

The theoretical and empirical links between bullying behavior and male sexual violence perpetration[☆]

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ABSTRACT

Bullying experiences and male sexual violence (SV) perpetration are major public health problems, and while extant literature suggests that they may share some developmental correlates, there is no established empirical link between being a perpetrator or victim of bullying and SV perpetration in the literature. Nonetheless, some SV prevention programs in the U.S. include bullying prevention components for elementary and middle-school aged children. Research is needed to test the hypothesized links between bullying experiences and SV perpetration to determine whether bullying prevention programs are likely to prevent SV perpetration. The purpose of this paper is to present results from a review of research on each of these topics and to discuss the potential shared and unique risk and protective factors within a social-ecological framework. The paper concludes with suggested directions for future research.

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1. Introduction

Both bullying behaviors and male sexual violence (SV) perpetration are major public health problems that occur at relatively high rates and demand attention to alleviate the suffering they cause. While both of these problems undoubtedly share some developmental correlates, there is not an established empirical link between bullying experiences and SV perpetration in the literature. However, some SV prevention programs in the U.S. include bullying prevention components for elementary and middle-school aged children. There are many reasons for this, one of which is that bullying prevention is more palatable than SV prevention to schools and society in general. Using bullying prevention strategies to prevent SV is implicitly based on the expectation that bullying and SV are similar behaviors or have similar risk factors. Indeed, some types of repeated sexual aggression (e.g., sexual harassment) can be considered both bullying and SV. Although it is likely that bullying and SV are related expressions of aggression that have similar antecedents, existing research has not adequately examined the association between bullying experiences and SV perpetration. Moreover, although substantial information is available about the risk factors for each type of violence, relatively little is known about the overlap in the findings.

The purpose of this paper is twofold: to discuss shared risk and protective factors based on the separate bodies of research on bullying and SV perpetration and to highlight factors studied in only one realm of violence that may have implications for the other. Several sections follow. First, we provide definitions of bullying and SV and we briefly describe the magnitude of each problem. Second, we describe the social-ecological framework and its usefulness in highlighting the complex nature of these problems and draw attention to the lack of information available within more distal levels of social influence. Third, we summarize results from the few research studies available that empirically test the link between bullying and SV perpetration. Fourth, we provide a summary of the results from the literature review organized according to a social-ecological framework. We include in the conclusion a discussion of factors identified in the review for one problem but not the other. Finally, we offer a graphical display depicting the unique and shared precursors of bullying and SV perpetration.

Because of the overlap between bullying perpetration and victimization, we include information on both types of bullying experiences and, when possible, we describe patterns for bullies, victims, and bully-victims. Given our interest in bullying as a potential precursor to SV perpetration and the developmental progression of bullying behavior and SV perpetration, with bullying behavior starting and peaking during early adolescence and SV perpetration starting in early adolescence and continuing through young adulthood, we include an expanded age period for SV perpetration. Specifically, we reviewed the literature on bullying experiences of elementary, middle, junior high, and high school aged youth (ages 10–17) in the school

setting. We include SV perpetration literature on youth (10–17 years old) as well as young adult/college age samples (18–24 years old) and adult samples as we hypothesize that bullying experiences during youth are related to concurrent as well as subsequent SV perpetration. We excluded adult bullying literature (e.g., bullying in the workplace) because we focused on bullying experiences of youth. As most victims of SV are female and the large majority of perpetrators of this abuse are male (Hall & Barongan, 1997; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006), we focus the current manuscript on male perpetration of SV.

2. Definition

2.1. Bullying

Bullying as a topic of scholarship flourished after groundbreaking work of Professor Daniel Olweus of Norway in the 1990s. Many studies have adopted his definition of bullying, which considers a person to be bullied when he or she is exposed repeatedly over time to negative actions by one or more others, not to include cases where two children of similar physical and psychological strength are fighting (Olweus, 1994). Further, Olweus added that bullying can be direct (open attacks that are physical or verbal in nature) and indirect (exclusion). Since the 1990s, many scholars have adopted or modified Olweus' definition of bullying. For example, studies vary in the extent to which they assess the difference in power between bullies and victims, and the chronicity of the bully/victim incidents. Some studies provide children with a definition of bullying similar to Olweus' definition while others simply ask about the behaviors that constitute bullying (e.g., name-calling, hitting). As a result of the numerous modifications to Olweus' definition and the various operational definitions of bullying used, it difficult to compare results across studies.¹

To maximize inclusiveness of our literature review, we included studies that refer to the construct of "bullying" even if the authors did not assess the power differential and chronicity of the target behavior or did not label the behavior as bullying for the research participants. When we refer to the traditional definition and assessment of bullying, we are referring to Olweus' definition that is provided to the respondents who are asked to indicate how much they engage in or are the target of direct and indirect forms of bullying. To reduce confusion, we will indicate how bullying was operationally defined in studies that did not use the traditional definition and assessment of bullying. Studies on bullying include behaviors perpetrated by the same or opposite sex and bullying that is homophobic in nature. Methodologically robust and peer-reviewed literature on homophobic bullying behavior remains relatively limited; however, we include those studies that are available in various sections of the manuscript.

¹ For an excellent discussion of these definitional issues through an experimental manipulation and definitional impact on prevalence rates see Vaillancourt et al. (2008).

Four distinct categories have been used to describe youth involvement in bullying behaviors: (1) bullies, youth who bully others but are never victims; (2) bully-victims, youth who bully others and also are victimized by other bullies; (3) victims, youth who are victimized but do not resort to bullying others; and (4) controls, youth who have no significant history as bullies or victims (Espelage & Holt, 2001). Bullying is a phenomenon that affects a large number of youth in the U.S. and around the world (Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1994; Smith, Bowers, Binney, & Cowie, 1993). In the U.S., 30% of sixth through tenth grade students in a large study of over 15,000 public and private school students across the U.S. reported moderate to frequent involvement in bullying at school; 13% as bullies only and 11% as victims only (Nansel et al., 2001).

