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Bullying in the Wizarding World: Victim, Peer, and Adult Responses
in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

Casey John Winters

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Educational Specialist

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ABSTRACT

Bullying in the Wizarding World: Victim, Peer, and Adult Responses in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*

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Bullying is a phenomenon faced by students worldwide, and bibliotherapy is one viable classroom strategy to teach students how best to respond to bullying behavior. Although ample research exists on appropriate picture books with bullying themes, few studies have analyzed the content of middle-grade books for effective responses to bullying, despite the prevalence of bullying among middle school students. *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* was selected due to its accessibility, its instances of responses to bullying, and its reader demographics.

Researchers created a coding instrument to document all textual instances of bullying, victim responses, peer responses, and adult responses. Coders used this documentation to tally the frequency of various response types among victims, peers, and adults. Results from this frequency count were used to compare response types in the novel with research on response effectiveness—responses that reduce bullying and/or support the victim.

Findings reveal that the most common response among victims, peers, and adults is “no response described.” Among textual responses, victims commonly respond ineffectively through revenge-seeking, peers respond ineffectively by participating in the bullying, and adults respond effectively by listening to the victim or giving advice. Therefore, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* represents a wide range of effective and ineffective responses to bullying, both of which can be presented in bullying discussions with students. Researchers include a table with bullying response examples from *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* to aid education stakeholders in using the novel for these bibliotherapeutic discussions.

Keywords: responses to bullying, adult, peer, victim, *Harry Potter*, children's literature

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In June 2017, following multiple instances of bullying, sixth-grader Mallory Grossman committed suicide. According to Mallory's parents, school officials required Mallory to hug her tormenters as an attempted solution to the harmful behavior (Zaveri, 2018). Mallory's story is emblematic of educator, parent, and student struggles to answer bullying in appropriate ways that decrease harmful behavior and improve the coping abilities of victims. Responses to bullying behavior can result in either a reduction or increase in bullying behavior as well as a reduction or increase in adjustment difficulties (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004). Victim, peer, and adult responses to bullying are a vital component to understanding the bullying phenomenon.

Just as in reality, fiction is a common environment for bullying behavior, but concerned stakeholders should question what students are learning from literature about adaptive and maladaptive ways of responding to bullying. Researchers have analyzed bullying through the lens of literature, yet much of this research has remained focused within the arena of children's picture books (see Entenman, Murnen, & Hendricks, 2005; Flanagan et al., 2013; Moulton, Heath, Prater, & Dyches, 2011). However, because bullying tends to reach a zenith in middle school (Copeland, Wolke, Angold, & Costello, 2013; Eslea & Rees, 2001; Ma, 2002; Nansel et al., 2001; Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann, & Jugert, 2006), chapter books are an imperative medium for analysis. The purpose of this project was to ascertain the adaptive appropriateness of responses to bullying within one such book, *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.

Bullying

For behavior to be defined as bullying, it must meet three criteria: the perpetrator must have more power than the victim, the behavior must occur multiple times, and the perpetrator

must intend to harm the victim (Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999). Bullying behavior can be physical, verbal, or relational (Donoghue, Rosen, Almeida, & Brandwein, 2015; Sullivan, 2000; Wienclaw & Frey, 2012). Physical and verbal bullying are considered direct forms of bullying (Olweus et al., 1999; Sullivan, 2000). Relational, or indirect, bullying is behavior intended to damage a relationship, such as through gossip (Young, Boye, & Nelson, 2006). Any discussion of bullying must also take cyberbullying (harmful behavior enacted through technology) into account, particularly with the rise of social and other media in the 21st century.

Research has much to say regarding victims and bullies. For example, both victims and bullies experience detriments to mental and physical health as well as school adjustment problems (Nansel, Craig, Overpeck, Saluja, & Ruan, 2004). Further, victims of school bullying experience depression and anxiety in adolescence (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2014) and adulthood (Copeland et al., 2013; Sigurdson, Undheim, Wallander, Lydersen, & Sund, 2015). While victims and bullies share certain traits, such as loneliness and adjustment problems (Nansel et al., 2001) and insecurities (Rosen, Scott, & DeOrnellas, 2017), they differ in some respects. For example, bullies struggle to empathize with peers and may have overly permissive home lives (Rosen et al., 2017). Where bullies are often defined by externalizing behavior, victims often internalize their behavior (Farmer et al., 2015; Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004).

