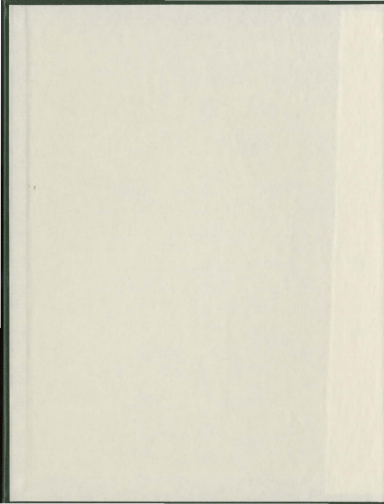


NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR GUIDANCE
COUNSELLORS' STRATEGIES FOR HANDLING
BULLYING

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**NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS'
STRATEGIES FOR HANDLING BULLYING**

By

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine how guidance counsellors in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador would handle a specific verbal-relational bullying incident (i.e., analyzed through five composite scales: *ignore the incident, work with the bully, work with the victim, enlist other adults, discipline the bully*). Also of interest in this study were participant demographics, bullying programs and Positive Behaviour Supports.

Bullying can be understood from a dynamic systems perspective where bullying occurs in the context of larger social systems, namely the home, community, and school. The current study focused on the school environment and in particular how guidance counsellors would handle a specific bullying scenario.

The data for this study was collected using a published questionnaire entitled the "Handling Bullying Questionnaire" developed by Bauman, Rigby and Hoppa (2008). Demographic data such as age, sex, school population and years of experience were also collected. Ninety-four guidance counsellors in this province provided the data discussed in the following chapters. Data was analyzed using simple inferential statistics and descriptive statistics. Results and study implications are discussed along with implications for guidance counsellors.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Problem and Purpose Statement

Bullying in schools has been a topic of growing research around the world. As a teacher and a guidance counsellor in multi-grade settings in Newfoundland and Labrador, I have been witness to all types of bullying: physical (e.g., pushing, hitting), verbal (e.g., name-calling, threatening), relational (e.g., exclusion, spreading rumours), and cyberbullying (e.g., spreading rumours using social networking sites). Bullying continues to be widespread and problematic with the National Center for Education Research in the United States recently reporting 32% of students aged 12 to 18 having been bullied in school (Dinkes, Kemp, Baum & Snyder, 2009). A study by Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, and Scheidt (2001) reported 30% of youth in Canada in grades 6 to 10 as having experienced being a bully, target or both. A 2001 survey by the World Health Organization ranked Canada 26th and 27th out of 35 countries whose 13 year olds reported being bullies and victims, respectively (Craig & Harel, 2004). There is a strong and consistent relationship between bullying and involvement in other violent behaviours where bullying can be considered a marker for more serious violent behaviour (Nansel, Overpeck, Haynie, Ruan, & Scheidt, 2003). While a whole school and community approach is considered by many to be the key to countering bullying in schools (Olweus, 1993), guidance counsellors can play a vital role.

It is critical that guidance counsellors be part of the solution to this pervasive problem. Some studies report that teachers have been unsuccessful in dealing with

bullying situations (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Smith & Shu, 2000). A Canadian study by Pepler, Craig, Ziegler and Charach (1994) reported only 25% of students believed teachers would stop bullying behaviour. There is evidence to suggest that guidance counsellors perceive bullying situations differently than teachers. A study by Jacobsen and Bauman (2007) found that school counsellors displayed more empathy for victims of relational and physical bullying than teachers. They also perceived relational bullying to be more serious than teachers did and were more likely to intervene. One problem is that there has been little research conducted on how guidance counsellors in this province deal with bullying situations.

A quantitative study using a questionnaire developed by Bauman, Righy and Hoppa (2008) entitled "Handling Bullying Questionnaire" was administered electronically to all guidance counsellors in Newfoundland and Labrador. The purpose of the author's research was to find out which strategies are most prevalently employed by guidance counsellors in handling a specific verbal-relational bullying situation. This research was guided by this overarching question: how would guidance counsellors in this province respond to a verbal-relational bullying situation?

Research Questions

As noted the overarching research question in the current study was: How would guidance counsellors in this province respond to a verbal-relational bullying situation? Given this research question, and the possible responses to the questionnaire administered, this researcher specifically addressed the following:

1. Would guidance counsellors elect to work with the victim? Work with the bully? Enlist other adults? Ignore the incident? And/or discipline the bully?
2. Would any of the above five scales (i.e., work with the victim, work with the bully, enlist other adults, ignore the incident, discipline the bully) significantly correlate with each other?
3. Would guidance counsellors respond differently to the questionnaire items based on school population, school location, or type of school where they worked?
4. Would age, sex, or education of the guidance counsellors affect how they responded to this bullying incident?
5. Would the presence of a bullying program affect how guidance counsellors responded to this bullying incident?
6. Would the practice of Positive Behaviour Supports affect how guidance counsellors responded to this bullying incident?

Definition of Terms

Bullying is defined as having three elements: deliberate intention to harm; repetition of the bullying behaviour over time; and a power imbalance between the bully and the victim (Olweus, 1993). Bullying can be *physical* (e.g., pushing, hitting), *verbal* (e.g., name-calling, threatening), or *relational* (e.g., exclusion, spreading rumours). Bullying can also be *direct* (e.g., name calling, hitting) or *indirect* (e.g., spreading rumours, social exclusion) (Bauman, 2008). The *verbal-relational* bullying in the current study involves teasing, name-calling, and exclusion.

A *bully* is the perpetrator or perpetrators of the bullying behaviour. This behaviour is typically directed toward a *victim* or victims who are the targets of such behaviour. The child who is considered a *bully/victim* switches roles from being the perpetrator to being the victim of bullying behaviour. The *bystanders* are those who witness acts of bullying and may be directly involved or indirectly involved.

The Handling Bullying Questionnaire used 22 items which described how the respondent might react to a scenario of verbal-relational bullying. Using a Likert scale from 1 (I definitely would not) to 5 (I definitely would) with 3 as the mid-point (I'm unsure), participants' responses were classified using the five composite scales: *work with the victim*, *work with the bully*, *ignore the incident*, *enlist other adults*, and *discipline the bully*. The composites and a summary of their relevant questionnaire items follow:

1. *Work with the victim*- encourage victim to show he/she is not intimidated; tell victim to stand up; suggest victim be more assertive; advise victim to tell bully to back off
2. *Work with the bully*- help bully achieve greater self-esteem; discuss with bully options to improve; share concern with the bully about what happened to the victim; meet with students, including the bully; find the bully something more interesting to do
3. *Ignore the incident*- let someone else sort it out; let students sort it out themselves; treat the matter lightly; tell the kids to grow up; ignore it

4. *Enlist other adults*- refer the matter to the administration; contact victim's parents; insist to bully's parent that the behaviour must stop; ask student's teacher to intervene; discuss with colleagues
5. *Discipline the bully*- insist that the bully cut it out; make sure the bully is punished; make it clear to the bully that his/her behaviour would not be tolerated

Summary

In summary, the need for continued studies on bullying and victimization is evident with bullying in schools continuing to be a pervasive problem. With Health Canada (1999) reporting 56% of boys and 40% of girls in grades 6 and 8 admitting to bullying and 43% of boys and 35% of girls saying they had been bullied, bullying continues to be an issue in our schools. Once thought of as a 'rite of passage' or 'kids being kids', bullying has come to the forefront of much research.

Bullying is best understood in the context of a social dynamic system where the bully and victim are only two parts of a larger social system (Pepler, Craig, & O'Connell, 1999). This social system can promote and sustain bullying and victimization. The home, community, and school environments can be considered part of this social system. This study will examine the school population and in particular how one group of adults within this population, the school guidance counsellors, handle an incident of verbal-relational bullying.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

They were older than me, they took a dislike to me...various things happened...they would take my cardigan and kick it around as a football, and they would kick me out of the way and carry on...one boy pulled my hair so hard that some would come out, he dropped it in front of me...I was pushed off the climbing frame. I didn't realise I had a concussion but that's what it was...I remember feeling very alone, no-one would help me...I dreaded going to school (Smith & Sharp, 1994, p.1).

This scenario describes a scene of overt, physical bullying showing the social, emotional and physical effects of bullying. While research on bullying has grown over the last 30 years, bullying among school-aged children continues to be a pervasive issue in countries worldwide.

The terms 'bully', 'perpetrator', 'victim', and 'bystander' are constructs embedded in the literature and loaded with preconceived and assumed meanings, often painting a stereotypical picture. These roles are complex and may not fit with the atypical ways they are often portrayed. The dichotomy of 'bully' and 'victim' is unclear and some children may in fact be simultaneously both 'bully and victim'. Even though these labels are rife with definitional challenges, they are an integral part of understanding this body of literature. As bullying literature expands, the use of the above noted definitional language will continue to impact our conceptualizations of this wide spread social issue. The following literature review was written while critically considering the impacts of the language. However, the reader is encouraged to consider the impacts of the language on his/her own interpretations of this review.

The following literature review will define the construct of bullying, examine the prevalence of bullying, explain the impacts of bullying, discuss the nature of bullying in the school setting, examine the roles and implications for adults in addressing bullying (e.g., community members, parents, teachers, administrators, and guidance counsellors), and discuss the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs.

Bullying Defined

School shootings in Littleton's Columbine High School in 1999 and in W.R. Myers High School in Taber, Alberta have increased the amount of attention paid to bullying in the school system and have pushed the research agenda in this area. In both cases, students were alleged victims of bullying who opted to respond to bullying through force directed at their immediate environments. In other cases, victims of bullying have committed suicide as a way to escape the pain of being bullied. For example, it was the completed suicides of three young Norwegian boys in 1982, who had been bullied by their peers that prompted a public outcry in Norway and eventually lead to groundbreaking bullying research by Dan Olweus.

Olweus, a Norwegian professor, was the first scientist to study the concept of bullying in detail in the 1970s. Olweus, considered a pioneer in the field, has generated a plethora of data contributing to the literature on bullying (Sanders, 2004) and it is his definition that is the most commonly cited in the literature (Bauman, 2008; Bomtrager, Davis & Bernstein, 2009; Bradshaw, Sawyer, & O'Brennan, 2007; Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Fekkes et al., 2005; Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007; Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2006;

Naylor, Cowie, Cossin, de Bettencourt, & Lemme, 2006; Sapouna, 2008; Sherer & Nickerson, 2010; Smith, Cowie, Olafsson, & Liefvooghe, 2002). According to Olweus (1993), "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more students" (p.9). This definition includes three critical criteria, intention, repetitiveness, and power imbalance which are well accepted characteristics of bullying behaviour by most researchers (Olweus, 2010).

Olweus' definition is used on *The Olweus Bullying Questionnaire* (Olweus, 2007), a questionnaire commonly used to assess the prevalence rates of bullying in schools. It reads:

We say a student is being bullied when another student or several other students, say mean and hurtful things or make fun of him or her or call him or her mean and hurtful names; completely ignore or exclude him or her from the group of friends or leave him or her out of things on purpose; hit, kick, push, shove around, or lock him or her inside a room; tell lies or spread false rumors about him or her or send mean notes and try to make other students dislike him or her; and other hurtful things like that (Olweus, 2010, p.12).

This definition uses the three criteria (i.e., intention, repetitiveness, and power imbalance) discussed above. Other definitions similar to Olweus' have been used on questionnaires to assess the nature and prevalence of bullying:

We say a young person is being bullied, or picked on, when another child or young person, or a group of young people, say nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is bullying when a young person is hit, kicked or threatened, locked inside a room, sent nasty notes, when no one ever talks to them and things like that. These things can happen frequently and it is difficult for the young person being bullied to defend himself or herself. It is also bullying when a young person is teased repeatedly in a nasty way. But it is not bullying when two people

of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel (Whitney & Smith, 1993, p.7).

We say a student is being bullied when another student, or a group of students, say or do nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a student is being teased repeatedly in a way he or she doesn't like. But it is not bullying when two students of about the same strength quarrel or fight (Nansel et al., 2003, p.349).

It is important to note that these definitions do not include occasional quarrels or disagreements between peers of equal strength, nor do they include friendly teasing. The following definition by Smith and Sharp (1994) incorporates the repetitive nature of bullying and the imbalance of power:

Bullying can be defined as a systematic abuse of power....Power can be abused; the exact definition of what constitutes abuse will depend on the social and cultural context, but this is inescapable in examining human behaviour. If the abuse is systematic, repeated, and deliberate, bullying seems a good name to describe it (p.2)

Some researchers believe that aggressive behaviour does not have to be repeated to be considered bullying (e.g., Stephenson & Smith, 1989). Other definitions include the relational aspects of bullying behaviour where the threat of friendship withdrawal is included in the definition:

Bullying includes both physical and verbal aggression, which is a systematic, ongoing set of behaviour instigated by an individual or a group of individuals attempting to gain power, prestige, or goods. Tactics may also include the threat of withdrawal of a friendship (Espelage & Swearer, 2003, p.368).

Researchers such as Twemlow and Sacco (2008) have incorporated the role of the bystander audience and persistent humiliation as functional parts of the bullying definition:

Bullying is more than simply fighting. Bullying is an interpersonal process that creates humiliation for a victim in front of a bystanding audience...In order to be considered bullying, the humiliation must be sustained, not just an isolated occurrence. Bullying tends to be an almost compulsively repeated psychological process that begins between individuals and then may evolve into a peer-group phenomenon (p.56).

Establishing whether or not an incident constitutes 'bullying' is often difficult for both the children and the adults involved. The differences in perceptions and definitions of bullying further complicate the issues surrounding bullying and may affect intervention programs and bullying education (Mishna et al., 2003).

From a Canadian perspective, researchers Craig and Pepler (2007) identify two elements key to understanding bullying. First, bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour imposed from a position of power. This power may come from physical stature, social advantage, social status in the peer group, strength in numbers, or systemic power. Secondly, the repetition occurs over time whereby the "power relations become consolidated" (p.86) allowing the bully to gain power and the victim to lose power. Craig and Pepler consider bullying to be a "destructive relationship problem" (p.86) where the bully uses aggression and power to distress and control others and the victim becomes increasingly powerless in the cycle of peer abuse.

A key element in the conceptualization of bullying is recognizing that bullying can be classified into several types.

Types of Bullying

Bullying can be physical (e.g., pushing, hitting), verbal (e.g., name-calling, threatening), or relational (e.g., exclusion, spreading rumours). Bullying can also be

direct or indirect. Direct bullying involves physical and verbal bullying such as: name calling, pushing, hitting or threatening. Indirect bullying, or social aggression, uses less direct forms of bullying such as: spreading rumours, social exclusion, and demanding compliance (Bauman, 2008). According to research, indirect bullying is often perceived as less serious (Mishna et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2002) and teachers are less likely to include relational bullying in their definition of bullying as compared with verbal and physical forms (Holt & Keyes, 2004). Cyberbullying, which can be direct or indirect, uses advances in technology such as: email, chat rooms, text messages, and digital photos, allowing bullying to expand into the "borderless cyberworld" (Diamanduros, Downs, & Jenkins, 2008) and beyond the classrooms, schoolyards, playgrounds and streets.