2.2. Homophobic bullying

As indicated above, homophobic bullying warrants special mention because of its focus on sexual orientation and, by implication, sexual behavior, which may be perceived by some to represent the overlap between bullying behavior and SV. Homophobia, the underlying attitude that informs this particular form of bullying, can be defined as the negative beliefs, attitudes, stereotypes, and behaviors directed toward gay, lesbian and bisexual people (Wright, Adams, & Bernat, 1999). Examples of homophobia and homophobic bullying include incidents of teasing (often involving epithets that infer or otherwise expose the victim as homosexual), threats of physical violence, social isolation and physical assault (including, in a very few cases, instances of sexual assault). Rivers (2001) reported that name-calling, assault, and teasing were frequent forms of bullying experienced by gay and lesbian students (82%, 60%, and 58%, respectively). Rumor spreading (59%) and social isolation (27%), which could be considered relational forms of aggression, were also reported. In California, in a large-scale survey of students in grades 7–11 ($N = 237,544$), researchers found that 7.5% reported being bullied at school because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, with two-thirds of those students who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender reporting victimization (California Safe Schools Coalition & 4-H Center for Youth Development, 2004).

2.3. Sexual violence

SV includes nonconsensual completed or attempted penetration (vaginal, oral, or anal), unwanted non-penetrative sexual contact, or non-contact acts, such as sexual harassment, by any perpetrator. This definition includes incidents when the victim is unable to consent (e.g., due to age or illness) or unable to refuse (e.g., due to physical violence or threats) (Basile & Saltzman, 2002). Sexual harassment often coincides with physical SV and creates a hostile environment involving unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature (American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 2001; Stein, Marshall, & Troop, 1993). The most recent national estimates indicated that 18% of adult women and 3% of adult men reported an experience of an attempted or completed rape during their lifetime (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006). The 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, a national survey of students in grades 9–12, found a lifetime reported prevalence of unwanted physically forced sexual intercourse for 11% of females and 5% of males (Eaton et al., 2008). Rates of perpetration of SV by adolescents and young adults are harder to estimate due to the lack of nationally representative data sources that assess perpetration. One study of approximately 131,000 public school children in grades 6, 9, and 12 in Minnesota found 5% of the males and 1% of the females reported that they had forced sexual acts on someone (Borowsky, Hogan, & Ireland, 1997). Estimates of perpetration rates among college-age males are consistent across numerous studies, with approximately one-fourth to one-third reporting they have engaged

in sexually aggressive acts (Abbey, McAuslan, & Ross, 1998; Abbey, McAuslan, Zawacki, Clinton, & Buck, 2001; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Loh, Gidycz, Lobo, & Luthra, 2005). Sexual harassment is particularly pervasive in schools among adolescents, with one national study reporting that: 66% of boys and 52% of girls indicated they have harassed a peer; 70% of students had experienced nonphysical sexual harassment (e.g., sexual rumor spreading); and 58% of students had experienced physical sexual harassment (e.g., having clothing pulled off or down) at some point during their lives (AAUW, American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 2001).

3. The Social-ecological approach

For the purposes of this review, we use a social-ecological approach to frame our discussion of constructs related to bullying and SV. The social-ecological framework is a multidimensional conceptual framework originally developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and adapted by others (e.g., Belsky, 1980; Heise, 1998; Basile, 2003) to study violence. This framework combines various ecologies, or levels of influence, to understand complex behaviors such as violence (Heise, 1998). The social-ecological approach considers violence a result of multiple levels of influence on behavior, including: (a) the individual level, which includes biological and personal history factors; (b) the relationship level, which represents the ecologies most proximal to the individual, including the family and peer relationships; (c) the community level, which consists of the community settings in which the individual lives; and (d) the society level, which is the most distal ecology and includes larger societal forces such as cultural values and beliefs (Dahlberg & Krug, 2002). This approach has advantages for summarizing a large body of research because it allows for the integration of several different perspectives and several different levels of influence simultaneously. It also is useful in that it can guide future research and prevention efforts because it sheds light on the nested relationships between the different levels of influence (Belsky, 1980). For example, a child who experiences abuse within the home may also live in a community or go to a school where he does not feel connected, which may lead to low academic achievement, all of which may have an impact on his likelihood to perpetrate violence.

4. Recent research examining both bullying and sexual harassment

Our literature search revealed four studies in which bullying and sexual harassment were both examined (one study focused on bullying and sexual harassment victimization, and the other three studies focused on bullying and sexual harassment perpetration). One recent study by Gruber and Fineran (2008) compared the frequency and impact of bullying (defined as upsetting someone, scaring, teasing, picking on, making fun of, calling names, getting into a physical fight, pushing, shoving, slapping, kicking, threatening to hurt or hit, or excluding someone from their group of friends during the school year) and sexual harassment victimization of middle and high school students and found that bullying occurred more frequently than sexual harassment for both boys and girls, and there were no differences between boys and girls in the frequency of bullying or sexual harassment. However, self-identified gay, lesbian, bisexual, or questioning (GLBQ) students experienced higher levels of both sexual harassment and bullying. Further, the authors found that sexual harassment had more of a negative health impact (e.g., mental and physical health, trauma symptoms) than bullying, particularly for girls and GLBQ students (Gruber & Fineran, 2008). Three additional empirical studies demonstrated an association between bullying and sexual harassment. DeSouza and Ribeiro (2005) examined a sample of Brazilian high school students and found that for both males and

females, peers who self-reported bullying perpetration (name calling, pushing, threatening in the past 30 days) were more likely to sexually harass (measured as a scale of gender harassment, unwanted sexual attention, and sexual coercion) the same peers than were those who did not report bullying perpetration. Pepler and colleagues (2006) also found a positive association between sexual harassment perpetration (measured as a scale including verbal harassment, rumor spreading, etc. and brushing up against someone) and bullying perpetration (adapted from Olweus and defined as repeated aggression, not including sexual forms of bullying, where the victimized child has difficulty defending him/herself) among students. In this cross-sectional study of 961 elementary school (grades 6 through 8) and 935 middle school students (grades 9 through 12), sexual harassment perpetration was more prevalent among students who bullied others than among those who did not report bullying others. Examining the relation between bullying and sexual harassment longitudinally, Pellegrini (2001) found that boys who bullied (defined traditionally using Olweus' definition) peers at the beginning of 6th grade were likely to sexually harass (measured as a scale including sexual comments, touching, and forced sexual contact) peers at the end of 7th grade ($r = .44, p < .0001$), but this association was mediated by self-reported high dating frequency at the end of 6th grade. Overlap between sexual harassment and bullying demonstrated in these three sexual harassment perpetration studies suggests that youth who engage in one type of aggression (i.e., bullying) are more likely to engage in the other (i.e., sexual harassment). Additional research is needed to determine if this overlap indicates that some bullying is simply sexual in nature or if bullying and SV share important risk factors. To date, no studies have examined the links between bullying and the different types of SV separately (noncontact versus contact), and no studies have examined the association between bullying and arguably the most severe form of SV, forced penetrative sex (i.e., rape or attempted rape).