Educators, parents, and students themselves must consider the effectiveness of responses to bullying, which can be either adaptive or maladaptive depending on the increase or decrease of further harmful behavior and the effect on victim adjustment problems (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004). Compiling research from various sources (Davis & Nixon, 2014; Flanagan et al., 2013; Garnefski & Kraaij, 2014; Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004; Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003), the authors recognize 14 victim responses to bullying. Effective responses include

prosocial response, skill development, using adaptive humor, telling an adult at home, telling an adult at school, and telling a friend. Ineffective responses include maladaptive humor, retaliation, emotional expression, distancing, rumination, telling the bully how one feels, telling the bully to stop, and acceptance.

How peers and adults respond to bullying can have varying degrees of effectiveness as well. According to Davis and Nixon (2014), effective peer responses to bullying include spending time, talking with the victim at school, helping the victim to get away, giving advice, calling the victim at home, listening, telling an adult, helping the victim to tell an adult, distracting the perpetrator(s), and nicely asking the perpetrator to stop. Ineffective peer responses include ignoring the bullying, blaming the victim, and mocking the victim for being bullied or seeking support. Effective adult responses include giving advice, listening, follow-up, and amplified adult supervision. Additionally, ineffective adult responses include telling the victim to not “tattle,” ignoring the bullying behavior, telling the victim to solve the situation, and blaming the victim (Davis & Nixon, 2014). Responses to bullying send messages about how bullying is treated at school and how victims are or are not being supported.

Bibliotherapy

Utilizing interventions is a natural step to answering bullying behavior. Ttofi and Farrington (2009) analyzed bullying interventions, formulating a list of 20 intervention types. Some authors have paired bibliotherapy—the use of literature as a therapeutic intervention—specifically with bullying, albeit in the form of general recommendations (Olweus, 1993; Sjostrom & Stein, 1996) and book lists (see James, 2002) rather than experimental or quasi-experimental studies. Although not specifically aimed toward bullying, past research

(Shechtman, 2000; Shechtman, 2006; Shechtman, 2009) has recognized bibliotherapy as an effective possibility for opposing aggression.

With the purpose of understanding bullying from a literary perspective, researchers have coded fiction for its portrayal of bullying, particularly in children's picture books, discovering various themes and connections to the real-world research on the bullying phenomena (see Entenman et al. , 2005; Flanagan et al., 2013; Moulton et al., 2011). This research is beneficial to educators hoping to use bibliotherapy in the classroom, but more research is needed.

Statement of Problem

If educators opt to use literature as part of an anti-bullying intervention, they must know which books contain appropriate descriptions of victim, peer, and/or adult response to bullying. Because middle school is a salient period vis-à-vis bullying (Copeland et al., 2013; Eslea & Rees, 2001; Ma, 2002; Nansel et al., 2001; Scheithauer et al., 2006), middle-school educators must have research-based information regarding this harmful behavior, particularly concerning the messages students receive from popular literature; however, few studies have analyzed bullying in middle-grade fiction.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research was to analyze the bullying responses of victims, peers, and adults within the novel *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. This analysis allowed us to draw conclusions as to the common responses to bullying in the novel and how they align with research on response effectiveness. Additionally, we present a collection of these literary responses in a table for educators to discuss with students in a bibliotherapeutic context.

Research Questions

This study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do victims, peers, and adults respond to bullying in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*?
2. How do victim, peer, and adult responses to bullying in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* align with research on response effectiveness?

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Researchers often hold differing definitions of *bullying* or use discrete terms compared to those used by students (Donoghue et al., 2015). An exact definition may be less important in specific bullying incidents than alleviating the immediate situation; however, in systemic or schoolwide contexts, a concrete definition can be vital (Sercombe & Donnelly, 2013). Stakeholders have a responsibility to clearly define bullying as part of its reduction (Jones & Augustine, 2015). Furthermore, defining what bullying is *not* may be just as important; after all, some form of conflict is often present in schools. Sercombe and Donnelly (2013) report the following:

[There exists] a high level of responsibility for academics, policy-makers, practitioners and legislators to be precise in their understanding and in the formulation of the discourse. . . . If through vague definition an ever increasing range of agonistic relationships drift into the bullying category, then difficult, perhaps dominating but essentially non-pathological relationships will be caught up in the regulation of behaviour and the sanctions that may go along with that. (p. 500)

Recognizing the prevalence of bullying, the characteristics of bullies and victims, and possible interventions—bibliotherapy being one—for creating positive schoolwide and classroom climates are also of interest to educators.