As will be seen in the current study, counsellors were presented with a verbal-relational bullying scenario which contained elements of both direct and indirect bullying. For the purpose of this study, the bullying scenario presented had three components common to most definitions of bullying: deliberate intention to harm; repetition of the bullying behaviour over time; and a power imbalance between the bully and the victim (Olweus, 1993).

As seen above, bullying is a complex and broad phenomenon, but does bullying continue to be a problem in schools? This question will be addressed in the next section.

Prevalence of Bullying

Bullying has received a great deal of attention both nationally and internationally and is considered a significant social problem in North America, Canada, and in Newfoundland and Labrador. It was the torture and murder of 14-year old Reena Virk at the hands of seven of her peers in Victoria, British Columbia that put bullying in the spotlight in this country in the 1990's (Hymel, Schonert-Reichl, Bonanno, Vaillancourt, & Henderson, 2010). In this province, one study found bullying prevalence rates ranging from 20% to 30% when bullying behaviours such as hurting other people, teasing, and fighting with other students were measured (Durdle, 2008).

A study by Nansel et al. (2001) reported that 30% of American youth in grades 6 to 10 have been a bully, a target of a bully, or both. A 2004 study of almost 3,000 Dutch elementary school children reported 44.6% of children aged 9 to 12 being bullied at least once or twice in the previous months (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2004). In a Greek study of primary and secondary students, 8.2 % of students reported being a victim of bullying (Sapouna, 2008). A recent study in China by Cheng et al. (2010) reported 25.7% of middle school students being bullied within the previous month. Similarly, in a Chilean study of 8,131 middle school students surveyed, 47% reported having been bullied in the past month (Fleming & Jacobsen, 2009).

According to an international Health Canada (1999) survey, 56% of boys and 40% of girls in grades 6 and 8 in this country admitted they had bullied someone while 43% of boys and 35% of girls said they had been bullied in that year. Other Canadian

statistics can be found in the 2001-2002 World Health Organization (WHO) study on Health Behaviours in School-Aged Children (HBSC). Using Olweus definition of bullying, children were asked how often they had been bullied in the past couple of months and if they had taken part in bullying another student in the past couple of months (Craig & Harel, 2004). Thirty-five countries worldwide participated and results showed Canada ranked a dismal 26th and 27th on measures of bullying and victimization among 13 year old children, respectively (Craig & Harel). According to the WHO survey, 17.8% of 13 year old Canadian boys and 15.1% of 13 year old Canadian girls reported being frequently victimized. Canada's ranking on the same survey in 1993-1994 was markedly better where Canada ranked 19th and 20th out of 24 countries on measures of bullying and victimization, respectively (King, Wold, Tudor-Smith, & Harel, 1996). In a 2006 study of grade 4 and grade 5 students in four Canadian schools, 29% of students said they had been bullied once or twice in the current term and 9% said they had been bullied more than once or twice in the same timeframe (Mishna et al., 2006).

As shown by these statistics, the continued prevalence of bullying in this country, and indeed throughout the world, is cause for continued research. The impacts of bullying behaviour on bullies, victims, bystanders and society at large are profound and will be discussed in the next section.

Impacts of Bullying

We believe that bullying does not mysteriously disappear as children leave elementary school, but rather that its forms change with age: playground bullying changes into sexual harassment, gang attacks, dating violence, assault, marital violence, child abuse, workplace harassment, and elder abuse. The common

element in all these forms of abuse is the combination of power and aggression, a behavioural style that is learned early and persists if not corrected (Pepler & Craig, 1999 as cited in Barriere, 2005).

Bullying behaviour can have profound impacts on society as a whole and on the individuals directly and indirectly involved. The negative impacts of bullying on bullies, victims, bully/victims, and bystanders are widely documented. For example, in a recent Swedish survey on health-related quality of life, adolescents who experienced being a victim, bully, or bully/victim were more likely to show a poorer rating on physical, social, and emotional functioning than their uninvolved peers (Frisen & Bjarnelind, 2010). Negative impacts of bullying on bullies, victims, bully/victims, and bystanders are discussed in the following sections.

The Bully

There is a strong and consistent relationship between bullying and involvement in other violent behaviour where involvement in bullying can be considered a marker for more serious violent behaviour such as: weapon carrying, frequent fighting, and fighting-related injury (Nansel et al., 2003). According to PREVNet (2010), a national network of Canadian researchers, non-governmental organizations, and governments committed to stopping bullying, bullies show aggressive behaviour. This aggressive behaviour may lead to sexual harassment, dating aggression, gang involvement, and drug and alcohol abuse. Risk-taking behaviours such as excessive drinking and substance use are common among bullies (Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpela, Rantanen, & Rimpela, 2000). Bullies are also likely to experience depression (Kaltiala-Heino, Frojd, & Marttunen, 2010) and suicidal ideation (Rigby & Slee, 1999).

The Victim

The psychological impacts of being a victim of bullying are profound, cross-cultural, and long-term. Victims can suffer from poor social adjustment (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996) poor mental health (Rigby, 2000), low self-esteem (Delfabbro et al., 2006; Egan & Perry, 1998; Olweus, 1993b; Rigby, 1998), depression (Fekkes et al., 2004; Fleming & Jacobsen, 2009), and physical unwellness (Rigby, 1998). The loss of self-esteem has been the most frequently cited consequence of being bullied where low self-esteem can lead to depression and suicide.

Victims of bullying show similar psychological distress across all cultures. In addition, suicides related to being a victim of bullying have been documented in the United States, Canada, Australia, England, and Japan. A study of Chilean middle school students found those who had experienced bullying were more likely to report feelings of depression, sadness, and hopelessness (Fleming & Jacobsen, 2009) and Chinese students who had experienced bullying reported feelings of loneliness and suicidal thoughts (Cheng et al., 2010).

The effects of bullying on victims can be long-term where longitudinal studies suggest that peer victimization can continue to contribute to difficulties with health and well-being later in life (Rigby, 2003). For example, a recent study by Allison, Roeger, and Reinfeld-Kirkman (2009) found adults who reported early exposure to bullying were more likely to report a lower health-related quality of life in adulthood and were more likely to be at risk of psychosomatic and emotional disorders.

The Bully/Victim

The child who is considered a bully/victim switches roles from being the perpetrator of bullying to being the victim of bullying behaviour. Because of the dynamics of this kind of role switching, students in this group may be at the highest risk. A study by Ivarsson, Broberg, Arvidsson, and Gillberg (2005) found that the adolescents who were classified as bully/victims showed symptoms of delinquency, depression, aggression, identity issues and suicidality. Other studies (Fekkes et al., 2004; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000) show bully/victims as being at a more serious risk of psychosomatic disorders, depression, and suicide as compared with people falling into bully, victim, or bystander categories.

The Bystanders

Bystanders who witness repeated acts of abuse and violence may also suffer psychological distress as a result of exposure to bullying. The bystanders may fear retaliation from the bully or fear they may lose their place in the peer group if they were to become involved. Feelings of powerlessness and scars of the violence they have witnessed can follow bystanders into their adulthood (Nesbit, 1999). A study by Janson, Comey, Hazler and Oh (2009) found that the trauma of witnessing repetitive abuse as a bystander to bullying was substantially higher than trauma levels found in firefighters, police officers, emergency workers, and paramedics.

In summary, the consequences of bullying in schools are serious, long-term, and profound for all those involved. In the school environment, 'those involved' means

everyone including: students, teaching staff, support staff, administration, and guidance counsellors. An exploration of the nature of bullying in schools and why children bully can help further our understanding of the bullying phenomenon.

The Nature of Bullying

Bullying is a complex issue. To understand the nature of bullying, this section explores the theory and research outlining why children bully; provides an overview of bullying in the school environment; and details the profiles of bullies, victims, bully/victims, and bystanders.

Why do children bully?

To explain bullying phenomenon is a challenge and the answer to the question "why do children bully?" is complicated. According to one researcher, bullying is regulated by environmental factors and social cognitions (Sutton, 2001). Using these factors as a prospective lens, some researchers have developed theoretical frameworks to explain why bullying occurs. Two of these theoretical frameworks are: social information processing theory (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Dodge & Crick, 1990) and theory of the mind framework (Sutton). Social information processing theory defines six stages in processing social information (e.g., encoding social cues; interpreting social cues; See Dodge & Crick, 1990 for a review) and claims bullying occurs as a result of a deficit in one or more of these stages. Sutton, Smith, and Swettenham (1999) explain bullying behaviour by claiming that bullies have an advanced ability to read other people, a kind

of social intelligence whereby they can understand the mental states of others and predict their behaviours.

According to Pepler et al. (1999), dynamic systems theory can be used as a theoretical perspective to explain bullying behaviour. They argue that bullying is best understood in the context of a social dynamic system where the bully and victim are only two parts of a larger social system. The social system can promote and sustain bullying and victimization. The **home**, **community** and **school** environments can be considered part of this social system. The **home** environment is influenced by parenting styles and several inadequate or maladaptive parenting styles have been associated with child bullying behaviour: parenting that is harsh, absent, and neglectful (Pettit & Bates, 1989; Strassberg, Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994); parenting that lacks positive emotional affection (Janssens & Dekovic, 1997); and parenting that does not teach appropriate behaviour (Grusec & Goodnow, 1994). In addition, maltreated children, especially those suffering from physical and sexual abuse are more likely to bully other children and are at a higher risk of being victimized by their peers (Shields & Cicchetti, 2001). **Community** and neighbourhood factors such as poverty, availability of drugs and guns, and community disorganization have a positive correlation with violent behaviours (Hawkins et al., 2000) and may, therefore, influence bullying behaviours. Because the **school** environment is the focus of this research it will be explored in more detail in the next section.

Bullying in the School Environment

The school can be viewed as a microcosm of society, existing as an environment which can support or challenge bullying behaviour. One of the most important features of bullying in the school environment is "its essential public nature: bullying routinely occurs in the presence of other students" (Jeffrey, Miller, & Linn, 2001, p.145). The bully or perpetrator is more likely to engage in bullying behaviours when there is an audience of bystanders. Bullying occurs among individuals (i.e., the bully or bullies, the victim, and the bystanders) within the context of a system (i.e., the school environment).

Factors such as school climate, social dynamics, and perceptions of school staff can play a role in school bullying (Macklem, 2003). For example, an American study by Nansel et al. (2001) found students who had reported bullying others had a significantly poorer perception of their school climate than students who were victims or bully/victims. There is evidence that demographic factors such as: school size (Olweus, 1993; Wolke, Woods, Stanford, & Schultz, 2001); school location (Olweus, 1993); and socio-economic status (Mellor, 1999) do not affect the levels of bullying in a school. Bullying occurs in schools that are large and small, urban and rural. Bullying occurs worldwide across all cultures, races, and genders.

The profiles of victims, bullies, bully/victims, and bystanders can help explain the nature of bullying. The following profiles are not meant to simplify the problem, de-emphasize the importance of social context, or to offer stereotypes, but rather to present the available research on such profiles.

Profile of a Victim

To further comprehend the bullying phenomenon, it is essential to understand the nature of the victims involved. Victims of bullying have been classified into several types. For example, Olweus (1978; 1997) distinguished between passive/submissive victims and provocative victims where passive/submissive victims are insecure, helpless and submit to attacks or insults while provocative victims are nervous, defensive, and quick tempered. Perry, Kusel, and Perry (1988) suggested a categorization of victims into three groups: victimization victims (i.e., who are rejected by their peers because of their victimization); aggression victims (i.e., who are rejected by their peers because of their aggression); and victimization and aggression victims (i.e., who are rejected by their peers for both victimization and aggression).

There are several characteristics common to victims of bullying reported in the literature. These include: a belief that they cannot control their environment; poor social and interpersonal skills; self-blame for their problems; a poor self-concept; feelings of inadequacy; difficulty relating to their peers; family members who are over-involved in their decisions; performance of self-destructive actions; and being physically younger, smaller and weaker than their peers (Hazler, Carney, Green, Powell, & Jolly, 1997).

Profile of a Bully

Research has suggested that people that bully have a positive attitude toward violence; they have little empathy for the victims but high self-esteem; and they have little concern for the feelings of others (Olweus, 1993, Olweus, 1997). According to

PREVnet (2010), bullies are bossy, manipulative and aggressive with their siblings, teachers, friends, and animals. In addition, they are quick to anger, like to control others, see aggression as the only way to preserve their self-image, exhibit obsessive or rigid actions, and create frustration in a peer group (Hazler et al., 1997).

Profile of a Bully/Victim

Several studies have examined the bully/victim role, where an individual is both a bully and a victim of bullying (Fekkes et al., 2004; Glover, Gough, Johnson, & Cartwright, 2000; Haynie et al., 2001; Kaltiala-Heino et al., 2000; Kim, Leventhal, Koh, Hubbard, & Boyce, 2006; Menesini, Modena, & Tani, 2009). Bully/victims have higher levels of physical and verbal aggression than comparison children not fitting this profile (Craig, 1998); they have a negative self-image (Glover et al., 2000); they are insecure in school (Glover et al., 2000) and they score lower on measures of scholastic ability, social acceptance, and self-worth (Austin & Joseph, 1996). A study by Haynie et al. (2001) found the bully/victim group showing the least optimal psychosocial functioning in comparison to the bully or victim group by displaying higher rates of problem behaviour (i.e., such as smoking, drinking, theft, property damage, violations of parent's rules), lower self-control, less ability to form positive friendships with peers, and poorer school functioning.

Profile of a Bystander

Within the study of bullying, researchers have tried to classify the profiles of bystanders. Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, and Kaukiainen (1996) used a

combination of self-reports and peer-nominations to classify the role of the bystanders into the following four groups: **assistants** (i.e., those who join the perpetrators), **reinforcers** (i.e., those who provide positive feedback to the perpetrators), **outsiders** (i.e., those who stand off and watch from a distance), and **defenders** (i.e., those who attempt to intervene on behalf of the victim). According to this classification, bystanders can be directly involved in the bullying process (i.e., assistants, reinforcers, and defenders) or they may not be involved at all (i.e., outsiders). Salmivalli and her colleagues found that these roles were gender-related where boys were more likely to be reinforcers or assistants and girls were more likely to be defenders or outsiders.