5. Individual level factors

5.1. Sex

For decades, males have been considered the more aggressive sex because they tend to engage in more direct, overt, and physical forms of aggression and bullying as compared to females (Coie & Dodge, 1998; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). More recent conceptualizations of bullying, however, have included the verbal and psychological forms of bullying, such as indirect aggression (e.g., social manipulation; Osterman et al., 1998), relational aggression (e.g., behaviors meant to damage a child's friendships or feelings of inclusion; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995), and social aggression (e.g., behaviors that are directed toward causing harm to another's self-esteem or social status; Underwood, Galen & Paquette, 2001). These forms of aggression have consistently been found to be more prevalent among girls (Crick, 1996; Crick, Casas, & Mosher, 1997; Crick & Grotpeter, 1995; Rys & Bear, 1997). Likewise, some types of SV may be conceptualized as a form of direct and overt violence (i.e., rape, attempted rape) while other types are more indirect forms of social aggression (i.e., sexual harassment). Different from bullying, studies have consistently found males more likely than females to sexually harass their peers (AAUW, 1993, 2001) and to sexually abuse children (Finkelhor & Russell, 1984), women (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2006), and peers (Borowsky et al., 1997; Foshee, 1996).

5.2. Anger and hostility

Anger and hostility have consistently emerged as important correlates of both bullying and SV perpetration. In several studies of bullying behavior (e.g., name calling, teasing, threatening), anger was the strongest predictor of bullying cross-sectionally and longitudinally

(Bosworth, Espelage, & Simon, 1999; Espelage, Bosworth, & Simon, 2001). Many studies have documented a relation between hostile attitudes toward women and perpetration of SV (Koss & Dinero, 1988; Malamuth, 1986; Malamuth, Linz, Heavey, Barnes, & Acker, 1995; Seidman, Marshall, Hudson, & Robertson, 1994). Both undetected and incarcerated rapists report high levels of anger toward women (Groth, 1979; Lisak & Roth, 1990) and a need to dominate women (Lisak & Roth, 1990; Shotland, 1992). Malamuth (1986) found that a scale measuring hostility toward women correlated significantly with sexual aggression among college students. Further, Yates, Barbaree and Marshall (1984) concluded that anger was a component of a rape-conducive disposition (Yates et al., 1984). In a test of Malamuth's Hierarchical-Mediational Confluence Model, Malamuth and colleagues (1995) conducted a ten year follow-up study with young adult males and found support for a model of SV perpetration as a function of hostile attitudes and impersonal sex. Finally, a meta-analysis concluded that there is a consistently strong correlation between hostile masculinity and men's self-reported levels of sexual aggression (Murnen, Wright, & Kaluzny, 2002).

5.3. Social manipulation

Although substantial research indicates that aggressive youth lack social skills (Crick & Dodge, 1994; Dodge & Coie, 1987), more recent theorizing suggests that at least some bullies have heightened social skills that are used as a vehicle to aggress (Sutton, Smith, & Swettenham, 1999). Given that bullying includes indirect forms of aggression, such as lying and spreading rumors that lead to the victim's exclusion from the group, and that the physical violence is frequently planned, scholars posit that at least some bullies have social understanding of their behavior. Support for this proposition was established in a short-term longitudinal study conducted by Camodeca, Goosens, Schuengel and Terwogt (2003), who investigated children's responses to provocative scenarios. Bullies did not differ from other children in the number of aggressive solutions they offered, though they and victims of bullying did offer fewer solutions that involved assertiveness. These group differences disappeared when children were prompted to generate additional solutions. The fact that all groups of children were able to provide a wide range of solutions led investigators to the conclusion that bullies possess social knowledge but do not always apply it appropriately (Camodeca et al., 2003).

Perpetrators of SV also possess social knowledge and skills that are used to coerce their peers into unwanted sexual behavior. Muehlenhard and Falcon (1990) found that socially skilled men who easily initiate interactions with women are more likely to have engaged in verbally coercive sexual behavior than non-socially skilled men. However, other research on sexual offenders reveals that they may lack social competence skills as a result of insecure attachment in childhood which makes them unable to experience intimacy and uncomfortable and aloof in social situations (Marshall, 1989; Ward, Polaschek, & Beech, 2006).

5.4. Empathy

Research has consistently found negative associations between empathy and aggression (Feshbach & Feshbach, 1982; Kaukiainen et al., 1999; Mehrabian, 1997; Miller & Eisenberg, 1988). Some studies that have focused on emotional reactions of bullies conclude that many bullies (40.6%) are indifferent following an aggressive act (Borg, 1998), seem unaware of the negative effects of bullying on victims (Menesini et al., 2003), and have lower consideration of others than do uninvolved youth (Espelage, Mebane, & Adams, 2004).

Some researchers have posited that empathy is not a uni-dimensional construct. For example, Davis (1983) presented a model of empathy that includes three dimensions: perspective-taking,

empathic concern, and personal distress. Perspective-taking refers to the cognitive components of empathy; empathic concern refers to one's affective reaction to others' emotional states with a focus on others; while personal distress pertains to the emotional reactions experienced as a feeling of self concern, in which the focus is on the self rather than others. Research suggests that it is the emotional component of empathy (i.e., empathic concern) rather than the cognitive component of empathy (i.e., perspective-taking was measured) that is inversely related to bullying and general aggression (Endresen & Olweus, 2001; Mehrabian, 1997). Similarly, Hoffman (2000) argues that a child who has high abilities in perspective-taking but no willingness or ability to share the perceived feelings of others is more likely to become unscrupulously cunning. Research by Smith and colleagues (1993) supports this contention by finding that 9–11 year old bullies have less emotional empathy for their victims than do other children (Smith et al., 1993).

Empathy deficits also appear to be common among sexual offenders (Fernandez & Marshall, 2003; Gidycz et al., 1997; Lisak & Ivan, 1995; Marshall & Moulden, 2001; Schewe & O'Donohue, 1993). Marshall and Moulden (2001) studied 32 rapists, 28 non-sex offenders, and 40 non-offender males. Rapists were significantly less empathic than either of the other two groups toward women who had been sexually assaulted. They were also significantly less empathic toward their own victims than toward other women. Building on this earlier research, Fernandez and Marshall (2003) compared incarcerated rapists with incarcerated non-sexual offenders and found that rapists may suppress empathy primarily toward their own victim rather than suffer from a generalized empathy deficit. Dean and Malamuth (1997) found that other characteristics related to sexual aggression are more likely to lead to sexually aggressive behavior in individuals who are self-centered rather than those who are sensitive to others. In addition, related to empathy deficits, sexual offenders have been found to have an impersonal orientation toward sex. They have a greater ability to engage in sexual relations without closeness or commitment than nonaggressive men (Gangestad & Simpson, 1990; Martinn, Vergeles, Acevedo, Sanchez, & Visa, 2005).