Bullying

Researchers have often defined *bullying* by describing what it is *not*. Bullying is not teasing (Olweus, 1993), playful fighting (Fisher et al., 2015), illegal acts (Sullivan, 2000), school relationships in conflict (Sercombe & Donnelly, 2013), or fighting between equally powerful

peers (Lines, 2007). These definitional variations are important for educators to recognize if they aim to reduce bullying in their school environments.

Researchers have used many words and phrases synonymously with *bullying*, such as *peer aggression* (Donoghue et al., 2015), *peer victimization* (Graham & Bellmore, 2007; Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004), *peer mistreatment* (Davis & Nixon, 2014), and *harassment* (Graham & Bellmore, 2007; Olweus, 1993), yet there may be important distinctions. For example, some researchers (Lines, 2007; Sercombe & Donnelly, 2013) have separated *aggression* and *bullying*. Aggression has a place in certain contexts, such as sports, where aggression's lack of kindness is negligible compared to its aim; aggression by itself does not constitute bullying until it enters the arena of intended harm (Sercombe & Donnelly, 2013). Similarly, *harassment* may be a major component of bullying (Whisman, 2015), but *harassment* should be used when speaking of isolated incidents rather than persistent behavior (Ashbaughm & Cornell, 2008). For the purposes of this research, *aggression* and *harassment* are considered aspects of bullying, but never as synonyms.

Dan Olweus (1993), a formative researcher in the field of bully/victim relations, has stressed the "asymmetric power relationship" (p. 10) between bully and victim as a critical component of its definition, with the helplessness of the victim in stark contrast to the strength of the bully. Other researchers have generally included this power imbalance in their definitions (Lines, 2007; Nansel et al., 2001; Sullivan, 2000; Wienclaw & Frey, 2012), as have some state legislators and state education boards (Utah Code § 53G, 2018; Whisman, 2015). This power differential could be physical, social, or intellectual. Additionally, the bullying power differential may be due to the victim being outnumbered by multiple bullies, or the bully may be attempting to *gain* power through the bullying (Espelage & Swearer, 2003).

Another criterion for bullying behavior is the bully's intention of harm (Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus et al., 1999; Sercombe & Donnelly, 2013; Wienclaw & Frey, 2012). The resultant harm can be physical or psychological, if not both (Sullivan, 2000). In their own reworked definition of *bullying*, Sercombe and Donnelly (2013) recognized "the *sustained* [emphasis added] threat of harm" (p. 499) as a condition of bullying, which is a combination of both intended harm and its persistence over time.

Therefore, the third characteristic of bullying is its persistence (Fisher et al., 2015; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus et al., 1999; Sercombe & Donnelly, 2013; Wienclaw & Frey, 2012). Some researchers (Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993; Sercombe & Donnelly, 2013) have stated that for a behavior to be considered bullying, it must be repeated over time to separate it from common negativity or conflict in schools. Bullying's persistence can be short- or long-lived, and the bullying may be planned and systematic or haphazard but still successive (Sullivan, 2000).

Considering the above research, behavior must contain all three components to be considered bullying: (a) the victim is less powerful than the bully or bullies (physically or non-physically), or the bully is attempting to gain power; (b) the bully intends to harm the victim; and (c) the bullying behavior is continual or persistent.

Types of bullying. In an early definition of *bullying*, Olweus (1993) used "negative actions" broadly to describe *harm* (p. 9). These negative actions can be in the form of bodily harm, words, or the harder-to-recognize social damage, such as exclusion or ignoring. This definition has been refined over time by research. For example, Sercombe and Donnelly (2013) have critiqued Olweus's wording, citing negativity as common in schools—discomfort does not constitute a bullying situation. Olweus's early description of *bullying* has been expanded to

describe the three main types of bullying as physical, verbal, and relational (Donoghue et al., 2015; Sullivan, 2000; Wienclaw & Frey, 2012).