Bystander behaviour may perpetuate the reoccurrence of bullying behaviour by encouraging it or by failing to act/intervene. The power of curtailing the bullying problem may lie in harnessing the power of the bystander. By training observers to become active defenders rather than passive bystanders, the bully could lose power and the bully/victim relationship will be less likely to be fuelled by the power imbalance between bully and victim.

Adults in the home, school, and community may be considered as bystanders to bullying behaviour and are important components of the social system where bullying occurs. The next section will examine the roles of adults in addressing bullying.

Adults and Bullying

Contrary to many popular beliefs, bullying is not a normal part of growing up nor is it a normal school issue. Bullying in schools is a societal issue and responses to

bullying by community members, parents, and adults in the school (e.g., teachers, administration, guidance counsellors) are of the utmost importance. According to Olweus (1993), adults need to step in when bullying starts because kids do not have enough power to stop it on their own.

One of the most pervasive issues surrounding bullying is the adults' frequent lack of awareness that bullying is taking place. According to a qualitative study by Mishna et al. (2006), approximately half of the teachers and parents interviewed were not aware that their student or child was bullied. Further compounding this issue is the child's perception of how ineffective adults are in dealing with a bullying situation. For example, some children are adamant that telling an adult only makes the bullying worse and they would only tell when the bullying became "serious" (Mishna et al.).

The Community

Schools reside in neighbourhoods where the attitudes of the community members and the atmosphere of the neighbourhood can profoundly affect the school environment. If schools exist in violent neighbourhoods then violence will also be a concern within the school (Hall, 2008). In order for bullying behaviour to be addressed, schools must feel safe and "Schools cannot really be safe in unsafe communities" (Twemlow & Sacco, 2008, p.86). Compounding this problem are the attitudes and behaviours of community members which may influence bullying behaviours where hostile relationships within a community may provide children with examples of bullying behaviours (Bowes et al., 2009). Since children learn by example these actions may be repeated within the peer

group and if children learn to solve problems with violence, the cycle of violence will continue.

'It takes a village to raise a child' is a common saying in child-raising practice and can also apply to the anti-bullying programs and practices. Communities comprised of neighbourhoods, recreational centers, churches, and community centers can partner with schools and families to reduce bullying (Espelage & Swearer, 2003).

Parents

Parents have a tremendous impact on the lives of their children. In the study of bullying behaviours, the family of origin of bullies (Bowes et al., 2009; Shields & Cicchetti, 2001), victims (Shields & Cicchetti, 2001; Stadler, Feifel, Rohrmann, Vermeiren, & Poustike, 2010) and bully/victims (Bowes et al., 2009; Pontzer, 2010) contribute to and influence their behaviours. Parental bonding and attachment, parenting styles, and family dynamics can have an effect on a child's peer relationships (Rigby, 2008) and barring other factors such as genetics, school environments, life events, peer relations, "parents can act to significantly reduce the likelihood that their children will be involved in bully/victim problems at school" (p.110).

Studies report that victims who are regularly bullied report these occurrences 67% of the time to their parents and parents try to stop the behaviour 60% of the time (Fekkes et al., 2005). It is important for parents to increase their awareness of bullying behaviour and actively participate in the prevention and intervention of bullying. Many anti-

bullying programs emphasize the importance of parental involvement and parent involvement is highly positively correlated with program success (Eslea & Smith, 2000).

Responses to Bullying in Schools

Teachers

The school climate plays a role in the perpetuation and cessation of bullying behaviours. The school climate is in part created by the school staff and administration and is directly affected by how teachers react to incidents of bullying. Teacher responses to bullying have been summarized in four response types: **constructive-direct** (i.e., teacher directly addresses the student(s) involved in a manner which is supportive, educative, and non-punitive); **constructive-indirect** (i.e., teacher sends the involved student(s) to another individual such as a counsellor, parent or administrator in a supportive, educative, and non-punitive way); **punitive-direct** (i.e., teacher addresses the involved student(s) in a punitive manner); **punitive-indirect** (i.e., teacher sends the student(s) involved to another individual such as the principal to deal with the situation punitively) (Marshall, Varjas, Meyers, Graybill, & Skoczylas, 2009).

In a study by Dake, Price, Telljohann, and Funk (2003), researchers found that 86.3% of teachers used serious talks with the bully and victim as an intervention technique while only 31.7% used classroom time to discuss bullying and 31.2% involved students in creating classroom rules against bullying. In a Newfoundland study by Nesbit (1999), teachers were asked how they would prevent bullying and most responded they would talk to the students about the issue using an interactive dialogue on topics such as

behavioural guidelines, other people's rights, positive behaviour and ownership of behaviour.

Teachers may react differently to instances of bullying based on the type of bullying observed. Indirect, relational bullying may be perceived as less serious by teachers (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006) and have a greater chance of going unnoticed (van der Wal, de Wit, & Hirasing, 2003) even though indirect forms of bullying and relational bullying cause the greatest amount of suffering (van der Wal et al.).

Students do not perceive teachers as intervening frequently nor consistently to stop bullying behaviours (Craig, Henderson & Murphy, 2000). In fact, teachers may inadvertently foster bullying by failing to promote respectful relationships among students or by failing to speak out against bullying (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). According to research by Fekkes et al. (2005), almost half of the bullied children surveyed did not tell their teachers they were being bullied and although teachers who knew of the bullying often tried to stop it, students reported the bullying as staying the same or getting worse. In the same study, teachers were successful in stopping bullying incidents 49% of the time and bullies were spoken to about their behaviour 52.1% of the time.

The school administration also plays an important part in school climate creation and bullying intervention and prevention.

Administration

School administrators set a tone in the school and directly influence what behaviour is acceptable and not acceptable among students. They also provide leadership to staff members on the handling of bullying situations. It is widely accepted that in order for any bullying intervention to be successful, there must be administrative support (Plog, Epstein, Jens, & Porter, 2010). The principal's commitment to allocating time and resources to bullying-related activities is associated with improvement (Olweus, 2004). As noted by this researcher, there is very little research on principal perception of bullying in schools. Alarmingly, in one study of 49 elementary school principals in the southern United States, 88% of principals reported bullying as a minor problem in their school (Flynt & Morton, 2008).

Administrators together with teachers and guidance counsellors are responsible for creating a school climate that fosters positive peer relationships and discourages bullying and victimization.

Guidance Counsellors

The school guidance counsellor is an untapped resource in the anti-bullying movement with very little research on the role of guidance counsellors in bullying intervention and prevention (Bradshaw et al., 2007). A recent American study by Sherer and Nickerson (2010) showed that school psychologists use several anti-bullying strategies in their schools. These strategies include: talking with bullies following bullying incidents; using disciplinary consequences such as suspension and expulsion for

bullies; increasing adult supervision in less structured areas such as the playground and cafeteria; having a talk with victims following a bullying incident; and individual counselling with bullies in areas of empathy and anger management.

Because of their background and training, it is possible that school counsellors may perceive bullying situations differently than teachers (Bauman et al., 2008). A 2007 study by Jacobsen and Bauman found that school counsellors showed more empathy for victims of relational and physical bullying than teachers did and perceived relational bullying as more serious. These findings may suggest that school counsellors are more sensitive to issues of bullying than their teacher colleagues. Counsellors with anti-bullying training rated relational bullying as more serious than counsellors who did not have such training and counsellors who worked in schools with anti-bullying programs were more likely to intervene in incidents involving relational bullying than counsellors who worked in a school without such programs (Jacobsen & Bauman). Guidance counsellors in this province take courses in individual counselling and group counselling where empathic understanding, listening, and reflection are emphasised as critical components of being an effective counsellor.

In the current study, counsellors responded to a verbal-relational bullying situation along five dimensions: *ignore the incident*; *discipline the bully*; *work with the victim*; *enlist other adults* (e.g., teachers, parents and administrators); and *work with the bully*. The author's research was derived from a study done by Bauman et al. (2008) in which they compared teacher and guidance counsellor responses to a bullying situation. They found counsellors were more likely than teachers to enlist the help of other adults

and work with the victims. Counsellors were also less likely than teachers to ignore or dismiss the situation and less likely to use punitive measures. Bauman (2008) suggests that the school guidance counsellor is "the logical person to take a leadership role in the efforts to reduce bullying" (p.365).

Guidance counsellors, administrators, and teachers have helped to implement "anti-bullying programs" in this province and throughout the country in efforts to raise bullying awareness and to promote healthy relationships. But are these programs effective? This question will be addressed in the next section.

Anti-Bullying Programs

Staff awareness of the prevalence and seriousness of bullying and recognition of the need for a whole school approach are common elements in many school anti-bullying programs (Rigby, Smith, & Pepler, 2004) with most intervention programs focusing on systemic change rather than on individual change (Craig, Pepler, Murphy, & McCuaig-Edge, 2010). However, there may be differences in the contents and component emphasis of these programs. For example, there may be different emphasis on teacher training, prevention, intervention, surveillance, monitoring of students outside of school, and working with the students identified as bullies (Rigby et al.).

Rigby (2008) summarizes conclusions which can be derived from studying intervention programs. These include: most interventions are only moderately successful showing 15-20% bullying reduction; several interventions have claimed high success rates of 50% bullying reduction while other programs have not been able to show any

improvements; bullying reductions are achieved more consistently in younger grades; different kinds of interventions have claimed the same levels of success so we do not know if, for example, punishing the bully is any better than using counselling methods; and when interventions are implemented with strong school support, outcomes are better.

One area of contention is the effectiveness of school anti-bullying campaigns. According to Twemlow and Sacco (2008), the anti-bullying and anti-violence programs in schools in the United States, Britain and throughout Europe "have generally not worked very well" (p.1). They argue that a program that is simple, crisp and continuous where the larger, background issues are a consideration will be successful and stress that the intervention program should not be about "what you do" but "how you do it" (p.3). Similarly, Canadian researchers Craig and Pepler (2007) have noted that "some interventions actually make the problem worse, and most are not rigorously evaluated and operate in isolation due to a lack of an evidence-based national platform for coordination and implementation" (p. 87). With Canada's ranking on the WHO survey of 2001 worsening compared to the 1993 survey, it has been suggested that other countries have been preventing bullying problems more effectively (Craig & Pepler). In a study by Sherer and Nickerson (2010), 53% of school psychologists identified an anti-bullying policy as the most effective strategy while 43% considered anti-bullying policies ineffective. In a meta-analysis of 16 school bullying intervention programs spanning research across a 25 year period, Merrell, Isava, Gueldner, and Ross (2008) found that meaningful and positive effects from the implementation of a school bullying intervention program occurred on only one third of the variables measured and bullying

intervention programs are more likely to influence attitudes, self-perceptions, and knowledge rather than anti-bullying behaviours.

Some research does suggest that it is better to have an anti-bullying program than to not have one at all. In a recent study by Craig et al. (2010), 73% of 48 programs studied reported some positive effects. They stress the need for all anti-bullying programs to be continuously evaluated in order to assess programs' impacts on students and staff.

What makes a program more or less effective than another program? This question will be addressed in the next section.

Effective Programs

Model programs are based on experimental evidence with proof of sustained effects within a sound theoretical framework. Effective programs are systemic in nature and should provide enough information to be replicated. Such programs are called "evidence-based prevention programs" (Craig et al., 2010, p.226).

Anti-bullying policies are effective if they involve the whole school (Cowie & Jennifer, 2008; Olweus, 1993; Rigby, 2008) and the surrounding community (Glover et al., 2000). It is widely accepted that bullying will not stop without the intervention of adults (Beran, 2006; Craig, Pepler, & Blais, 2007; Craig et al., 2010) and some programs are thought to be effective only because they involve the educating of the school personnel and parents first (Pollack, 2006). Indeed, "parents are an integral part of preventing bullying" (Craig et al., 2010). The involvement of communities can be a

deciding factor in the success of a bullying intervention program where the programs with the highest success rates had the highest percentages of community involvement (Craig et al., 2010). Education and training must be made available to parents and educators to increase their awareness of their own attitudes towards bullying and decrease the chances of invalidating a child's experiences (Mishner et al., 2006). Staff members who showed self-efficacy in dealing with bullying situations were more likely to intervene and were more effective in doing so (Bradshaw et al., 2007). Successful intervention programs span across the schools, classrooms, playgrounds, home and involve all students (e.g., bullies, victims, bully-victims, bystanders), parents, teachers, administrators, guidance counsellors, school psychologists, and the community.

Anti-bullying programs typically start with an assessment of the current attitudes of teachers, guidance counsellors, administrators, lunchroom supervisors, bus drivers, school secretaries, and parents toward bullying. This is followed with an intervention and education program (Cowie & Jennifer, 2008). It is important that prevention programs start as early as possible (Rigby, 2008) with change focusing on the whole system, not just on individuals (Craig et al, 2010; Macklem, 2003). There are certain elements that must be present in any program if the program is to be successful. These elements include: there must be buy in; students, teachers and staff need to feel safe; there must be an understanding of the nature of power issues, power struggles, and power dynamics; there must be a whole school approach that involves staff, students, administration, community members, parents, and school boards; the undiscussables must be addressed; and there must be ongoing evaluation and accountability (Twemlow & Sacco, 2008).

In the current study, guidance counsellors cited several anti-bullying programs used in schools in this province. Programs such as LionQuest, Roots of Empathy, Positive Behaviour Supports, Focus on Bullying, Focus on Harassment and Intimidation, Character Counts, and Beyond the Hurt are some of the anti-bullying programs currently in use in Newfoundland and Labrador. However, there is a great deal of variation in the amount of empirical support for these programs.

The Counsellor's Role in Bullying Intervention and Prevention

Guidance counsellors, because of their educational background and training, can offer an alternate perspective on bullying in schools. It has been suggested that school counsellors take a leadership role in reducing bullying in schools (Bauman, 2008; Furlong, Morison, & Pavelski, 2000; McKellar & Sherwin, 2003). The research shows that the best outcomes from anti-bullying programs were obtained in schools who had the strongest commitment to the program and who typically had a staff member coordinate the program under strong administrative support. The school counsellor can initiate and take a leadership role by establishing a steering committee; providing training for staff, students and parents; designing teacher training to address their concerns with the program; helping others understand the strategies used in bullying situations; staying in the counsellor role and being the go-to person for students to safely report bullying; gathering and presenting data on the prevalence and types of bullying observed in the school; teaching social skills to students; and staying knowledgeable about current developments in the field (Bauman, 2008). Diamanduros et al. (2008) saw the school psychologist as being in a unique position to address the issue of cyberbullying in schools

by promoting awareness of cyberbullying; assessing the severity of cyberbullying; developing intervention and prevention programs to address the problem of cyberbullying; and collaborating with school officials to develop policies on cyberbullying in the school. Other research has emphasized the counsellor's role in dealing with bullies who are heterosexist (i.e., believe that heterosexuality is superior to other forms of sexuality) by promoting awareness of homophobic discrimination in schools (Pollack, 2006).