5.5. Self-esteem

Related to empathy, researchers have shown significant relationships between self-esteem and both bullying and SV. Evidence for an association between self-esteem and bullying is mixed, with some evidence that children who were bullies, victims of bullying, or both bullies and victims had lower global self-esteem than children who had not had any bullying experiences (O'Moore & Kirkham, 2001) and other studies showing that students who bully others are not lacking in self-esteem (Olweus, 1981, 1984; Pulkkinen & Tremblay, 1992). Additional research is needed to determine the extent to which self-esteem is related to bullying perpetration. Regarding SV, Marshall and colleagues have suggested that low self-esteem inhibits empathy (Ward et al., 2006). Marshall and colleagues (1997) found that child molesters had lower self-esteem than non-offenders, which provides evidence for Marshall and colleagues' (Marshall & Barbaree, 1990) integrated theory. This general theory of sexual offending suggests that adverse childhood events (e.g., child abuse) lead to distorted ideas of intimate relationships, which leads to poor social and self regulations skills. This results in rejection and resultant low self-esteem (as well as anger, etc.) and offenders commit child sexual abuse because they rely on sex to cope with low moods associated with low self-esteem and loneliness as a result of intimacy avoidance (Marshall, Champagne, Brown, & Miller, 1997; Ward et al., 2006). Further support for low self-esteem in sexual offenders comes from a recent German study. Hosser and Bosold (2006) compared young adult sexual offenders to other violent offenders and found that sexual offenders had lower self-esteem than other violent offenders.

5.6. Antisocial behavior/delinquency

Research suggests that bullies are more likely than their peers to engage in externalizing behaviors, to experience conduct problems, and to be delinquent (Haynie, Nansel, & Eitel, 2001; Nansel et al., 2001). Similarly, sexual abusers also have been found to engage in early delinquency (Shaw et al., 1993; Skuse et al., 1998). Malamuth and colleagues (1991, 1995) used structural equation modeling to test a two-path model (one path involving hostile attitudes toward women and another path including early delinquent behavior) to sexual aggression. They found that the interaction between the two constellations of characteristics was the best predictor of sexual aggression perpetration (Malamuth, Sockloskie, Koss, & Tanaka, 1991; Malamuth et al., 1995).

5.7. Positive attitudes toward violence

Studying over 2000 students in grades 6–9, Endresen and Olweus (2001) found a strong correlation between positive attitudes toward bullying and bullying behavior. In addition, Boulton, Trueman and Flemington (2002) investigated children's general attitudes toward bullying and its impact on specific types of aggressive behavior that are commonly used to bully others (e.g., threatening someone, forcing someone to do something they don't want to do). These investigators found significant correlations between more positive attitudes toward bullying and self-reported involvement in each type of aggressive behavior. Similarly, college men who endorse attitudes accepting interpersonal violence in relationships are more likely to have histories of engaging in verbal sexual coercion or forcible rape than college men who do not strongly accept interpersonal violence in relationships (Malamuth, 1986; Mosher & Anderson, 1986; Muehlenhard & Falcon, 1990). Further, research has pointed to factors such as sexist attitudes toward women, male peer support for violence, and male likelihood to commit rape if they were assured they would not be punished (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998; Demare, Lips, & Briere, 1993; Malamuth, 1981), combined with individual factors and previous histories of violence, that serve to encourage and legitimate SV perpetration.

5.8. Narcissism

Menesini and colleagues (2003) categorized children 9–13 years old into bully, victim, and outsider groups. They then were presented with a story of bullying using a set of ten cartoons depicting typical bullying situations (e.g., consistent imbalance in power between the aggressor and the victim) and were asked "If you were the bully what would you feel and why?" They found that most bullies seemed unaware of the negative effects of bullying on victims. However, the 30% of bullies who were aware of the negative consequences of bullying for victims were more concerned about personal consequences such as punishment than about the impact on the victim. Salmivalli, Kaukiainen, Kaistaniemi and Lagerspetz (1999) found that for boys but not girls, bullying (defined as exposing a child repeatedly to shoving or hitting, name calling, making jokes, being left outside the group, etc.) was associated with defensive egotism (including always wanting to be the center of attention; thinking too much of himself or herself; and not taking criticism) (Salmivalli et al., 1999). These findings suggest that bullies may be more emotionally self-centered or narcissistic than non-bullies.

In a review of the literature on date rapists, marital rapists, and convicted rapists, Ryan (2003) concludes that all three types of rapists share cognitions that foster rape by promoting sexual narcissism and beliefs about women's complicity in rape. These beliefs encourage denial and minimization of rape. Ryan's work supports Malamuth's (1996) Hierarchical Confluence Model that implicates narcissism and hostile attitudes as one pathway to sexual aggression (Malamuth

et al., 1995). Kosson, Kelly, and White (1997) also found that sexual assault perpetration by college men was positively associated with narcissism.

5.9. Alcohol and drug use

Bullying is strongly associated with both alcohol and drug use (Berthold & Hoover, 2002; Pepler, Craig, Connolly, & Henderson, 2002). In their study of fifth to eighth graders (mean age 12.7), Pepler and colleagues (2002) found that for both boys and girls, bullies were almost five times more likely to report alcohol use and seven times more likely to report drug use than non-bullies. Similarly, a strong association has also been established between alcohol use and sexual assault perpetration (Borowsky et al., 1997; Locke & Mahalik, 2005). Looman, Abracen, DiFazio and Maillat (2004) compared rapists and child molesters to non-sexual violent offenders. They found that sex offenders had more problems with alcohol abuse than did the nonsexual violent offenders. There were no differences among the groups regarding other drug use. Abracen, Looman and Anderson (2000) also found that sexual offenders were more likely to abuse alcohol than were nonsexual violent offenders. Koss and Gaines (1993) found that self-reported alcohol use predicted sexual aggression among undergraduate men. Alcohol use also discriminated those who reported participating in gang rapes from those not reporting such involvement. Finally, Borowsky and colleagues (1997) reported an association between daily alcohol use and use of anabolic steroids without a prescription and forcing someone into a sexual act for both male and female students in grades 9 and 12. In contrast, Abracen et al. (2000) found that non-sexual offenders were more likely than sexual offenders to have a history of other drug abuse.