Physical bullying is perhaps the easiest bullying type to identify; it includes any physical abuse, such as hitting, pushing, or property damage, among other physical actions (Sullivan, 2000). Verbal bullying is the use of words to cause harm to a victim, which can include mocking, name-calling, threatening, and persistent teasing.

In relational bullying, or *relational aggression* as it is often called in the research literature, the bully uses interpersonal relationships to harm the victim. Examples include the bully “threatening to stop talking to a friend (the silent treatment), isolating a peer from his or her group of friends (social exclusion), or spreading gossip or rumors within the peer group” (Young et al., 2006, p. 298). This type of bullying is more difficult to identify because it is not as observable as other types of bullying (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). In fact, educators and students may not consider relational bullying as a type of aggression (Young et al., 2006).

Ultimately, all types of bullying are typically subsumed under two major categories: *direct* (physical and verbal bullying) and *indirect* (relational bullying), with the former being more overt than the latter (Olweus et al., 1999; Sullivan, 2000). Additionally, these bullying types are not necessarily separated—a bully may combine direct and indirect bullying types (Sullivan, 2000).

Unfortunately, direct and indirect bullying are not exclusive to school, nor even to a physical space; the ubiquity of the Internet presents a nascent and unique problem for students, educators, and researchers when the bully can now be anywhere at any time, such as online or in a text message. Despite the prevalence of technology, researchers have disagreed on many aspects of cyberbullying, even at the definitional level (Tokunaga, 2010). For example, research

has vacillated on whether to consider cyberbullying a type of bullying—distinct from physical, verbal, or relational bullying (Kim & Yun, 2016)—or a unique means or setting of the bullying (Musu-Gillette, Zhang, Wang, Zhang, & Oudekerk, 2017). Tokunaga (2010), hoping to unite cyberbullying research, performed a meta-synthesis of the literature and operationalized a definition of *cyberbullying*. He defined *cyberbullying* much as researchers have defined traditional bullying (intent to harm and persistence), with harm inflicted using technology. However, the power imbalance is absent in some definitions of *cyberbullying* (Musu-Gillette et al., 2017; Tokunaga, 2010), perhaps due to the possibilities of anonymity on the Internet. Despite conceptual disagreements, researchers have recognized cyberbullying as a problem faced by many students (Kim & Yun, 2016; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017; Tokunaga, 2010).

Prevalence. The prevalence of bullying varies by country, bullying type, and age. In a cross-national study of student self-reports, Nansel, Craig, Overpeck, Saluja, and Ruan (2004) discovered that bullying prevalence varied widely by country, averaging at 11% but ranging from as low as 5% (Sweden) to 20% (Lithuania) for students who reported being victims of bullying more than twice during a term. These differences in bullying prevalence are visible in studies conducted in various countries. Olweus's (1993) early studies in Scandinavia revealed that, in a Norwegian survey, 9% of students self-reported being bullied often, and 3% reported being bullied at least once every week. Furthermore, in a survey of over 2,000 German students from grades five through ten, 11.1% reported being bullied at least once a week (Scheithauer et al., 2006). According to Kim and Yun's (2016) survey in South Korea, 23.5% of sampled middle school students reported victimization. However, rather than persistence being measured by week in this study as in the Scandinavian and German studies, bullying was defined as at least once over the past 6 months—despite persistence being mentioned in Kim and Yun's (2016)

definition, the survey is more inclusive of singular incidents of harassment, thereby affecting the percentages.

Studies in the United States have revealed varying percentages of reported bullying. In their United States survey of 15,686 sixth through tenth graders, Nansel et al. (2001) reported that 8.4% of sample students were bullied at least once every week. Furthermore, in a 2015 joint national survey conducted by the United States Department of Education and the Department of Justice, 21% of 12- through 18-year-olds reported being victims to bullying at school (Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). Additionally, Davis and Nixon (2014) surveyed 13,177 students ranging from 11 to 19 years old, discovering that over 25% of students reported being bullied at least twice a month.