In this province, the school guidance counsellor is an important professional in the implementation of the school's anti-bullying program. Positive Behaviour Supports is a decision-making framework endorsed by Newfoundland and Labrador's Department of Education which provides a basis for the selection and implementation of academic and behavioural practices.

Positive Behaviour Supports

Positive Behaviour Supports (PBS) emerged in the mid-1980's as a means to support individuals who had difficulty achieving their lifestyle goals due to problem behaviours (Dunlap, Sailor, Homer, & Sugai, 2009). Its conceptual framework is based on behaviourism (Simonsen & Sugai, 2009) and applied behaviour analysis or ABA (Dunlap et al.; Simonsen & Sugai) where all behaviours are functional and learned (i.e., the behaviour results from the environment and provides a function) (Simonsen & Sugai). Human behaviour can change in an environment that can promote desired behaviours and minimize the development of undesired behaviours (Dunlap et al.). PBS has influenced

practices in juvenile justice, child welfare, family therapy, children's mental health, and education.

In the early 1990's, studies were conducted using entire schools as the units of behavioural analysis where researchers established the importance of teaching and reinforcing behavioural expectations for all students (Dunlap et al., 2009). Emerging from these studies was a multi-tiered framework of school-wide positive behaviour supports, SW-PBS. SW-PBS is a "whole-school approach emphasizing systematic and individualized behavioural interventions for achieving social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behaviors" (Sugai & Horner, 2008). A key element in this approach is for schools to establish teaching and learning environments which actively teach appropriate behaviours and prevent the occurrence of problem behaviours (Sugai & Horner). Schools implementing SW-PBS identify relevant outcomes, use data to guide their practices, and establish a system of support to implement PBS. Within this system of supports, there is recognition that "schedules, staffing patterns, cultural expectations, physical conditions, budgeting, and organizational policy are also likely to affect the success of support" (Dunlap et al., 2009, p.5).

Because children vary in their risk of involvement in bullying, different interventions are required at different levels. PBS is a three-tiered model. The **primary tier** involves the 75-80% of students who are uninvolved in bullying or victimization. The **secondary tier** involves the 10-15% of students who are occasionally involved and the **tertiary tier** involves the 5-10% of students who are frequently involved in bullying or victimization (Dunlap et al., 2009).

These three groups require different levels of interventions (Craig et al., 2010).

The **primary tier** is where low intensity strategies address the entire population of staff and students. Examples of this include: increasing active supervision, establishing expectations, and developing a school wide reinforcement system (Simonsen & Sugai, 2009). At the **secondary tier** moderate strategies are used to redirect individuals from possible behaviour problems to more appropriate behaviour such as increasing prompts and reinforcing appropriate behaviour (Simonsen & Sugai). The **tertiary tier** uses intensive and individualized procedures where supports are implemented to meet the needs of the students who do not respond to the first two layers of supports. At this tier, supports are individualized, high-intensity, and function-based (Simonsen & Sugai) such as the Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA), based on the ABC (i.e., antecedent-behaviour-consequence) model of behaviour.

The effectiveness of PBS depends largely on the context in which it is implemented. For example, individual programs implemented in chaotic classrooms where teachers are constantly addressing behaviour problems are ineffective (Dunlap et al., 2009). In a recent study by Sherer and Nickerson (2010), school psychologists perceived school-wide positive behaviour support plans as the most effective anti-bullying practice. This was followed by a modification of space and schedule and immediate responses to bullying incidents. In contrast, avoiding contact between victims and bullies, the implementation of a zero-tolerance policy, and the use of written anti-bullying programs were perceived as the least effective strategies.

On the whole, research is highly supportive of the SW-PBS approach with rates of problem behaviours decreasing, students with problem behaviours benefiting from behavioural interventions such as FBA, improvements to school climate and academic success, and decrease in antisocial behaviour (Sugai & Horner, 2008). A longitudinal study of student discipline problems and academic performance of over 600 students at an American urban elementary school found student discipline problems decreased and academic performance improved following PBS intervention (Luiselli, Putnam, Handler, & Feinberg, 2005).

Bully prevention in positive behaviour support (BP-PBS), a model by Ross and Horner (2009), teaches students to withhold the social rewards believed to support and maintain bullying behaviour in schools and was designed to fit within the system of school wide PBS. In this study, students from three U.S. elementary schools already implementing PBS were taught a skill set which involved: being taught to discriminate between respectful and disrespectful behaviour; saying 'stop' with your hand held up if someone was being disrespectful to you; saying 'stop' if you see someone being treated disrespectfully; walking away if the disrespectful behaviour continues; telling an adult if the disrespectful behaviour continues after you walk away; and if someone tells you to 'stop' you stop what you are doing, take a breath and go about your day. Results showed that the use of BP-PBS was functionally related to reducing the number of bullying incidents in all six targeted students observed in the three schools. Increased responses from bystanders and victims were also observed and staff and faculty rated the program as effective and efficient.

Under the Safe and Caring Schools Policy (Government of NL, 2006) in this province, schools are required to implement Positive Behaviour Supports or otherwise known as Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports or Effective Behaviour Supports (Government of NL, 2003). This model promotes a school-wide positive approach to discipline "based on the assumption that desirable behaviour should be taught and reinforced" (p.1). Two endorsed anti-bullying programs from the Department of Education in this province are *Focus on Bullying* (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1998) for primary and elementary levels and *Focus on Harassment and Intimidation* (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2001) for junior high and senior high school students. Both anti-bullying programs originated from the British Columbia school system.

Conclusion

As seen, bullying is a complex and broad phenomenon. Although it is at times perceived as an intrapsychic problem it has contextual and societal roots. This necessitates a broader conceptualization of bullying behaviour when it comes to prevention, assessment, and intervention. Importantly, guidance counsellors have a unique skill set which makes them important contributors in addressing bullying behaviour. This literature review provided an overview of bullying by defining the bullying construct, examining the prevalence of bullying, discussing the nature of bullying in schools, examining the roles of adults in addressing bullying, and discussing anti-bullying programs. With this information presented, the author will now discuss the methodology of the current study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a survey method to explore how guidance counsellors in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador would report handling a specific bullying incident. The questionnaire used in this study was developed by Bauman et al., (2008) entitled the "Handling Bullying Questionnaire" (see Appendix A). Permission to use this survey was granted by Dr. Sheri Bauman, University of Arizona. This chapter presents information on the methods used for data collection and analysis. Participant demographics, sampling approach, and research design are included.

Participants

A total of 189 guidance counsellors in 274 schools were invited to participate in this study, which included reviewing an informed consent form and completing the Handling Bullying Questionnaire. Ninety-four guidance counsellors completed the survey giving a response rate of 49.74%. The sample was mostly female (i.e., 70.2%) with almost half of the sample falling in the 41-50 year age range and 67% in full time guidance positions. Over half of the respondents came from a rural setting (i.e., 55.3%, $n = 52$) with most respondents indicating they worked in a primary/elementary (i.e., 24.5%, $n = 23$) or multi-grade school (i.e., 23.4%, $n = 22$).

Sampling

The unit of analysis was guidance counsellors in all four English speaking school districts in Newfoundland and Labrador (i.e., Eastern, Western, Nova Central, and

Labrador). Exactly 189 guidance counsellors were sent an email invitation (see Appendix B) to participate in the survey. Permissions to administer the surveys were obtained in writing from all four school districts (see Appendix C).

Two of the four districts (i.e., Eastern and Western) also required the oral or written consent of individual school principals in order for their guidance counsellors to be contacted. The researcher telephoned and emailed individual principals in order to obtain consent to survey the guidance counsellors in these two school districts. The body of the email contained a brief introduction to the study and included documents that outlined the nature and purpose of this study (see Appendix D). Email addresses were obtained from the schools' websites for individual principals and obtained from the Department of Education, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador for individual guidance counsellors. Two out of 122 principals in the Eastern School District denied permission to contact their school's guidance counsellor. Once principal consents were received, an email was sent to guidance counsellors inviting them to participate in this study (see Appendix B).

The schools were located in rural and urban areas throughout the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Of the 274 schools whose guidance counsellors were surveyed, there were varying school configurations as identified by this researcher. These were: primary/elementary (i.e., K-6, K-3, K-4); middle school (i.e., 7-9, 7-8, 5-9, 4-7); high school (i.e., 10-12, 9-12); all grade (i.e., K-12); and multi-level (i.e., 8-12, K-7, K-8, K-9, 7-12).

Table 1: Distribution of NL Schools, Guidance Counsellors, and Guidance Counsellors Surveyed

School District	# of Schools	# of Guidance Counsellors (population)	# of Guidance Counsellors invited to participate in study
Eastern	122	120	118
Nova Central	67	30	30
Western	71	35	35
Labrador	16	6	6
Total	276	191	189

Research Design

Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered electronically to all guidance counsellors in the four English speaking districts of Newfoundland and Labrador. The survey was administered using Survey Monkey, an online survey software tool. Guidance counsellors were contacted via email (see Appendix B) and provided with a link to access the informed consent form and questionnaire posted on Survey Monkey. Counsellors were presented with a brief explanation of the survey explaining the intention and rationale for the research, description of ethical concerns, assurance of confidentiality, and contact information should the participants have any questions (see Appendix E). Lastly, counsellors were presented with a consent form where clicking “yes” indicated their consent to participate in this study and led them to the questionnaire (see Appendix F). Counsellors were informed that participation in the survey was completely voluntary and all information would be held in the strictest of confidence.

Counsellors were sent an initial email (see Appendix B) with a request for their participation in the internet survey. This was followed with a reminder email two weeks later to request participation (see Appendix G).

Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this study originated from a 26-item questionnaire used by Rigby in 2006. Psychometric analysis of the original questionnaire led to modifications "to provide a factorial structure that more clearly conformed to the hypothesised dimensions" (Bauman et al., 2008, p.841) and resulted in the current 22-item questionnaire used in this study (Bauman et al.).

This questionnaire was selected to obtain an overall measure of how guidance counsellors in this province handle verbal-relational bullying. The survey questionnaire contained 22 questions (see Appendix A) verbatim from the Bauman et al. (2008) questionnaire with the exception of question #13 which read "I would ask the student's teacher to intervene" in the current study whereas in Bauman et al.'s survey it read "I would ask the school counsellor to intervene". Since counsellors were the population being surveyed, the wording of this question was changed. In addition to the 22 question survey, participants were also asked demographic information (e.g., age, education, sex, years of experience, percent of time employed in guidance position, grades and courses taught) and school information (e.g., school location, town population, type of school, school population, number of students worked with, bullying program, bullying training, training in positive behaviour supports, school implementation of positive behaviour

supports) (see Appendix A). As incentive to participate, counsellors could enter their name in a draw to win a \$25.00 Walmart gift card by emailing their name and address to the researcher (see Appendix A).

Counsellors were given the following bullying scenario containing both direct and indirect bullying:

A 12-year-old student is being repeatedly teased and called unpleasant names by another, more powerful, student who has successfully persuaded other students to avoid the targeted person as much as possible. As a result, the victim of this behaviour is feeling angry, miserable, and often isolated.

They were asked to choose, on a scale of one to five, how likely they were to react in the way specified by each of the 22 items where 1 was 'I definitely would not', 2 was 'I probably would not', 3 was 'I'm unsure', 4 was 'I probably would,' and 5 was 'I definitely would.'

Scales corresponding to five factors were: *Work with the victim* (i.e., using items 6, 11, 17, and 22); *Work with the bully* (i.e., using items 5, 9, 12, 19, and 21); *Ignore the incident* (i.e., using items 2, 8, 10, 16, and 18); *Enlist other adults* (i.e., using items 4, 13, 14, 15, and 20); and *Discipline the bully* (i.e., using items 1, 3, and 7). Scale scores were calculated for each participant by summing the items on each scale and dividing by the total number of items on that scale. The higher the scale score on that category, the higher the endorsement of that strategy.

The rotated component matrix of the Handling Bullying Questionnaire shows that most of the 22 items on the questionnaire have a strong loading on one of the five factors above, providing evidence of construct validity (Bauman et al., 2008).

Bauman et al. (2008) used Cronbach's alpha to measure the internal consistency of each subscale. These values were: *Work with the victim* as .75; *Work with the bully* as .69; *Ignore the incident* as .70; *Enlist other adults* as .63; and *Discipline the bully* as .45. In the current study, reliabilities were also examined using Cronbach's alpha. These values were: *Work with the victim* as .76; *Work with the bully* as .67; *Ignore the incident* as .20; *Enlist other adults* as .64; and *Discipline the bully* as .65. These values all fell within an acceptable range with the exception of the *Ignore the incident* scale which had very little variability in its scores. For example, item 18 which read "I would ignore it" had no variability with all respondents saying "I definitely would not." The items on this scale did not correlate well with each other and results from this scale should be interpreted with caution.

In conclusion, this chapter summarizes the methodology used in this research by presenting information on the methods used for data collection and analysis including participant demographics, sampling approach, and research design. The survey instrument used, the procedures for administering the instrument, and the reliabilities for the composite scales are presented. The next chapter will present the findings of the current study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

As previously discussed, 189 guidance counsellors were administered the Handling Bullying Questionnaire in 274 schools in this province. A total of 94 guidance counsellors completed the survey. Data was analyzed through descriptive statistics and simple inferential techniques using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 16.0 (SPSS, 2007). This chapter presents the research findings in the current study including demographics; data on bullying programs and Positive Behaviour Supports (PBS); composite scale analysis; and other notable findings.

Hypotheses for the Current Study

This researcher hypothesized the following:

1. guidance counsellors would elect to *work with the victim, work with the bully, and enlist other adults*. Given the support for enlisting other adults in schools' anti-bullying programs discussed in this literature review, this scale should be well-supported in this study.
2. it is unlikely guidance counsellors would *ignore the incident*.
3. given guidance counsellors' therapeutic role, it is unlikely they would *discipline the bully*.
4. guidance counsellors would not respond differently to the questionnaire items regardless of school population, school location, or type of school.

5. guidance counsellors' age, sex, or education would not significantly impact on the above noted five composite scales.
6. presence of a bullying program and the practice of Positive Behaviour Supports would be negatively correlated with the *ignore the incident* scale as well as the *discipline the bully* scale but positively correlated with the *work with the victim*, *work with the bully*, and *enlist other adult* scales.