5.10. Impulsivity

In a prospective study of factors that predicted bullying over a 4-month period, Espelage et al. (2001), found a significant association between impulsivity and a behavioral measure of bullying (e.g., name calling, teasing, threatening other students) among a sample of 214 6th grade students. Prentky and Knight (1991) found that criminal sexual aggressors are similar to other criminals in their “lifestyle impulsivity,” and that evidence suggests inclusion of lifestyle impulsivity as a component of any multidimensional model of adult sexual aggression. More recently, Knight and Sims-Knight (2003) found that impulsivity predicted sexual coercion, both directly and through aggressive sexual fantasy. Comparing perpetrators of sexual assaults that involved alcohol and perpetrators of sexual assault that did not involve alcohol to non-perpetrators, Zawacki and colleagues (2003) found that sexual assault perpetrators reported higher levels of impulsivity than non-perpetrators, and sexual assault perpetrators whose assaults involved alcohol reported the highest levels of impulsivity of all, suggesting that alcohol may exacerbate the relationship between impulsivity and sexual offending.

5.11. Academic performance

A recent study by Glew, Fan, Katon, Rivara and Kernic (2005) found an association between certain bullying experiences and low academic achievement. Among third, fourth, and fifth grade students, victims (adjusted odds ratio [AOR] 0.8; 95% confidence interval [CI] 0.7–0.9) and bully-victims (AOR 0.8; 95% CI 0.6–1.0) were less likely to be high achievers in school (measured by a composite score including reading, math, and listening) as compared to bystanders, although the finding for bully-victims is borderline significant (Glew et al., 2005). A more recent study by Glew, Fan, Katon and Rivara (2008) of 7th, 9th, and 11th graders in an urban public school district found that for each 1-point rise in grade point average, the odds of being a victim versus a bystander decreased by 10% (Glew et al., 2008). For SV, Borowsky and

colleagues (1997) found that both male and female students who reported being sexually aggressive had significantly lower grade point averages in school than students who did not report sexual aggression. However, in multivariate models that controlled for other factors and were stratified by sex, the relation between sexual aggression and academic performance only remained significant for female students (AOR 0.42; 95% CI 0.24–0.74) (Borowsky et al., 1997).

5.12. Enjoyment of and connection to school/connection to community

There is some evidence that bullying and peer harassment in school is related to school adjustment. In a recent study of 930 6th graders in the first year of middle school, students who were bullies, victims, or bully-victims showed poorer school adjustment (e.g., doing well on schoolwork, getting along with classmates, following rules, doing homework) than their uninvolved peers over three assessments into the end of the 7th grade (Nansel, Haynie, & Simons-Morton, 2003). Also, victims and bully-victims in the 6th grade perceived their school climate as more negative than bullies or uninvolved students. Glew and colleagues (2005) found that among third, fourth, and fifth graders, both victims (AOR 4.1; 95% CI 2.6–6.5) and bully-victims (AOR 3.1; 95% CI 1.3–7.2) were more likely than bystanders to report feeling that they do not belong at school. They also found that bullies (AOR 2.5; 95% CI 1.5–4.1), victims (AOR 2.1; 95% CI 1.1–4.2), and bully-victims (AOR 5.0; 95% CI 1.9–13.6) were more likely than bystanders to report that they felt unsafe at school (Glew et al., 2005). In their more recent study of 7th, 9th, and 11th graders, Glew and colleagues (2008) found that victims were more likely than bystanders to feel that they do not belong at school (AOR 1.7; 95% CI 1.4–2.1), and bullies (AOR 1.9; 95% CI 1.3–2.6), victims (AOR 2.0; 95% CI 1.6–2.6), and bully-victims (AOR 2.6; 95% CI 1.7–3.8) were more likely than bystanders to report that they felt unsafe at school (Glew et al., 2008). For SV, high levels of community connectedness, as measured by how much an adolescent believes people at school, friends, church leaders, and police care about them, are protective against SV perpetration even after controlling for the influence of other factors (Borowsky et al., 1997). Other research suggests that the lack of positive attachment to peers and school can also be detrimental. Miner and Crimmins (1995) found that juvenile sex offenders were more likely than juvenile non-sex offenders and juvenile non-delinquents to report fewer peer attachments and less attachment to school. The authors concluded that isolation and poor social adjustment are important factors that distinguish juvenile sex offenders from other juveniles (Miner & Crimmins, 1995).

6. Relationship level factors

Given the social-ecological perspective that individual characteristics of adolescents interact with group-level factors, many scholars have turned their attention to how families and peers contribute to bullying and SV. Both family and peer environments have been found to be quite influential regarding bullying and sexually aggressive behavior.

6.1. Parental social support

Lack of parental social support is a risk factor for both bullying and sexual abuse perpetration. Middle school students classified as bullies and bully-victims indicate receiving substantially less social support from parents than those who are not involved in bullying (Demaray & Malecki, 2003). Hunter and Figueredo (2000) studied a group of juveniles some of whom were sex offenders who had themselves been victims of sexual abuse. They found that adolescents who perceived their families as less supportive following disclosure of their own abuse were more likely to have later sexually abused a younger child than were those who perceived their families as supportive.

6.2. Parenting style and attachment

With respect to the family context, bullies report that their parents are authoritarian, use physical punishment, lack warmth, and display indifference to their children (Baldry & Farrington, 2000; Olweus, 1995). Children at 18 months with insecure, anxious-avoidant, or anxious-resistant attachments are more likely than children with secure attachments to become involved in bullying at the age of 4 and 5 years (Troy & Sroufe, 1987). Bully-victims have been found to report inconsistent parental discipline and monitoring practices and to have lower perceptions of warm parental affection (Bowers, Smith, & Binney, 1994). A comparison between a clinical group of sexually abusing youth and a clinical sample of non-abusing youth indicated that sexually abusing youth had significantly more disruptions to attachment with at least one adult caregiver than did the non-abusing youth (Lightfoot & Evans, 2000). Additionally, caregiver inconsistency and childhood sexual abuse together were powerful predictors of sexual aggression in adulthood (Prentky et al., 1989). Finally, Prentky (2003) reviewed the sexual coercion literature over the last 15 years and summarized important predictors of SV perpetration. It appears that parental neglect and a subsequent disruptive attachment disorder could lead to social skills deficits and maladaptive coping styles consisting of emotional detachment and the inability to experience empathy toward women. Interestingly, parents can also contribute to a decrease in children's aggression over time. Aggressive children who experienced affectionate mother-child relationships showed a significant decrease in their aggressive-disruptive behaviors (McFadyen-Ketchum, Bates, Dodge, & Pettit, 1996).