In addition to country and culture, prevalence for bullying type is not equal among the research literature. In focus groups of 44 elementary and middle school students, Donoghue, Rosen, Almeida, and Brandwein (2015) coded and analyzed student responses for bullying incidents and bullying type. Of the bullying incidents, the researchers discovered more mentions of verbal and physical incidents (51% and 29% respectively) than relational (18%). In other words, these students discussed direct bullying more often than indirect. A joint U.S. survey in 2015 (Musu-Gillette et al., 2017) also revealed high accounts of verbal bullying, but relational was second highest, ahead of physical bullying reports. Of the 21% of sixth through twelfth graders who reporting being bullied during the school year, 13% reported being the target of insults, 7% reported being bullied by hateful words, and 4% were subject to threats. Regarding relational bullying, in the same survey, 12% of students were the focus of rumors, and 5% experienced social exclusion. Finally, in terms of physical bullying, 5% of students were

“pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on” (p. 74), and 2% experienced damaged property (Musu-Gillette et al., 2017).

A German study revealed verbal bullying as the most common type experienced by students (Scheithauer et al., 2006), but not all countries follow this trend. In South Korea, relational bullying was more commonly experienced, perhaps due to the collectivist culture compared to the individualistic nature of United States citizens (Kim & Yun, 2016).

Several reasons might account for differences in prevalence and bullying type, across countries and within them. First, as seen above, researchers study different age groups; results from one study may not correlate to another study or generalize to another age group. Second, although researchers often hold similar definitions of bullying, their methods can fail to reflect important aspects of the concept. For example, Kim and Yun (2016) include persistence in their definition of bullying, yet in their survey, students are considered victims if they experience bullying once or more over a six-month period. Similarly, although researchers often agree on persistence as a salient aspect of bullying, some measure frequent bullying by week, month, term, or school year. These differences make consolidating the prevalence of bullying difficult.

Despite research disparities for overall bullying prevalence, much of the literature recognizes similar trends related to bullying and age, particularly the decrease in bullying as students develop. Olweus (1993) found that in grades two through six, an average of 11.6% of students were bullied—contrasting to the 5.4% average of students who were bullied in grades seven through nine. Musu-Gillette et al. (2017) found similar trends, with 31% of sixth graders and 25% of seventh graders reporting victimization by bullying, whereas 15% of twelfth graders reported being bullied. Furthermore, Nansel et al. (2001) revealed that 13.3% and 10.5% of students in sixth and seventh grade, respectively, reported weekly bullying, declining to 4.8% for

the tenth-grade student sample. While the percentages of students who are bullied regularly are disparate, bullying's tendency to decline with each grade is similar across the literature.

Although bullying has a downward trend as students age, the transition from elementary school to middle school can be a salient moment for students; the actions bullies take change as bullies and victims develop—for example, as their relationships become more complex, victims experience more direct and indirect forms of relational bullying (Crick, Casas, & Nelson, 2002), and bullying behavior is at its highest in middle school (Copeland et al., 2013; Eslea & Rees, 2001; Ma, 2002; Nansel et al., 2001; Scheithauer et al., 2006). Pellegrini and Long (2002) used self, teacher, and peer reports, as well as direct observations and diary entries, to study bullying among rural fifth graders. They found that bullying increased as students transitioned beyond elementary school. Similarly, in their survey of over 2,000 fifth through tenth graders, Scheithauer, Hayer, Petermann, and Jugert (2006) found that the sixth- through ninth-grade students reported the most bullying, with less bullying reported among fifth- and tenth-grade students. Therefore, middle school students face more bullying behaviors than their younger and older counterparts.

The supposition of Farmer et al. (2015) for bullying's peak in middle school—with the transition beyond elementary school being a volatile moment—is the change in social environment and the change in authority figures:

In the elementary school context, classroom teachers tend to be with students throughout the day and are in a position to monitor children's peer affiliations and to help them negotiate peer relationships in ways that may reduce problematic peer affiliations. In middle school, teachers typically have contact with students for a relatively short period and have less opportunity to monitor peer group dynamics. (Farmer et al., 2015, p. 14)