Demographics

Demographic data was collected and used for descriptive and analytical purposes. Descriptive, demographic information was collected using 11 questions. Five of these questions included: level of education; grades and courses taught; school population; number of students worked with on a daily basis; and population of community/town/city where school is located. Responses on the first two questions (i.e., level of education and grades and courses taught) were nominal data to help describe the sample population. Three questions in the demographic section (i.e., school population; number of students worked with on a daily basis; and population of community/town/city) were estimates given by counsellors with several respondents giving an approximate or range of numbers. Counsellors reported various educational backgrounds with all counsellors reporting a minimum of two degrees (i.e., at least one Bachelor and one Master's degree). Counsellors who indicated they had teaching duties taught various courses from Kindergarten to Grade 12 (e.g., Health, Home Economics, Career Development, English, Drama, Social Studies, and Core French). In addition, some counsellors indicated they had teaching responsibilities in Special Services and/or Special Education. School

populations ranged from 9 to 1,000 students where counsellors reported working with anywhere from 3 to 100 students per day. Some counsellors indicated that this number fluctuated, depending on the day and the circumstances of the day. Community/town/city population numbers varied from 50 to over 100,000.

The demographic table below shows a summary of the demographic findings. The sample was primarily female (70.2%, $n = 66$) with almost half of the sample falling in the 41-50 year age range (45.7%, $n = 43$). The years of experience in a guidance position was variable where most respondents indicated either 0-5 years (27.7%, $n = 26$) or 16-20 years (21.3%, $n = 20$). Sixty-seven percent ($n = 63$) of counsellors surveyed were in a full time guidance position indicating that most counsellors surveyed only had guidance duties in their respective schools. Over half of the respondent sample came from a rural setting (55.3%, $n = 52$). School type was variable where most respondents indicated they worked in a primary/elementary school (24.5%, $n = 23$) or a multigrade school (23.4%, $n = 22$). The least number of respondents reported working in a high school setting (9.6%, $n = 9$).

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Characteristic	N	% of Sample
Sex		
Male	20	21.3
Female	66	70.2
Missing	8	8.5
Age		
Under 30	4	4.3
31-40	23	24.5
41-50	43	45.7
51-60	19	20.2
61+	0	0
Missing	5	5.3
Years of Experience		
0-5	26	27.7
6-10	14	14.9
11-15	13	13.8
16-20	20	21.3
21-25	7	7.4
26+	6	6.4
Missing	8	8.5
Percent of Position*		
Full time guidance	63	67.0
Part time guidance + other	21	22.3
Part time guidance only	2	2.1
Missing	8	8.5
School Location		
Urban	28	29.8
Rural	52	55.3
Both	3	3.2
Missing	11	11.7
School Type**		
Primary/Elementary	23	24.5
Middle school	13	13.8
High school	9	9.6
All grade	17	18.1
Multigrade	22	23.4
Missing	10	10.6

*Percent of position refers to the time allocated to guidance duties in the guidance position. *Full time guidance* refers to a respondent with only guidance duties. *Part time*

guidance + other refers to guidance counsellors who spend a portion of their time in the guidance role but are also assigned other duties such as teaching. *Part time guidance only* refers to those counsellors who are in a guidance role in a part time capacity.

****School types were categorized by this researcher. *Primary/Elementary schools* were the following configurations: K-6; K-4; and K-3. *Middle schools* were the following configurations: 7-9; 7-8; 5-9; and 4-7. *High schools* included 10-12 and 9-12. *All grade schools* were K-12. *Multigrade schools* were: 8-12; 7-12; K-7; K-8; and K-9. Multigrade was also used as a designation given to guidance counsellors who indicated they were in more than one school at different levels. For example, one respondent indicated working in 3 schools (K-6, 7-12, and K-12).**

Bullying Programs and Positive Behaviour Supports

Counsellors were asked six survey questions on bullying programs and PBS.

Answers to four of these questions were summarized in SPSS using a frequency table (see table 3) while two survey items were descriptive and are summarized in the next section.

Statistical Summary of Four Survey Questions

Four survey questions required a yes/no response and are tallied in the table below. In summary, the majority of guidance counsellors who responded to this questionnaire reported that their schools have a bullying program (58.5%, $n = 55$) and more than half of counsellors surveyed reported receiving training in bullying (56.4%, $n = 53$). More than three-quarters of guidance counsellors in this study indicated they have had training in Positive Behaviour Supports (76.6%, $n = 72$) and 71.3% ($n = 67$) indicated that their school is currently implementing PBS.

Table 3. Responses to Bullying Programs and PBS Questionnaire Items

Questionnaire Item	N	Percent
Does your school have a bullying program?		
Yes	55	58.5
No	28	29.8
Missing	11	11.7
Have you received any formal training in bullying?		
Yes	53	56.4
No	30	31.9
Missing	11	11.7
Have you had any training in Positive Behaviour Supports?		
Yes	72	76.6
No	8	8.5
Not sure	3	3.2
Missing	11	11.7
Is your school currently implementing Positive Behaviour Supports?		
Yes	67	71.3
No	8	8.5
Not sure	7	7.4
Missing	12	12.8

Descriptive Summary of Two Survey Questions

In two survey items, counsellors were asked to indicate the name of their school's bullying program and the name of the bullying program(s) in which they had received training. When asked to indicate the name of the bullying program used in their school, 56 out of 94 counsellors (59.6%) responded naming one or several *programs; strategies; and resources*. Using the Ontario Ministry of Education's Registry of Bullying Prevention Programs (2010) as a basis for sanctioned bullying programs, the following

six programs were cited by counsellors as currently being implemented in schools in this province: Focus on Bullying; Roots of Empathy; Beyond the Hurt: Respect ED; Lion Quest; and Focus on Harassment and Intimidation. A small number of counsellors ($n = 4$) indicated use of an individualized bullying program specifically created for their school. Counsellors cited bullying strategies used in their schools such as: presentations and guest speakers; character education; pink t-shirt day; biweekly assemblies; teacher and student committees; peer counselling; buddy systems; conflict resolution; and classroom talks. Counsellors indicated the use of resources as part of their bullying programs, such as: Positive Behaviour Supports; Department of Education approved resources; Safe and Caring Schools Document; Peaceful Schools Membership; Be Cool Program; STRIVE (a program developed by the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary); Bully Boy and Gossip Girl; Bully Awareness Week; Bully Box; Bullying: Take Action; No Bullies Allowed; It's Not OK to Bully; Character Education; Respect Team; Volcano Club; Second Step; and Be Cool Program.

Counsellors were surveyed regarding any formal training they had received in bullying. On this survey item, 45 out of 94 counsellors (47.9%) responded by listing: training in *bullying programs* (as per the Registry of Bullying Prevention Programs, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010); training in *other bullying prevention programs and strategies*; and *general training*. Counsellors indicated receiving training on the same six *bullying programs* as listed above. These were: Focus on Bullying; Roots of Empathy; Beyond the Hurt: Respect ED; Lion Quest; and Focus on Harassment and Intimidation. *Other bullying prevention programs and strategies* cited were: PBS; Character Counts;

Safe and Caring Schools; Keys to Safer School Training on Bullying and Cyberbullying; STRIVE; Anti Violence; Peer Mediation Services; and Peaceful Schools International.

General training received included: cooperative discipline techniques; conflict resolution strategies; inservices and workshops at school professional development days; inservices through the Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors' and Psychologists' Association; university courses; information packages; and books.

Composite Analysis

The 22-item questionnaire was divided into 5 composite scales: *Ignore the incident* (items 2, 8, 10, 16, 18); *Work with the bully* (items 5, 9, 12, 19, 21); *Work with the victim* (items 6, 11, 17, 22); *Enlist other adults* (items 4, 13, 14, 15, 20); and *Discipline the bully* (items 1, 3, 7). The following analysis presents the mean scaled scores for each composite and the correlations between the composites.

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations of Composites and Correlations between Composites

COMPOSITE	Mean (\bar{X})	SD (σ)	N	Work with the bully	Work with the victim	Enlist other adults	Ignore the incident	Discipline the bully
Work with the bully	3.93	.61	73	1.00				
Work with the victim	3.35	.87	73	.368**	1.00			
Enlist other adults	4.10	.56	76	.527**	.308**	1.00		
Ignore the incident	1.23	.27	73	-.284*	.108	-.277*	1.00	
Discipline the bully	4.29	.71	76	.170	-.006	.500**	-.226	1.00

*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Note: Likert Scale ratings of 1 to 5 as: 1 = I definitely would not; 2 = I probably would not; 3 = I'm unsure; 4 = I probably would; and 5 = I definitely would

Mean Scaled Scores of the Composites

In this study, guidance counsellors reported being least likely to *ignore the incident* (mean = 1.23, SD = .27) and most likely to either *discipline the bully* (mean = 4.29, SD = .71) or *enlist other adults* (mean = 4.10, SD = .56). These results are consistent with Bauman et al.'s (2008) study which also found school counsellors least likely to *ignore the incident* (mean = 1.25, SD = .34) and most likely to either *discipline the bully* (mean = 4.27, SD = .69) or *enlist other adults* (mean = 4.14, SD = .61) (see table 5). Counsellors in the current study generally felt that *ignoring the incident* was unacceptable, a strategy consistent with hypothesis 2. Given the support for involving adults in bullying programs, this researcher hypothesized the *enlisting other adults*

strategy would be endorsed by counsellors in this province (hypothesis 1). However, *disciplining the bully* was not hypothesized by this researcher as a strategy that guidance counsellors would have endorsed (hypothesis 3).

Guidance counsellors also endorsed *working with the bully* (mean = 3.93, SD = .61) and *working with the victim* (mean = 3.35, SD = .87) with both mean scores falling above the neutral point. This suggests that counsellors would endorse *working with the bully* and *working with the victim* as strategies but not as strongly as they would endorse *disciplining the bully* and *enlisting other adults*. These results are consistent with Bauman et al.'s (2008) results which found that school counsellors were also hovering around the neutral point for both of these scales, *working with the victim* (mean = 3.33, SD = .83) and *working with the bully* (mean = 3.65, SD = .69) (see table 5). These results are consistent with hypothesis 1.

Although the mean score for the *work with the victim* scale was above the neutral point (mean = 3.35), the standard deviation on this scale was the largest of all five composites (SD = .87). Therefore, this scale shows the greatest variability in counsellor responses. These results are consistent with Bauman et al.'s (2008) study which also had the largest standard deviation on the *work with the victim* scale (mean = 3.33, SD = .83) (see table 5).

Table 5. Composite Scale Comparison of Means and Standard Deviations for Bauman et al.'s (2008) study and the Current Study

Composite	Bauman et al.	Current Study
Discipline the Bully	Mean 4.27 SD .69	Mean 4.29 SD .71
Enlist other adults	Mean 4.14 SD .61	Mean 4.10 SD .56
Work with victim	Mean 3.33 SD .83	Mean 3.35 SD .87
Work with bully	Mean 3.65 SD .69	Mean 3.93 SD .61
Ignore the incident	Mean 1.25 SD .34	Mean 1.23 SD .27

Correlations Between Composites

Several significant correlations between the composite scales are also noteworthy. There was a moderate positive correlation between the *work with the bully* composite and the *work with the victim* composite ($.368, \leq .01$, two tailed). As well, there were moderate to strong positive correlations between *enlisting other adults* and *working with the bully* ($.527, \leq .01$, two tailed), *working with the victim* ($.308, \leq .01$, two tailed), and *disciplining the bully* ($.500, \leq .01$, two tailed).

There was a moderate negative correlation found between the composites, *working with the bully* and *ignoring the incident* ($-.284, \leq .05$, two tailed) and *enlisting other adults* and *ignoring the incident* ($-.277, \leq .05$, two tailed). This researcher hypothesized that guidance counsellors would be unlikely to *ignore the incident* (hypothesis 2).

Contrary to hypothesis 5, the author found a significant correlation between sex and *working with the victim* where female counsellors were more likely than male counsellors to endorse *working with the victim* (.254, $\leq .05$, two tailed).

Bullying Programs and Training in Bullying

The author was interested in examining whether the presence or absence of a bullying program or training in bullying had any relationship with the way guidance counsellors would handle bullying (i.e., in this study, the five composite scales noted above). Tables 6, 7, and 8 below examine these relationships and show no statistically significant correlations.

Table 6. Spearman's Rho Correlations for Bullying Program, Training in Bullying and 5 Composites

Composite	Work with Bully	Ignore	Work with Victim	Enlist Adults	Discipline Bully
Bully Program					
Spearman's	-.087	-.006	-.045	-.065	-.031
Sig(2-tailed)	.465	.957	.703	.577	.788
N	73	73	73	76	76
Training in Bullying					
Spearman's	-.126	.097	-.015	-.156	-.206
Sig(2-tailed)	.290	.415	.900	.179	.074
N	73	73	73	76	76

*correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 7. ANOVA for Bullying Program and 5 Composites

Composite	df	F	Sig.
<i>Work with bully</i>	72	.481	.490
<i>Ignore</i>	72	.000	.988
<i>Work with victim</i>	72	.004	.948
<i>Enlist adults</i>	75	.410	.524
<i>Discipline bully</i>	75	.014	.906

Table 8. ANOVA for Training in Bullying and 5 Composites

Composite	df	F	Sig.
<i>Work with bully</i>	72	.546	.463
<i>Ignore</i>	72	2.089	.153
<i>Work with victim</i>	72	.036	.851
<i>Enlist adults</i>	75	2.384	.127
<i>Discipline bully</i>	75	2.365	.128

Positive Behavioural Supports

The author was interested in examining PBS training and PBS implementation, and typical ways of handling bullying incidents (i.e., in this study, the five composite scales noted above). As seen in Table 9, there were no statistically significant findings when PBS training (i.e., yes versus no) was compared to the responses on each of the five composite scales.

Table 9. ANOVA for PBS Training and 5 Composites

Composite	df	F	Sig.
<i>Work with bully</i>	72	.026	.974
<i>Ignore</i>	72	2.155	.124
<i>Work with victim</i>	72	1.338	.269
<i>Enlist adults</i>	75	.889	.416
<i>Discipline bully</i>	75	2.382	.099

The author then examined PBS implementation (i.e., yes, no, not sure) and the five composite scales. Using a oneway ANOVA (see table 10), there was a statistically significant difference found between guidance counsellors who indicated their schools were implementing PBS and the *disciplining the bully* composite, $F(2,73) = 8.346$, p value = .001. Because of the significant F-value, a posthoc analysis was used to identify where the significance existed. According to the posthoc analysis, there was a statistically significant difference between those who reported 'yes' to implementing PBS in their school (mean: 4.437, SD: .592) and those 'unsure' of implementing PBS (mean: 3.476, SD: .604) on the *discipline the bully* composite. Out of interest, the researcher opted to collapse the 'unsure' of implementing PBS and the 'not' implementing PBS levels of the PBS variable. The rationale here was that if a participant was unsure if his/her school was or was not implementing PBS then it would be unlikely the program was being followed all that stringently by the individual guidance counsellor (or it is unlikely the guidance counsellor is all that involved with the PBS program). Results of this ANOVA suggested a statistically significant difference between the counsellors who

indicated their schools were implementing PBS versus those who were not, or were unsure, if their schools were implementing PBS on the *disciplining the bully* composite, $F(1, 74) = 14.840, p = .000$ (see table 11). This suggested that guidance counsellors who indicated their schools were implementing PBS were more likely to report they would *discipline the bully* when compared to guidance counsellors who indicated their schools were not implementing PBS or were not sure if their schools were implementing PBS.