6.3. Witnessing and experiencing abuse

Both witnessing and experiencing abuse in the home have been linked to bullying experiences. Exposure to inter-parental verbal, emotional, or physical violence is significantly associated with both bullying perpetration and victimization (Baldry, 2003). Duncan (1999), in a retrospective study of college freshman, found that those who reported being victims of bullying (defined as being routinely picked on, verbally or physically, with examples) experienced higher rates of emotional and physical maltreatment by a parent and higher rates of child sexual abuse (Duncan, 1999). Witnessing abuse and direct experiences of abuse are also more common in the lives of sexually abusive than non-abusive adolescents (Borowsky et al., 1997; Shaw et al., 1993; Spaccarelli, Bowden, Coatsworth, & Kim, 1997). Adolescent sexual abusers in the 1992 Minnesota Student Survey had a significantly greater likelihood of having been sexually abused by a family member, sexually abused by a non-family member, and to have witnessed abuse as compared to non-abusers (Borowsky et al., 1997). The associations between experiences of abuse and subsequent behavior can be multiplicative. For example, Skuse and colleagues (1998) found that the risk of engaging in sexually abusive behavior toward other children is increased in adolescent boys who have been victims of sexual abuse if they have also witnessed intra-family violence. Likewise, sexually abused children who later become sexually abusive are also more likely to have experienced physical neglect than sexually abused children who do not become abusive later in life (Salter et al., 2003).

6.4. Supervision and parental involvement with child

Bullying is less likely to occur when parents are aware of their children's peer relationships (Roberts & Coursol, 1996). While parental involvement is associated with lower risk for bullying, lack of supervision is a risk factor for sexual abuse perpetration. Specifically, lack of supervision discriminates former male child victims of sexual abuse who abuse later in life from former male child victims who do not abuse later in life (Salter et al., 2003).

6.5. Perceived social norms

Peer groups during late childhood and early adolescence form based on behavioral similarities (Ennett & Bauman, 1994) and academic achievement (Ryan, 2001). This within-group similarity is called homophily (Berndt, 1982). Only recently has the homophily hypothesis been evaluated specifically with bullying. In a study of middle school students, social network analysis was used to identify peer networks and hierarchical linear modeling was employed to determine the extent to which peers influenced each other in bullying their peers. Results supported the homophily hypothesis for bullying and fighting among 6–8th graders over a one-year period (Espelage, Holt, & Henkel, 2003). Students tended to associate with students who bullied at similar frequencies, and students who associated with kids who bullied others increased in the amount of self-reported bullying over the school year. The homophily hypothesis for bullying was supported for both male and female peer groups. Thus, peers not only affiliate with students with similar levels of bullying, they also appear to influence each other over time (Espelage et al., 2003).

Researchers who study SV among college students posit that male peer support groups encourage and justify SV against women and actually create opportunities for their group members to engage in SV against women (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998). Male peer support has been defined as “the attachments to male peers and the resources that these men provide which encourage and legitimate woman abuse” (DeKeseredy, 1990). Male peer support can take the form of routine activities (e.g., social events, academic assistance), informational support (e.g., sexual, physical, and psychological advice about dating), affiliation with abusive male peers, peer patriarchal attitudes (e.g., justification for use of physical abuse toward dating partner), and finally peer pressure to have sex. DeKeseredy and Kelly (1993) found that college students' peer informational support (defined as guidance that influences men to sexually assault their dating partners), and peer patriarchal attitudes were significantly associated with sexual assault of a dating partner.

A recent study by Bohner, Siebler and Schmelcher (2006) manipulated perceived social norms by giving college students information about others' rape myth acceptance. They found a significant relation between perceived norms of rape myth acceptance and participants' ratings of rape proclivity. The authors conclude that group norms may act as a determinant of men's willingness to engage in sexual aggression (Bohner et al., 2006). Perpetrators of sexual harassment indicate their behaviors were justified because “all kids do it” and because of pressure from peers to engage in such behaviors (AAUW, 1993, 2001). Hence, when peer groups condone sexual harassment, youth are more likely to sexually harass others. Perceived social norms are also implicated in Malamuth's confluence model of sexual aggression. Research supporting this model has shown that delinquent peer groups may place value on impersonal sex and a sense of sexual conquest, leading some boys or men to use coercive means to induce girls or women into sexual behavior (Malamuth, 1996; Malamuth et al., 1991). Ageton (1983) found that associating with delinquent peer group members was the single best predictor of sexual assault. Gang membership is also positively associated with SV perpetration for both male and female adolescents (Borowsky et al., 1997).

7. Community level factors

As stated earlier, the *community level* of influence includes the neighborhood, the workplace, or the school in which the individual is embedded. Community level factors are less frequently the focus of research studies than are individual and relationship level factors. Yet, the contextual features of our lives undoubtedly shape our behavior in both subtle and obvious ways.

7.1. School/adult supervision

Adult supervision decreases from elementary to middle school (Astor, Meyer, & Pitner, 2001). In turn, less structure and supervision are associated with concomitant increases in bullying rates among middle school students (Kasen, Berenson, Cohen, & Johnson, 2004). For instance, at particularly salient times such as recess (Craig & Pepler, 1997), diminished supervision can have important ramifications. Although recess can be one avenue for promoting a child's social competence (Pellegrini & Davis, 1993), playgrounds are places where some students feel unsafe and afraid (Astor et al., 2001). Observational studies have clearly demonstrated that the majority of aggression and bullying occur on the playground and during recess as well as lunchtime (Craig & Pepler, 1997). Sexual harassment (AAUW, 1993; Stein et al., 1993) and homophobic behaviors (Rivers, 2001) also often occur in public. Because sexual harassment often occurs in public arenas, the treatment of these incidents when witnessed by school staff should have a critical impact on how students view the school climate about sexual harassment. Unfortunately, there appears to be a general acceptance of sexual harassment in schools that likely influences perpetration rates (AAUW, 1993). Research is currently lacking on this topic, however, one may hypothesize that the absence of adults who could intervene serves as a situational risk factor for bullying and SV perpetration.