Consequences of bullying. Bullying can affect bullies, victims, and bully-victims, or those who are both bullied and resort to bullying others (Kochel, Ladd, Bagwell, & Yabko, 2015; Solomontos-Kountouri, Tsagkaridis, Gradinger, & Strohmeier, 2017). In a longitudinal study of Norwegian students, Sigurdson, Undheim, Wallander, Lydersen, and Sund (2015) collected student data at adolescence and again at an average age of 27. Those students involved in bullying during adolescence experienced more internalizing and externalizing mental health problems in adulthood. Similarly, in their cross-national study of bullying, Nansel et al. (2004) found that students involved in bullying experienced poor emotional and physical health, irrespective of the students' countries and involvement status as bullies, victims, or bully-victims. The effect of bullying extends beyond emotional and mental difficulties as well—bullying-involved students often face difficulties in school adjustment (Nansel et al., 2004) as well as career difficulties, poverty, and social and behavioral disruptions in adulthood (Wolke, Copeland, Angold, & Costello, 2013). Bullying is a problem for all students involved, yet researchers have also studied the effect of bullying on each role individually.

Effect on bullies. While the targets of bullying are its true victims, bullies experience detriments to their well-being. For instance, bullying others may result in future criminality and alcohol use (Nansel et al., 2004; Olweus, 1993; Wolke et al., 2013). Olweus (1993) found that 35–40% of students who were classified as bullies had received at least three criminal convictions by age 24, with close to 60% of bullies having been convicted once or more.

Additionally, bullying others may increase the risk of internalizing problems such as fear and anxiety (Sigurdson et al., 2015), educational difficulties (Nansel et al., 2004; Wolke et al., 2013), and antisocial personality disorder in adulthood (Copeland et al., 2013). Despite these problems, bullies' health is less at risk than with victims or bully-victims, and the effects of

bullying on the bully may be due to familial difficulties or psychiatric problems in childhood rather than the bullying itself acting as the catalyst (Wolke et al., 2013).

The effect of bullying on bullies is an area for further research. More research has focused on victims and bully-victims compared to perpetrators; however, all parties involved must be studied if complete understanding of the bullying phenomenon is to be reached and for effective interventions to be instigated.

Effect on victims. The effect of bullying on victims is often more damaging than it is for bullies. Victims of bullying often experience loneliness and social marginalization (Nansel et al., 2004), low self-esteem (Hampel, Manhal, & Hayer, 2009; Nansel et al., 2004), emotional difficulties (Hampel et al., 2009; Nansel et al., 2004), anger control problems (Hampel et al., 2009), depression and anxiety in adolescence (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2014), depression and anxiety in adulthood (Copeland et al., 2013; Sigurdson et al., 2015), panic disorder and agoraphobia (Copeland et al., 2013), and suicidality (Copeland et al., 2013; Olweus, 1993; Sullivan, 2000). Wolke et al. (2013) found that, unlike bullies, victims continue to experience financial, social, and health difficulties as adults after the researchers accounted for family difficulties and psychiatric problems in childhood. In other words, the adverse effects encountered by victims during adulthood were due to the bullying itself rather than other childhood variables.

Certain variables may reduce the negative effects of bullying on victims. Students who are victimized for an abbreviated time face fewer social and financial problems in adulthood compared to repeat victims (Wolke et al., 2013). Additionally, victims in high school experience less trauma compared to their elementary and middle school counterparts; the latter are more likely to feel unusual difficulty with daily tasks or feel traumatized by the dangerous environment (Davis & Nixon, 2014). Furthermore, despite the consequences of bullying

experienced by victims, researchers consider social support (Baldry, 2004; Rigby, 2000) and positive refocusing (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2014) as examples of mitigating factors in reducing bullying's effect on mental health (effective and ineffective coping strategies will be discussed in a future section). Despite these qualifying variables, however, any one of the consequences of bullying faced by victims could be detrimental to the psychological, mental, emotional, social, and physical well-being of students, thereby justifying interventions in the reduction of these effects and the bullying behavior itself.