Table 10. ANOVA for PBS Implementation and 5 Composites (Using yes, no and not sure groups)

Composite	df	F	Sig.
<i>Work with bully</i>	72	.878	.420
<i>Ignore</i>	71	.765	.469
<i>Work with victim</i>	71	.273	.762
<i>Enlist adults</i>	74	1.942	.151
<i>Discipline bully</i>	75	8.346	.001

Table 11. ANOVA for PBS Implementation and Discipline the Bully Scale (Using yes and no + not sure groups)

Composite	df	F	Sig.
<i>Discipline bully</i>	75	14.840	.000

Conclusion

This chapter presented the results found in the current study including demographics; data on bullying programs and Positive Behaviour Supports (PBS); composite scale analysis; and other general findings. In summary, guidance counsellors reported being least likely to *ignore the incident* and most likely to either *discipline the bully* or *enlist other adults*. Guidance counsellors also endorsed *working with the bully* and *working with the victim* with both mean scores falling above the neutral point. Several significant correlations were noted between composites; however, the presence of a bullying program had little impact on strategy choice among guidance counsellor participants in the current study. Results will be discussed further in the next section.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

A 12-year-old student is being repeatedly teased and called unpleasant names by another, more powerful, student who has successfully persuaded other students to avoid the targeted person as much as possible. As a result, the victim of this behaviour is feeling angry, miserable, and often isolated.

This was the verbal-relational bullying scenario presented to guidance counsellors at the beginning of the Handling Bullying Questionnaire (HBQ) in this study. This scenario contains elements of direct and indirect bullying and has the three components common to most definitions of bullying: deliberate intention to harm; repetition of the bullying behaviour over time; and a power imbalance between the bully and the victim (Olweus, 1993). Bullying should be considered from a dynamic systems perspective where it occurs in the context of a social system (Pepler et al., 1999) where the home, community, and school are integral parts. The current study focused on the school environment, specifically how guidance counsellors would handle the above noted bullying scenario.

This chapter discusses the results presented in the previous chapter. This chapter will link the findings to other research and discuss their importance by: examining how demographics may have influenced guidance counsellor responses; analyzing the results from the composite scales (i.e., *working with the victim*, *working with the bully*, *ignoring the incident*, *enlisting other adults*, and *disciplining the bully*); discussing how bullying programs and PBS implementation connected to guidance counsellor responses; and

outlining implications of the present study for counsellors in this province and beyond. This chapter will also present alternate measures to address bullying in schools and discuss the limitations of this study.

Demographic Variables and Guidance Counsellor Responses

Factors such as: school climate, social dynamics, and perceptions of school staff can play a role in school bullying (Macklem, 2003). School demographic factors such as school location and school population have not been shown to significantly affect the levels of bullying in schools (Olweus, 1993); however, there is evidence to show that bullying decreases as students enter higher grades (Olweus, 1993). In this study, neither school location (i.e., urban vs. rural) or school type (i.e., primary/elementary, middle school, high school, multi grade, all grade) affected how guidance counsellors responded to the current bullying situation.

It was hypothesized that guidance counsellors' age and sex would not significantly impact the guidance counsellor responses on the five composite scales. Age was not significantly correlated to any of the five composite scales, indicating that the age of the guidance counsellor was unrelated to their responses on the scales in this sample. However, the sex of the guidance counsellor affected how they would respond to this bullying scenario with females more likely than males to endorse *working with the victim* as a strategy.

Guidance Counsellor Strategies for Handling Bullying: Analysis of the Five Composites

The Handling Bullying Questionnaire has a five-factor structure (i.e., *ignore the incident, enlist other adults, work with the victim, work with the bully, discipline the bully*) which is consistent with research on how guidance counsellors may handle a bullying incident (Bauman et al., 2008).

Ignore the Incident

The mean scores presented in the previous chapter showed that counsellors were inclined to take some kind of action when presented with this verbal-relational incident of bullying and were unlikely to *ignore the incident*. Counsellors in the current study generally felt that *ignoring the incident* was unacceptable, a strategy consistent with the hypothesis proposed at the beginning of this study and consistent with Bauman et al.'s (2008) study.

The author of this study did not find any literature on how students perceive the effectiveness of guidance counsellor intervention in a bullying situation. However, there is research to support that students do not perceive teachers as intervening frequently nor consistently to stop bullying behaviour (Craig et al., 2000). In addition, school counsellors, because of their training and background may perceive relational bullying more seriously than their teacher colleagues (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007). The Department of Education in this province recently compiled a document entitled *Guidelines for Comprehensive School Guidance Programming* (Government of NL, 2010). According to these guidelines, a comprehensive school guidance program targets

personal/social development, educational needs, and career development of students. In addition, it emphasizes the role of all staff members and highlights the importance of a school counsellor as someone who "brings a level of expertise to a school team that can enhance both the development and the implementation of a guidance program" (p.2). One of the goals of the school guidance program is to "promote preventative and developmental programs on a school wide basis to such topics as violence prevention, bullying, substance abuse, etc" (p.4). Given the guidance counsellor's role in bullying prevention and programming, it is unlikely they would ignore a bullying incident.

In addition, guidance counsellors in this province may follow the same Code of Ethics as teachers which states that they "accept that the intellectual, moral, physical, and social welfare of his/her pupils is the chief aim and end of education" (Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, 1974, p. 33). Some guidance counsellors follow the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists (2001) which states that psychologists "Promote and protect the welfare of clients" and "Avoid doing harm to clients" (Sinclair & Pettifor, 2001, p.61). In addition, the Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association's Code of Ethics states: "Counsellors have a primary relationship to respect the integrity and promote the welfare of their clients" (Sheppard & Schulz, 2007, p.7). Therefore, to ignore a bullying incident would not only contradict guidance programming, but would also be unethical.

Enlist Other Adults

Counsellors in this study were likely to *enlist other adults* when presented with the bullying scenario on the questionnaire. *Enlisting other adults* is a strategy endorsed in most bullying programs according to the Ontario Ministry of Education, Registry of Bullying Prevention Programs (2010). Bullying research emphasizes the importance of parental involvement (Eslea & Smith, 2000), administrative support (Plog et al., 2010), teacher involvement (Craig et al., 2010), and counsellor involvement (Bauman, 2008; Diamanduros et al., 2008; Furlong et al., 2000; Pollack, 2006). From a systemic perspective, the need for bullying awareness and behaviour change extends beyond the student and involves peers, teachers, parents and the broader community (Craig et al., 2010). It is widely accepted that bullying will not stop without the intervention of adults (Beran, 2006; Craig et al., 2007; Craig et al., 2010) and some bullying programs are thought to be effective only because they involve the educating of the school personnel and parents first (Pollack, 2006). Enlisting the help and support of other adults is critical if schools, teachers, principals, guidance counsellors, and the surrounding community want to address the bullying issue.

Discipline the Bully

Imposing sanctions for the bully is consistent and widely endorsed under Olweus' anti-bullying program (Olweus, 1993). The strong endorsement of the *discipline the bully* scale by guidance counsellors in this province is consistent with Bauman et al.'s (2008) results where a sample of 735 American counsellors and teachers also supported

imposing sanctions for the bully. In that study, Bauman et al. proposed that *disciplining the bully* by punitive measures may be "justifiable in cases of high severity bullying" (p.847) but the scenario presented in the HIBQ was one of low severity and suggested that "U.S. teachers and counsellors appear less familiar with non-punitive strategies" (p.847).

Importantly, because different kinds of interventions have claimed the same levels of success we do not know, for example, if punishing the bully is any better than using counselling methods (Rigby, 2008). *Disciplining the bully* was not hypothesized by this researcher as a strategy that guidance counsellors would have endorsed due to their therapeutic role in schools. According to the *Guidelines for Comprehensive School Guidance Programming* (Government of NL, 2010), one of its' goals is to respond "to students' needs for individual or group counselling in order to support educational progress, career development, and personal/social growth" (p. 4) and one of the roles of the school guidance counsellor is "to promote and provide a range of individual/group counselling and group guidance services in the educational, career and personal/social areas" (p.32). Given this role, *disciplining the bully* may be considered a conflict of roles and may place the guidance counsellor in a dual role. For example, in many schools in this province, guidance counsellors are expected to perform hallway supervision during recess and lunch. In this unstructured time, guidance counsellors may have to act as disciplinarians. The dual role of counsellor and disciplinarian is problematic and best summarized by Remley and Herlihy (2005) who said: "It would be unreasonable to expect students to trust and confide in a counsellor who assigned them to detention or

reported their misbehavior to the principal" (p.206). The dual role of guidance counsellors will be further discussed in a subsequent section.

Work with the Bully/Work with the Victim

Guidance counsellors also endorsed *working with the bully* and *working with the victim* with both mean scores falling above the neutral point. This suggests that counsellors would endorse *working with the bully* and *working with the victim* as strategies but not as strongly as they would endorse the previous two strategies (*discipline the bully* and *enlist other adults*). These results are consistent with Bauman et al.'s (2008) results which found that school counsellors were hovering around the neutral point for both of these scales, *working with the victim* and *working with the bully*.

The high scores on the *work with the bully* and *work with the victim* scales may suggest counsellor training and educational backgrounds have influenced their interventions when working with bullies and victims. In a study by Jacobsen and Bauman (2007), it was found that school counsellors may perceive relational bullying as more serious and have a high degree of empathy for the victims (Jacobsen & Bauman). This suggests that the guidance counsellors' skill set in individual counselling, group counselling and empathetic listening may contribute to how they handle bullying situations. According to Bauman et al. (2008), counsellors "focus on the personal/social domain in addition to assisting with academic areas" (p.850).

In a recent study by Sherer and Nickerson (2010), school psychologists reported the most frequently used anti-bullying strategies in their schools related to working with

the bullies and victims. In the same study, school psychologists reported several anti-bullying strategies being used in their schools such as: talking with bullies following bullying incidents; using disciplinary consequences such as suspension and expulsion for bullies; having a talk with victims following a bullying incident; and individual counselling with bullies in the areas of empathy and anger management. In a study of the perceptions of school counsellors' working with student high-risk behaviour in this province, Harris and Jeffrey (2010) found that participants reported more formal training in the prevention, assessment, and intervention of bullying compared to other high-risk behaviour (e.g., suicide attempts, self mutilation, drug use, eating disorders). In that same study, it was found that counsellors' highest levels of perceived preparation, motivation, and effectiveness was in dealing with school bullying in comparison to other high-risk behaviours.

Interestingly, although the mean score for the *working with the victim* scale in the current study was above the neutral point, the standard deviation on this scale was the largest of all five composites, indicating the greatest variability in counsellor responses to questionnaire items on that scale. As with Bauman et al.'s (2008) study, this suggests that respondents had the least agreement about their role in *working with the victim*.

In analyzing the five composites, guidance counsellors in this province were unlikely to *ignore the incident* and most likely to *discipline the bully* and *enlist other adults*. Guidance counsellors also endorsed *working with the victim* and *working with the bully*.

Bullying Programs and Guidance Counsellor Responses

Of the 94 respondents, 58.5% indicated there was a school bullying program in their school while 29.8% indicated not having a school bullying program and 11.7% did not respond to this question. Just over half of the guidance counsellors surveyed (i.e., 56.4%) indicated receiving formal training in bullying. There were no significant correlations found between the presence of a bullying program or bullying training and how guidance counsellors responded to items on the five composite scales. This indicates that neither the presence of a school bullying program or training in bullying was associated with how guidance counsellors responded to the bullying incident presented on the Handling Bullying Questionnaire.

The Department of Education in this province endorses the use of two school bullying programs. *Focus on Bullying* (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1998) is a bullying program originating from the British Columbia school system and is used as a prevention program for elementary schools in this province. *Focus on Harassment and Intimidation* (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2001), also used in the British Columbia school system, is a bullying program for use in secondary schools in this province. However, the presence of a bullying program in the school did not significantly correlate with scores on any of the five composites (i.e., *ignoring the incident*, *disciplining the bully*, *enlisting other adults*, *working with the victim*, or *working with the bully*).

These findings were in contrast to Bauman et al.'s (2008) study which found the presence of a school policy on bullying was associated with lower scores on the *ignore the incident* scale and higher scores on the *enlisting other adults* scale. Bauman et al.'s study also found that participants who indicated the presence of a specific anti-bullying program or had received anti-bullying training were less likely to *ignore the incident*. Other findings have indicated that counsellors with anti-bullying training rated relational bullying as more serious than counsellors who did not have such training and counsellors who worked in schools with anti-bullying programs were more likely to intervene in incidents involving relational bullying than counsellors who worked in a school without such programs (Jacobsen & Bauman, 2007).

Counsellors in this province do not seem to be influenced by the presence or absence of a school bullying program in responding to a particular bullying incident. Importantly, it is possible that if the *ignore the incident* scale had been more reliable in the current study it may have resulted in a finding that would have been more consistent with the Bauman et al. (2008) study. Given that almost half of school psychologists in one study considered anti-bullying policies ineffective (Sherer & Nickerson, 2010), and the possibility that bullying intervention programs influence attitudes and self-perceptions rather than anti-bullying behaviours (Merrell et al., 2008), it is possible that guidance counsellors' responses to bullying situations are influenced by a complex array of factors, including school anti-bullying policies, programs, or training.

Positive Behaviour Supports (PBS) and Guidance Counsellor Responses

PBS is an approach to help schools establish learning environments which actively teach appropriate behaviours and prevent the occurrence of problem behaviours (Sugai & Horner, 2008). There is widespread support for the PBS model in the literature. For example, a recent study by Sherer and Nickerson (2010) showed that school psychologists perceived school-wide positive behaviour support plans as the most effective anti-bullying practice. In addition, a longitudinal study of student discipline problems and academic performance of over 600 students at an American urban elementary school found student discipline problems decreased and academic performance improved following PBS intervention (Luiselli et al., 2005). As a means to provide support to schools encountering behavioural challenges in this province, the Department of Education (2006) published a resource entitled *Meeting Behavioural Challenges: Creating Safe and Caring Learning Environments* which endorsed the implementation of PBS as an approach that "enhances the capacity to deal with behaviour issues" and "promotes a proactive school-wide approach to positive discipline that is based on the assumption that desirable behaviour should be taught and reinforced" (p.1). At the time of implementation, PBS training was offered to guidance counsellors in this province.