7.2. Absence of deterrence and school climate

It appears that intangible characteristics of schools (e.g., positive emotional climate) are associated with better academic and social outcomes for students and less bullying (Kasen et al., 2004). Bullying tends to be less prevalent in classrooms in which most children are included in activities (Newman, Murray, & Lussier, 2001), teachers display warmth and responsiveness to children (Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999), and teachers respond quickly and effectively to bullying incidents (Olweus, 1993). Furthermore, Hoover and Hazler (1994) note that when school personnel tolerate, ignore, or dismiss bullying behaviors they are conveying implicit messages about values that victimized students internalize. Conversely, if school staff members have attitudes not supportive of bullying behavior, and these are translated into voicing their opinions and/or actively intervening in bullying episodes, the school culture as a whole becomes less tolerant of bullying. Rivers, Duncan and Besag (2007) point out that schools that are safest are usually those that acknowledge that bullying behavior happens and that this does not make the school a failing school. Rather, schools that acknowledge that bullying occurs are on their way to becoming safe and successful institutions of education (Rivers et al., 2007). Ryan and Rivers (2003) argue that protective school policies, teacher training, and public education about discrimination and bullying for parents and community leaders are essential to create safe school environments for all students.

With regard to SV, schools can be contexts that promote SV through the acceptance of sexual bantering among males and the acceptance of inappropriate sexual attention directed from males to females (Askew & Ross, 1988). Schwartz and DeKeseredy (1997), in a sample of college males in Canada, found that males were more likely to perpetrate SV when they perceived there to be an absence of deterrence.

Absence of policies to address harassment and discrimination of students due to their perceived sexual orientation or other minority status also contributes to a negative school climate. The Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network's (GLSEN) 1998 'Back to School' report highlighted the fact that less than half of school districts across the U.S. had policies in place in 1998 to protect students and teachers from harassment (GLSEN, 1998). By 2005, 68.3% of students surveyed reported that their school had a policy or procedure for reporting harassment. The 2005 GLSEN report also found that having a

comprehensive policy against discrimination was associated with a lower incidence of homophobic remarks and harassment, and that school staff are more likely to intervene at schools with policies in place (GLSEN, 2005).

8. Societal level factors

There is much less literature focused on societal level factors related to either SV or bullying. However, cultural norms that support traditional gender roles and rigid masculinity seem to be shared between SV and certain forms of bullying. Cultures that prescribe more traditional gender roles with male dominance and female subordination show the highest rates of male violence against women (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottemoeller, 1999; Rozee, 1993). Further, while there is no societal level or cross cultural data to support this, some have suggested a link between homophobia and homophobic bullying and traditional masculine and feminine ideologies (Mandel & Shakeshaft, 2000; Phoenix, Frosh, & Pattman, 2003; Pollack, 1998; Skelton, 1996). Homophobic bullying or teasing is presumably similar in nature to sexual harassment or other forms of SV in that both behaviors may involve a challenge to masculinity on the part of the perpetrator. Cultural norms of rigid masculinity have been linked to SV perpetration (see, for example, Lisak, Hopper, & Song, 1996) and to violence against girls that occurs in the school context (Klein, 2006). Klein's (2006) media analysis of school shootings between 1996 and 2002 revealed that in five of the 13 high profile shootings examined, boys shot girls who rejected them. In three additional cases, boys shot boys who were perceived to threaten their relationship with a girl, in an effort to "protect" the girl. In three other cases, boys reported that part of the motivation for the shooting was a "general unhappiness over difficulties with girls" (Klein, 2006, p.158). Klein's analysis makes the case that normalized masculinity and the rigid cultural expectations for boys play a major role in explaining these acts of school violence.

9. Unique factors

Our review has demonstrated that bullying behaviors and SV perpetration have many factors in common. Fig. 1 graphically depicts the shared and unique risk and protective factors for bullying experiences and SV perpetration. As shown in Fig. 1, there are numerous shared factors at the individual, family/relationship, and community and neighborhood levels.

During the course of the review we found relatively few factors that were known to be associated with one form of violence but not the other. For example, SV perpetration has been associated with promiscuity. Sexually aggressive men have been described as having a noncommittal and game-playing sexual orientation (Kanin, 1984; Sarwer, Kalichman, Johnson, Early, & Akram, 1993). Sexual aggression has also been linked to other factors, such as early sexual debut (Malamuth et al., 1995; Malamuth, 1986), use of pornography (Jensen, 1995; Malamuth, Addison, & Koss, 2000), deviant sexual arousal (Hall & Barongan, 1997; Malamuth, 1986), rape myth beliefs (Bohner et al., 2006; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994), and gender based emotional constriction (Lisak et al., 1996). These risk factors may be relevant to bullying, but they have not been examined as such. We identified a few factors that have been studied in relation to bullying, including frustration (Salmivalli & Nieminen, 2002) and use of the Internet/Internet aggression (Kowalski & Limber, 2007; Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004), that have not been examined as potential risk factors for SV perpetration. In their telephone survey of on-line youth aggression, Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) found that 56% of on-line aggressor/victims, 49% of on-line aggressors, and 44% of on-line victims also reported off-line bullying victimization. Kowalski and Limber (2007) found that 11% of middle school students (grades 6–8) from six different schools in the southeast and northwest U.S. reported being

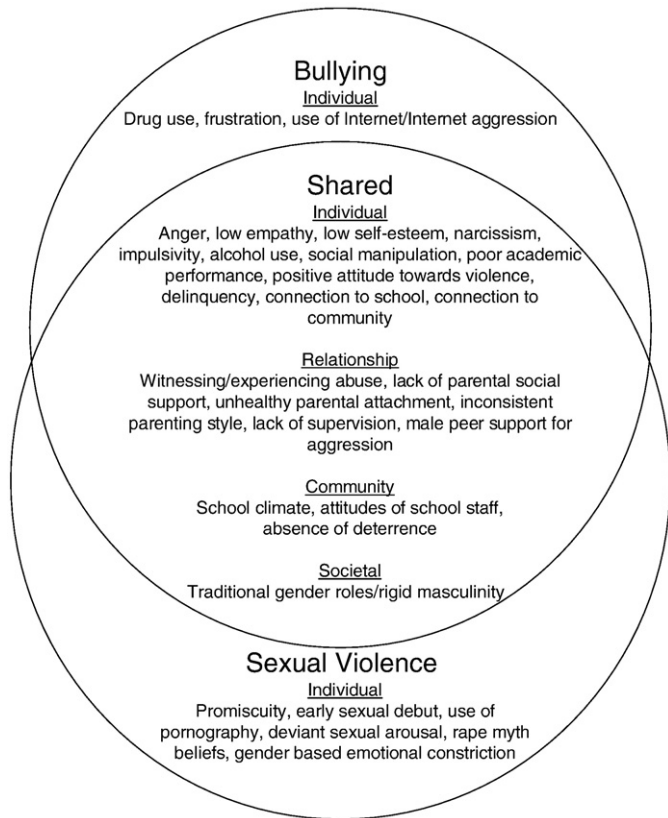


Fig. 1. Shared and unique risk and protective factors for bullying and sexual violence perpetration.