As reported in the results section, there was no statistical significance found between counsellors who indicated they had or had not received training in PBS and how they handled the verbal-relational bullying scenario in this study (i.e., the five composite scales). However, in examining PBS implementation and the five composite scales, there

was a statistically significant difference between the counsellors who indicated they were implementing PBS in their school versus those who were not, or were unsure, if they were implementing PBS and the *disciplining the bully* composite. This suggested that guidance counsellors who indicated their schools were implementing PBS were more likely to report they would *discipline the bully* when compared to guidance counsellors who indicated their schools were not implementing PBS or were not sure if their schools were implementing PBS.

Implications for Counsellors

In this province, guidance counsellors manage the school guidance program and provide professional expertise in areas such as counselling (e.g., personal/social, career); assessment; preventative/developmental programs (e.g., conflict resolution, bullying, self esteem, parenting skills); and consultation (e.g., referrals, case conferences, classroom management) (Government of NL, 2010). Guidance counsellors play a critical role in the prevention and resolution of bullying issues in schools. Through the delivery of preventative programs in bullying and conflict resolution, guidance counsellors help students resolve conflicts and develop respectful relationships. Bullies and victims can benefit from supportive counselling (Clarke and Kiselica, 1997) and guidance counsellors can provide these services.

School counsellors, because of their educational background and training, can offer an alternate perspective on bullying in schools. Guidance counsellors may perceive bullying incidents with more empathy and be more willing to work with the bully and the

victim through individual and group counselling. As this study has shown, counsellors are likely to enlist the help of other adults when dealing with bullying, a key element in most anti-bullying programs.

Some of the literature suggests school counsellors take a leadership role in reducing bullying in schools (Bauman, 2008; Furlong et al., 2000; McKellar & Sherwin, 2003). The research shows that the best outcomes from anti-bullying programs were obtained in schools who had the strongest commitment to the program and who typically had a staff member coordinate the program under strong administrative support. Diamanduros et al. (2008) saw the school psychologist as being in a unique position to address the issue of cyberbullying in schools by promoting awareness of cyberbullying and developing intervention and prevention programs to address the problem of cyberbullying. Other research has emphasized the counsellor's role in dealing with bullies who are heterosexist (i.e., believe that heterosexuality is superior to other forms of sexuality) by promoting awareness of homophobic discrimination in schools (Pollack, 2006). The promotion of respectful relationships and appreciation of differences are important elements in a proactive approach to reducing bullying in schools. As stated previously, one of the goals of the school guidance program is to promote preventative programs on a school wide basis on topics such as violence prevention and bullying. Given the guidance counsellor's role in the support of the school guidance program, bullying prevention and programming is one of the many social and developmental areas where guidance counsellor expertise is essential.

However, guidance counsellors may find themselves in a dual role in the prevention and resolution of bullying behaviour in schools.

Dual Role

By virtue of the work environment, school counsellors may face ethical dilemmas because of the multiple roles they play and the inherent conflicts in these roles (Remley & Herlihy, 2005). For example, the school counsellor who does hallway supervision may have to act as a disciplinarian should the need arise. According to Kitchener (1988), the ethics of dual role relationships are one of the most troublesome issues in professional ethics. Counsellors may find themselves in a dual role in the school, possibly wearing 'many hats' as counsellor, teacher, and administrator.

In small schools, the student population does not warrant the appointment of a full-time guidance counsellor, so it is common for a guidance counsellor to have teaching duties in these settings. In the current study, 21 out of 94 respondents (i.e., 22%) indicated they had teaching duties. As a teacher, counsellors may have to act as disciplinarians (e.g., giving detentions) and evaluators (e.g., giving grades on course work). Evaluative responsibilities can create a power differential between counsellor and client/student (Kitchener & Harding, 1990). Power differentials along with incompatible expectations and divergent responsibilities are the factors used to determine the risk of harm in a dual relationship (Kitchener & Harding). It is not difficult to comprehend the negative effect a power differential can have on the establishment of a healthy therapeutic relationship between counsellor and student.

In the present study, 55% of counsellors surveyed indicated they worked in a rural area. In a rural setting, it may be difficult for counsellors to avoid the dual role of counsellor/administrator. From the author's own experience, guidance counsellors in smaller schools may be asked to take on an administrative role in the absence of the principal and vice-principal. According to role theory, conflict occurs when the expectations associated with one role require the person to act in a way that is incompatible with the other role (Kitchener, 1988). In the principal role, the counsellor would act as disciplinarian; whereas in a counsellor role, he/she would act as a student advocate. According to one American study of the dual role of counsellor/administrator in a rural setting, students found it difficult to confide in the principal/counsellor "because the students who need counselling the most also appear to be those in trouble with the principal" (Engelking, 1990, p.9). In the case of the counsellor who acts as an administrator, there are ethical conflicts between the obligations of each role.

Given the strong endorsement of the *discipline the bully* scale, the implications for counsellors in dual roles such as counsellor/teacher and counsellor/administrator is worthy of future study.

Also worthy of future study is the examination of alternate approaches to addressing bullying in schools. Throughout the author's research, two such approaches have stood out: restorative justice and the No Blame Approach.

Bullying Programs

Bullying is an antisocial behaviour resorted to by young people with inadequate or inappropriate social skills and we must respond in a way which will be helpful to their learning of improved behaviour. Increasing their anxiety and alienation from us is not likely to work (Maines & Robinson, 1994, p.4)

There is a plethora of bullying intervention programs but there is also debate as to the efficacy of such programs. Some research shows that some interventions may make the problem worse if they are not evaluated and coordinated (Craig & Pepler, 2007) while other research suggests that it is better to have an anti-bullying program than to not have one at all (Craig et al., 2010). Currently in this province, schools use the *Focus on Bullying* (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 1998) and *Focus on Intimidation and Harassment* (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2001) resources. While it is beyond the scope of this research to examine the effectiveness of these or any other bullying program, this topic is worthy of future study.

In general, bullying research has told us that reductions in bullying are achieved more consistently in younger grades; different kinds of interventions have claimed the same levels of success; and when interventions are implemented with strong school support, outcomes are better (Rigby, 2008). In the present study, almost 60% of guidance counsellors surveyed were able to identify anti-bullying programs, strategies and resources used in their schools and while the efficacy of these interventions and programs is beyond the scope of this research, at least some guidance counsellors in this province feel effective in handling bullying, especially in relation to perceptions of effectiveness of addressing other types of high-risk student behaviour (Harris & Jeffrey, 2010).

Approaches to bullying and school discipline such as restorative justice (Moersion, 2002; Wachtel, 1999) and the No Blame Approach (Maines & Robinson, 1994) seek to resolve conflict by avoiding blame and punishment. Instead, these approaches restore relationships within the school and the community.

Restorative Justice

Based on the fundamental need of humans to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance, restorative justice moves away from assigning blame to managing behaviour by finding a mutually agreeable way to move forward (Wearmouth, McKinney, & Gilyan, 2007) and to respond to wrongdoing by focusing on relationships rather than punishment (Varnham, 2005). Restorative practices are authoritative and reintegrative, emphasizing high control and high support while disapproving wrongdoing but upholding student integrity (Wachtel, 1999). Implementing restorative justice in schools requires a paradigm shift from the 'retributive justice' system to a 'restorative justice' system (Hopkins, 2002) where, for example, dealing with conflict does not focus on getting to the bottom of the matter and finding out who is to blame but focuses on how to problem solve and mutually explore acceptable ways to move forward (Morrison, 2006).

Restorative justice emphasizes the nature of social relationships where bullying and victimization are seen as "behaviours (that) signal the breakdown of social relationships" (Morrison, 2002). According to Morrison (2006), bullying and restorative justice are a good fit where "bullying has been defined as the systematic abuse of power and restorative justice seeks to transform power imbalances that affect social

relationships" (p.372). Bullying and victimization can cause alienation, disconnection from the school, and shame (Morrison, 2006) where schools use punitive measures to do things "to" the student rather than "with" the student (Wachtel, 1999). Suspension and expulsion from school for inappropriate behaviour (e.g., bullying) may alienate and isolate the student (Morrison, 2006), putting them on the fringe of society.

Some of the elements of good restorative practices that can be used to change inappropriate student behaviours are: foster awareness (i.e., let the offending student become aware of the feelings of others); avoid scolding or lecturing (i.e., to prevent the offending student from acting defensively); involve students actively (i.e., to help the offending student decide how to repair the harm done); accept ambiguity (i.e., not assign fault); separate the deed from the doer (i.e., separate the behaviour from the person); and see every instance of wrongdoing and conflict as an opportunity to learn (i.e., help students learn from their mistakes) (Wachtel, 1999).

In order to be effective, restorative practices must be a whole school approach with the philosophy of restorative practices engrained in the school culture. Supporters of restorative justice "believe that restorative practices in schools can transform existing approaches to relationships and behaviour management" (Morrison, 2006, p.148).

No Blame Approach

The No Blame Approach emphasizes the development of values such as: empathy, consideration, and unselfishness to help the perpetrator change his/her behaviour, but at the same time, not allocate blame. The No Blame Approach is a seven

step process: interview the victim; convene a meeting with the students involved; explain the problem; share responsibility; ask a group of students including the bully and victim for their ideas on how to solve the problem; leave it up to the group; and meet them again (Maines & Robinson, 1994).

The No Blame Approach harnesses the power of the bystanders and allows the victim to express how he/she feels while giving a group of students the opportunity to problem solve by developing a solution to the bullying problem (Maines & Robinson, 1994). This approach puts the emphasis on the victim's feelings and involves having the bully examine how their actions have affected the victim (Demko, 1996). Like restorative justice, the No Blame approach is a whole school approach which rejects punitive ways for dealing with bullying behaviour and focuses on how the bully's behaviour has affected the victim. Often in schools, we treat a bullying situation with feelings of frustration and anger toward the bully and sympathy for the victim, but the No Blame approach aims not to bring the bully to justice but to change the bully's behaviour (Maines & Robinson). The program is based on the development of "higher values" such as empathy, consideration, unselfishness (Maines & Robinson).

In conclusion, guidance counsellors have a key role to play in bullying intervention and prevention in schools. Bullying programs (e.g., *Focus on Bullying* and *Focus on Harassment and Intimidation*) and Positive Behaviour Supports can be used to prevent and intervene in bullying situations. Alternative methods such as restorative justice and the No Blame approach may also be used.

Study Limitations

This study was based on a published questionnaire by Bauman, Righy and Hoppa (2008). Even though it may not be considered a limitation in this study, it is important to note that participants were presented with a bullying scenario, but the term 'bullying' was not defined. Without a definition preceding the scenario, whether or not it constituted a case of bullying was left up to the participant's own discretion. In addition, item #13 of this questionnaire was rephrased from Bauman et al.'s study which read "I would ask the school counsellor to intervene" to "I would ask the student's teacher to intervene" in the current study.

There are additional limitations in the current study. First, the reliabilities fell within an acceptable range with the exception of the *ignore the incident* scale which had very little variability in its scores. For example, item #18 which read "I would ignore it" had no variability with all respondents saying "I definitely would not." Results from this scale should be interpreted with caution. Second, there were small numbers of participants in certain variable groups (e.g., those not implementing PBS), reducing the power within such analyses. Third, like Bauman et al.'s (2008) study, this study is based on what counsellors thought they might do given this scenario of verbal-relational bullying. Thus, it is based on counsellors' perceptions/beliefs versus actual behaviour. As well, it is not advisable to generalize these findings to other types of bullying or to every type of bullying situation. Fourth, it is important to note that PBS is implemented by all professionals in the school including teachers and administrators. The current study, however, surveyed only the school's guidance counsellor regarding PBS. Lastly,

the response rate of the present study was 49.7% with 94 out of 189 guidance counsellors in this province responding to the questionnaire. In addition, data that was "missing" is noted by this researcher where as few as five or as many as twenty participants did not respond to some questionnaire items.

In conclusion, this chapter discusses the findings of the study, "Newfoundland and Labrador guidance counsellors' strategies for handling bullying." The purpose of this chapter was to link the findings of the current research to the literature by discussing how demographics influenced guidance counsellor responses; analyzing the results from the composite scale analysis; discussing how bullying programs and PBS implementation connected to guidance counsellor responses; and outlining implications of the present study for counsellors in this province. This chapter also presented alternate measures to address bullying in schools and discussed the limitations of the current study.

Study Conclusions

In the current study, "Newfoundland and Labrador guidance counsellors' strategies for handling bullying" the researcher sought to answer the question: how do guidance counsellors in this province handle a specific incident of verbal-relational bullying? Using a questionnaire published by Bauman et al. (2008), guidance counsellors answered questions based on a verbal-relational bullying incident where responses to the incident were classified along five independent composites (i.e., *ignore the incident*, *work with the bully*, *work with the victim*, *enlist other adults*, and *discipline the bully*).

Counsellors were also asked to respond to questions relating to demographics, bullying programs and positive behaviour supports.

In analyzing the five composites, guidance counsellors in this province were unlikely to *ignore the incident* and most likely to *discipline the bully* and *enlist other adults*. Guidance counsellors also endorsed *working with the victim* and *working with the bully*.

Several significant correlations were noted between composites; however, the presence of a bullying program had little impact on strategy choice among guidance counsellor participants in the current study.

Guidance counsellors in this province play a critical role in the prevention and resolution of bullying issues in schools. Their expertise contributes substantially to the school environment. However, the dual roles that guidance counsellors may experience in this province is worthy of future study.

The efficacy of bullying intervention programs is beyond the scope of this research, but alternative approaches to discipline and bullying issues such as restorative justice and the No Blame approach may be worthy of future study.

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APPENDIX A

Handling Bullying Questionnaire

Demographic Information. Please answer the questions below.

1. Age: ☐ under 30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51-60 ☐ 61 +

2. Education (please list degrees including major and minor area of study; university obtained from; and date completed):

3. Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female

4. Number of years of experience in position (as a Guidance Counsellor):

☐ 0-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26 +

5. % of Guidance Position:

☐ Full Time (100% Guidance) ☐ Part time (Guidance with other duties e.g., teaching)

☐ Part Time (Guidance only)

5b. Grades and courses taught, if applicable (please list):

School Information. Please answer the questions below.

1. Location of school: ☐ Urban ☐ Rural ☐ Both

2. Approximate population of community/town/city where school is located:

3. Type of school (e.g., K-6, K-12, 9-12

etc.): _____

4. Total number of students at your school (approximately):

5. Approximate number of students you work with on a daily basis:

6. Does your school have a bullying program?

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please indicate the name(s) of the program(s):

7. Have you received any formal training in bullying? (This would include workshops, in servicing, etc.)

☐ Yes ☐ No If yes, please indicate the name(s) of the program(s): _____

8. Have you had any training in "Positive Behaviour Supports?"

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

9. Is your school currently implementing "Positive Behaviour Supports?"

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Handling Bullying. Please read the scenario below and check the box that is closest to what you think you would do on the next page. Please check only one box for each option. What is done often depends on the circumstances in which the bullying takes place, and its severity. Sometimes it is difficult to generalize but in answering the questions indicate what you *might* do given the scenario below.

Counsellors who work in more than one school are asked to base their responses on the school in which they spend the majority of their time.

Imagine the following scenario:

A 12-year-old student is being repeatedly teased and called unpleasant names by another, more powerful, student who has successfully persuaded other students to avoid the targeted person as much as possible. As a result, the victim of this behaviour is feeling angry, miserable, and often isolated.

Options	I definitely would	I probably would	I'm unsure	I probably would not	I definitely would not
1. I would insist that the bully "cut it out"					
2. I would treat the matter lightly					
3. I would make sure the bully was suitably punished					
4. I would discuss the matter with my colleagues at school					
5. I would convene a meeting of students, including the bully, tell them what was happening, and ask them to suggest ways we could improve the situation					
6. I would tell the victim to stand up to the bully					
7. I would make it clear to the bully that his/her behaviour would not be tolerated					
8. I would leave it for someone else to sort out					
9. I would share my concern with the bully about what happened to the victim, and seek to get the bully to behave in a more caring and responsible manner					
10. I would let the students sort it out themselves					

11. I would suggest that the victim act more assertively					
12. I would discuss with the bully options from which he/she could make a choice in order to improve the situation					
13. I would ask the student's teacher to intervene					
14. I would refer the matter to the administration (principal, vice-principal)					
15. I would contact the victim's parents or guardians to express my concern about their child's well-being					
16. I would just tell the kids to "grow up"					
17. I would encourage the victim to show that he/she could not be intimidated					
18. I would ignore it					
19. I would help the bully achieve greater self-esteem so that he/she would no longer want to bully anyone					
20. I would insist to the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the bully that the behaviour must stop					
21. I would find the bully something more interesting to do					
22. I would advise the victim to tell the bully to "back off"					

Note: This questionnaire has been used with permission from Dr. Sheri Bauman, University of Arizona and Dr. Ken Rigby, University of South Australia.

In the space below, please feel free to add any additional comments you would like to make. Thank you again for participating in this study.

Thank you for participating in this study. You have helped us gain a better understanding of how guidance counsellors handle bullying situations.

Please be assured that data you have provided will not be linked to your name.

A summary of the research can be obtained by contacting Michleen Power Elliott at k73mcp@mun.ca

All participants are eligible to enter their name in a draw to win a \$25.00 Walmart gift card. Now that you have completed the questionnaire, you may email your name and address to Michleen Power Elliott at k73mcp@mun.ca to enter your name in this draw. Since this email will be sent independently from your questionnaire, your anonymity will be ensured.

APPENDIX B**Initial Email to Guidance Counsellors**

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled "NL guidance counsellors' strategies for handling bullying incidents." This is a research project (thesis) to fulfill the graduate degree requirements for the first researcher. This questionnaire will take approximately 7 minutes of your time.

The link below will take you to a consent form where you can check "yes" to give your consent to proceed to the questionnaire.

There will be a prize draw at the end of the data collection where participants are eligible to win a \$25.00 Wal-Mart gift card.

Thank you,

Michleén Power Elliott, Graduate student, MUN

Dr. Greg Harris, Assistant Professor, MUN

APPENDIX C



LEARN • DISCOVER • ACHIEVE

January 22, 2010

Ms. Michèle Power Elliott
10 Sweetwater Crescent
CBC, NL A2W 4T3

Dear Ms. Power Elliott:

This is in response to your request for permission from Nova Central School District to conduct a survey with guidance counsellors in our school district.

Nova Central School District requires that:

1. All research conducted in our schools be approved by the Assistant Director of Education (Programs);
2. Research associated with a college or university be approved by the appropriate ethics committee;
3. Individuals or agencies conducting research in our district provide us with a copy of the results or any reports resulting from the research.

When we consider requests for approval to conduct research in our schools, we take into account the number of requests/amount and types of research being carried out in any given school year, the relevant expertise and experience of the individual/agencies, relevance and value to the target population, impact on instructional time for both students and teachers, and privacy considerations.

You have addressed our request correctly in your cover letter and we are pleased to advise you that we are approving your request. Please feel free to contact the relevant school administrators.

Thank you for the information provided and we look forward with interest to seeing your report.

Sincerely,

Charlie McCormick
Assistant Director of Education (Programs)



Western School District

Jeff Thompson, Assistant Director of Education (Programs)
Tel. (708) 437-4844 Fax. (708) 435-1733

P. O. Box 354, 18 Williams Street
Crown Point, IN 46038

January 19, 2010

Michelle Power Elliott
Memorial University of Newfoundland
Faculty of Education
Graduate Programs
St. John's, NL
A1B 3X9

Dear Michelle Power Elliott:

I am writing in response to your correspondence of January 6, 2010 wherein you request permission to conduct a research project entitled "ML guidance counselors' strategies for handling bullying incidents".

Having reviewed your research proposal, and noting that it has received ethics approval from Memorial University's Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research, I am pleased to advise your request has been approved based on the attached conditions. I trust these conditions meet with your approval, and that you will sign and fax a copy of this agreement form to my attention as required. Permission to contact the principals will be granted once I have received the signed agreement.

I take this opportunity to wish you every possible success in your research work. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns regarding this correspondence.

Sincerely,

Jeff Thompson
Assistant Director of Education (Programs)

jcth

Enclosure

- 0 Dr. Ross Elliott, Director of Education
Education Officers
Principals of Schools with Guidance Counselors



*Office of the Assistant Director
 Rural Education and Cooperative Services
 Dr. Albert Trank*

Telephone: 796-735-7342

January 11, 2018

*Ms. Michelle Parent Gillett
 10 Sweetwater Crescent
 CDR, NJ
 A / W / 03*

Dear Ms. Parent:

RE: Research Request: Professional Guidance Counselors' Strategies for Handling Bullying Incidents.

Thank you for your correspondence dated January 6, 2018 requesting to conduct research within the Eastern School District.

Please be advised that permission has been granted to conduct your research study.

As you are aware, we have a Research policy in place and it is the expectation of the Eastern School District that the requirements of this policy be strictly adhered to during the conduct of the research.

Thank you for involving Eastern School District in what appears to be a very worthwhile study. Our District looks forward to receiving a copy of the results of your study.

Please feel free to contact this office should you have further questions.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Albert Trank
 Assistant Director
 Rural Education and Cooperative Services*

BT

*John Hill, Attention: Parent, 777 Water Avenue
 Box 5-46, Rt. John's, NJ, 07037-0049*

*Telephone: 796-735-7342
 Fax: 796-735-2317*



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www.lsb.ca

January 14, 2010

Ms. Michèle Power Elliott
10 Sweetwater Crescent
Conception Bay South, NL
A1W 1T3

Dear Ms. Power Elliott:

I am in receipt of your letter requesting permission to conduct academic research in our School District. It is my understanding that your research project will examine strategies used by guidance counsellors in handling bullying.

Your request is approved with the condition that participation in your study is strictly voluntary and all surveys must be completed outside of regular school hours.

I wish you every success in completing your research.

Sincerely,

Bruce Vey, Ph.D.
CEO/Director of Education
LABRADOR SCHOOL BOARD

BV:m

APPENDIX D**Email to all Principals in the Eastern & Western School Districts**

January 6, 2010

Dear Principal,

I am a graduate student at Memorial University in the Faculty of Education and am writing to seek your permission to conduct a research project in your school which involves asking your guidance counsellor(s) to complete a questionnaire. This research project has been approved by the School District and has received ethical clearance from Memorial University (ICEHR No. 2009/10-043). This research study, entitled "NL guidance counsellors' strategies for handling bullying incidents," constitutes the thesis component of my graduate degree in Memorial's Faculty of Education.

For your information, I have attached an additional document on the nature of this research project to this email.

In order to conduct research using information gathered from guidance counsellors in the Eastern School District, I must have your approval before the questionnaire can be administered. Kindly reply to this email (k73mcp@mun.ca) stating whether you approve of my contacting the guidance counsellor(s) in your school or call me at (709)834-9397. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the current study, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor, Dr. Greg Harris (gharris@mun.ca). Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michleén Power Elliott

Attachment:

Study Significance

Bullying in schools has been a topic of an increasing body of research around the world. As a teacher and a guidance counsellor in this province, I have been witness to all types of bullying: physical (pushing, hitting), verbal (name-calling, threatening), relational (exclusion, spreading rumours), and cyberbullying (facebook, chat rooms). Bullying continues to be widespread and problematic with the National Center for Education Research in the United States recently reporting 32% of students aged 12-18 having been bullied in school (2009). A study by Nansel et al. (2001) reported 30% of youth in Canada in grades 6 to 10 as having experienced being a bully, target or both. A 2001 survey by the World Health Organization ranked Canada 26th and 27th out of 35 countries whose 13 year olds reported being bullies and victims, respectively (Craig, 2004). Although a whole school and community approach is an important prevention and intervention model to address bullying in schools, guidance counsellors can, and often do, play a critical role (Olweus, 1993).

It is vital that guidance counsellors be part of the solution to this pervasive problem. Some studies report that teachers are ineffective in dealing with bullying situations (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Smith & Shu, 2002; Rigby & Bauman, 2002). A Canadian study by Pepler, Craig, Ziegler, and Charach (1994) reported only 25% of students believed teachers would stop bullying behaviour. There is evidence to suggest that guidance counsellors perceive bullying situations differently than teachers. A study by Jacobsen and Bauman (2007) found that school counsellors displayed more empathy for victims of relational and physical bullying than teachers. They also perceived relational bullying to be more serious than teachers did and were more likely to intervene. The current study will explore NL school counsellors' perceptions on how they would handle a specific verbal-relational bullying incident. In addition, as there has been little written on bullying in rural versus urban settings, my research will explore whether there are differences between how rural and urban counsellors handle bullying situations.

Research Method

A quantitative study using a questionnaire developed by Bauman, Rigby and Hopps (2008) entitled "Handling Bullying Questionnaire" will be administered electronically to all guidance counsellors (approximately 180-190) in the 4 English school districts of Newfoundland and Labrador. The survey will be administered using "SurveyMonkey" as a means to collect data. SurveyMonkey is an online survey software tool.

Dissemination Plans

Guidance counsellors will receive an email inviting them to participate in this study. A link to SurveyMonkey will lead them to the questionnaire which will take approximately 7 minutes of their time to complete. All data collected will be confidential and anonymous. The questionnaire does not contain any identifying information. As the data is downloaded and collected, it will be stored in password protected electronic format. Hard copies of the data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the university.

APPENDIX E

**Description/Ethics/Confidentiality/Contact Information: First Page of
SurveyMonkey**

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled "Newfoundland and Labrador guidance counsellors' strategies for handling bullying incidents." This research is being conducted by Ms. Michleén Power Elliott, Graduate Student and Dr. Greg Harris, Assistant Professor at Memorial University, as part of the first researcher's thesis. This page is part of the informed consent process. If you would like more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask by using the contact information below.

You have been invited to take part in this study because you are a guidance counsellor in this province. It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose not to take part in this research, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Bullying in schools has been the topic of an increasing body of research. Because of its' psychological, social, and educational impact on everyone involved, continual research in this area is warranted. The intent of this study is to learn more about current practices on how guidance counsellors handle bullying situations in schools. This questionnaire is not an evaluative instrument and what you do as a guidance counsellor to handle bullying situations is not being judged. The only intent of this data collection is to quantify current practices of handling bullying situations in NL schools.

There are no known risks to you, the participant, if you decide to engage in this study. Importantly though, there may be benefits to society as a whole since through this research there is an opportunity to increase the knowledge base of how we address bullying in our schools. This research may also provide you with the opportunity to reflect on your own practices as a guidance counsellor and provide you with added knowledge in terms of how these situations are typically handled.

This questionnaire should take approximately 7 minutes of your time.

Your name and the name of your school are not required on this questionnaire. Please be assured that your responses will not be linked with you personally. All data will be kept completely confidential. Results will be summarized in a thesis authored by the first researcher and may be published or presented through scholarly outlets. Data collected will be stored electronically (password protected) and in hard copy. Electronically stored data will be downloaded and stored in a locked cabinet in Dr. Greg Harris' office

for five years, as per university guidelines and will be subsequently destroyed. Hard copy data will also be stored and destroyed in the same manner.

You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact: Michleen Power Elliott at (709)834-9397 or Greg Harris at (709)737-6925.

The proposal for this research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy. If you have ethical concerns about the research (such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant), you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at (709)737-8368.

In addition, consent from each of the four English school board districts (Eastern, Western, Central, and Labrador) has been obtained. As required by the Eastern and Western School Districts, consent from individual school principals has also been obtained.

APPENDIX F

Consent Form: Second page of SurveyMonkey

By beginning this questionnaire it means:

- You have read the information about the research
- You have been able to ask questions about this study, if so desired
- You are satisfied with the answers to any questions you have asked
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing
- You understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future

A summary of the findings of this research will be made available by emailing Michleen Power Elliott at k73mcp@mun.ca.

If you decide to proceed, you do not give up your legal rights, and do not release the researchers from their professional responsibilities.

Please complete this questionnaire only once.

Participants are eligible to enter their name in a draw to win a \$25.00 Wal-Mart gift card. Upon completion of the questionnaire, you may email your name and address to Michleen Power Elliott at the email address below. Since this email will be sent independently from your questionnaire, your anonymity will be ensured.

I have read and understand the information provided and consent to participate in this study.

- Yes
- No

APPENDIX G

Reminder Email to Guidance Counsellors

(sent approximately 2 weeks after the initial email to guidance counsellors)

Thank you to all guidance counsellors who have participated in the "Handling Bullying Questionnaire." If you have not already filled in the questionnaire, you may do so by following the link below. Kindly respond to this survey within the next week. The survey will close on Thursday April 1st. General information regarding the questionnaire follows.

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled "NL guidance counsellors' strategies for handling bullying incidents." This is a research project (thesis) to fulfill the graduate degree requirements for the first researcher. This questionnaire will take approximately 7 minutes of your time.

The link below will take you to a consent form where you can check "yes" to give your consent to proceed to the questionnaire.

There will be a prize draw at the end of the data collection where participants are eligible to win a \$25.00 Wal-Mart gift card.

Here is the link: (insert)

Thank you,

Michleén Power Elliott, Graduate student, MUN

Dr. Greg Harris, Assistant Professor, MUN