victims of electronic bullying, 7% reported being a bully-victim, and 4% reported bullying others electronically (at least once in the last month, using the Olweus definition). The most common forms of electronic bullying in this sample were instant messaging, emails, and chat rooms. While there are some factors that appear to be unique to either bullying or SV perpetration based on the reviewed literature, this could be because factors unique to one type of aggression have not been examined as possible correlates of the other. Further work is needed to determine whether the factors treated as unique to bullying or SV perpetration in Fig. 1 are in fact shared.

10. Conclusion

The intent of this paper was to review the shared and unique risk and protective factors for bullying and SV perpetration and to offer ideas on how these two phenomena may be related.

The results from this review indicate that most of the factors associated with bullying perpetration are also associated with SV perpetration. This finding suggests that the two forms of violence share many risk and protective factors, but does not necessarily imply that bullying is part of the developmental pathway to SV. However, future research is needed to determine if some forms of bullying behavior in childhood and adolescence have the potential to continue into adulthood and thus manifest in the form of SV. While we used the social-ecological perspective to frame the factors related to bullying and SV, there is a need for a theoretical model that explains the development, progression, and interrelationships across bullying and SV perpetration. No current theoretical model explains both outcomes well. In this paper we offer a graphical reflection of the links between these two forms of violence. Future research is needed to examine the links between the specific types of bullying experiences and the specific types of SV perpetration and to investigate variables that have

been linked to one type of violence to see if it is linked to the other. No studies to date have examined the connection between bullying and SV perpetration in a longitudinal investigation in which risk and protective factors are assessed for each construct. This paper serves as a call for the research community to consider examining these phenomena simultaneously to determine the extent to which bullying perpetration and SV perpetration deviate from one another across childhood and adolescence. Research is also needed to test the links between variables at different levels of the social ecology. Such research would inform bullying and SV prevention programs and enable the field to adapt existing bully prevention programs to make them more likely to prevent SV.

The current literature on bullying and SV is characterized by several limitations. Most research on risk factors for bullying and SV perpetration has focused on individual level constructs. Fewer studies have been conducted on factors from the outer layers of the social ecology. Notably, very few studies focus on protective factors for either form of violence. What also seem to be lacking are studies that examine the interplay between environmental factors and personal factors (individual or relational). For example, how do factors such as school climate or school attitudes and behavior interact with impulsivity or other individual level risk factors to influence risk for bullying and SV perpetration? Future studies that examine risk and protective factors for bullying and SV perpetration on multiple levels of the social ecology simultaneously would help tease out the relationships between personal and environmental factors.

Another limitation of the research on bullying is the inconsistent way that bullying behavior is operationalized. While many studies use the traditional definition, others allow students to use their definition of bullying or they focus on a range of behaviors (e.g., teasing, pushing, punching) that might reflect bullying but might also occur in other contexts, such as disputes between youth of relatively equal status or isolated events. Thus, a degree of error may be introduced when considering significant risk factors for bullying. Furthermore, if we had included only those studies that used the traditional definition of bullying we would have had fewer studies to draw from and it can be argued that we would have missed potentially important shared risk factors. On the other hand, by including such studies we run the risk that some of the results may reflect shared risk factors between SV and general youth aggression rather than bullying specifically. This limitation of the existing research on bullying and consequently the current review should be considered when drawing conclusions about the implications of the results for prevention efforts.

The risk factors shared by bullying and SV are frequently targeted by social development, cognitive behavioral and family training strategies that have been shown to reduce risk for youth peer violence (Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, 2007) and their relevance to SV perpetration has potentially important implications for prevention practice. For example, prevention strategies that effectively address shared risk factors, such as those that enhance social problem solving and those that work with families to promote parental monitoring and supervision, may result in reductions in both bullying and SV perpetration. A recent review of school-based bullying prevention programs found the greatest support for comprehensive programs that addressed multiple levels of the social ecology in schools, including training for individual students, peer groups, teachers, and administrative staff, and enforcement of school-wide rules and sanctions (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). The authors found that seven of the 10 studies evaluating whole-school approaches resulted in positive effects and five showed reductions in bullying behavior. Future evaluations of bullying and general peer violence prevention programs should assess the extent to which such strategies can influence risk for SV perpetration and consider ways to enhance the potential for beneficial outcomes.

Data about contributing factors that are unique to either bullying or SV are as important as data about shared risk and protective factors.

Knowledge about unique factors can inform efforts to enhance prevention strategies that are primarily designed to reduce bullying so that the potential impact on SV perpetration is maximized. For example, the results from this review suggest that bullying prevention strategies designed to teach youth strategies for reducing impulsive behavior, and efforts that enhance parental support and students' connectedness to their school are addressing factors that are strongly associated with both bullying and SV. Efforts to tailor these strategies to incorporate themes designed to reduce gender-based emotional constriction and rigidity, and correct myths about peer relationships, especially rape myths could potentially increase the likelihood that the preventive impacts would generalize from bullying to SV perpetration.

A recent theoretical piece from the nursing literature by Fredland (2008) offers the term "sexual bullying" as a conceptual link bridging bullying behavior with later sexually-related violence, such as teen dating violence and intimate partner violence. She proposes this term in an effort to encourage researchers to examine the links between bullying behaviors and early forms of sexualized violence. While there is controversy around the use of terms such as sexual bullying as they may mask the seriousness of SV that is occurring in schools (Gruber & Fineran, 2008; Stein & Breines, revise and resubmit), this review is in the same spirit as Fredland's efforts to bring attention to the links between bullying and sexualized violence. This review provides systematic evidence for a conceptual link between bullying experiences and SV, in all its adolescent and adult forms. The hope is that this review will stimulate future research on the associations between bullying and SV perpetration to further our ability to prevent these two public health problems.

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