Effect on bully-victims. A third party involved in the phenomenon of bullying is the student who is both victim and bully, or bully-victim. As an amalgam of both victim and bully, bully-victims often experience the detrimental effects of both statuses. Not only are bully-victims likely to experience panic disorder and depression in adulthood, like victims (Copeland et al., 2013), but also, according to the cross-national study by Nansel et al. (2004), bully-victims reported levels of emotional adjustment, relationships with classmates, and health problems similar to those of victims, with levels of school adjustment and alcohol use similar to those of bullies. Moreover, in some cases, their scores were significantly worse than those of either bullies or victims. (p. 734)

Wolke et al. (2013) discovered similar findings on the combination of bullying and victimization effects for bully-victims, with the mental and physical health of bully-victims in adulthood being worse than that of bullies only and victims only, with greater risk of illnesses or disorders. Bully-victims, like victims only, were more likely to report poor relationships and, like bullies, exhibit illegal behaviors in adulthood, struggle academically, and frequently use alcohol. In fact, after adjusting for childhood psychiatric and familial difficulties, the detrimental effects experienced by bully-victims remained. Compared to bullies only and victims only, "the

greatest impairment across multiple areas of adult functioning was found for bully-victims” (Wolke et al., 2013, p. 1967).

As has been explored above, all three student statuses within the bullying phenomenon—bullies, victims, and bully-victims—encounter detriments to physical, mental, emotional, and social health, both during the bullying incidents and later in adulthood. These players in school bullying will be, and should be, the focus of those intervening to reduce bullying and its effect. However, bullying’s impact spreads beyond the bully and victim dichotomy (bully-victims, while often separate, also take on the characteristics of both bullies and victims): in addition to recognizing the common characteristics of bullies and victims, educational stakeholders must also consider the characteristics of the bystander.

Characteristics of bullies, victims, and bystanders. Much like the effects of bullying on bullies and victims, these roles often overlap on certain characteristics. For example, both bullies and victims have “poorer psychosocial adjustment” (Nansel et al., 2001, p. 2097) than students uninvolved in bullying. Additionally, in middle school, both bullies and victims experience loneliness (Nansel et al., 2001). Students with low self-esteem are more likely to be victimized or bully others than students with high self-esteem (Ma, 2002), and teachers describe both bullies and victims as insecure (Rosen et al., 2017). Despite these similarities, bullies and victims are different in many respects, and although their relationship is central to the discussion on bullying, the characteristics of bystanders will also be discussed.

Bullies. Many researchers recognize gender as a salient factor in bullying involvement, with boys more likely to bully others than girls (Ma, 2002; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993). Some researchers (Kim & Yun, 2016; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1993) have recognized girls as more likely than boys to use the difficult-to-discern method of relational bullying. Compared

to victims, bullies exhibit problematic externalizing behaviors (Farmer et al., 2015), are often older and physically stronger (Olweus, 1993), and typically have a better ability to make friends (Nansel et al., 2001), which results in higher social status as well as friends or supporters who bully for the leader (Olweus, 1993). Despite this tendency toward popularity, bullies are often characterized by less emotional empathy or by an inability to relate to other students (Olweus, 1993; Rosen et al., 2017; Solomontos-Kountouri et al., 2017).

Furthermore, bullies tend to hold a favorable view of violence and have “a strong need to dominate others” (Olweus, 1993, p. 34). A maladaptive home life could contribute to this desire for power and enjoyment of causing pain in victims (Olweus, 1993), and bullies may learn bullying behaviors from the examples of aggressive parents, or their home life may be overly permissive of inappropriate behavior (Olweus, 1993; Rosen et al., 2017). Bullies can come from low-income households, and they are more likely to have parents with mental health problems than students who do not bully, although these problems were self-reported rather than necessarily diagnostic (Shetgiri, Lin, & Flores, 2015). In addition to inflicting emotional or physical pain, Olweus (1993) also recognized a bully profiting from the victimization of others through theft of possessions or pressuring the victims into giving them money. Overall, students with teacher and peer perceptions of externalizing behavior are more likely to be labeled bullies (Farmer et al., 2015).

Group membership plays a vital role in bully status as well. Farmer et al. (2015) found that students who bully or associate with bullies in elementary school are likely to remain bullies or supporters when transitioning to middle school. Family background is less clear than peer group membership: research has vacillated on whether the number of parents a student has in the home is significant to bullying behavior. According to Ma (2002), the number of the parents in

the home, or the death of a parent, is insignificant to both bullying and victimization, despite myths to the contrary. Yet Solomontos-Kountouri, Tsagkaridis, Gradinger, and Strohmeier (2017) found that parental separation could be a factor in bullying behavior, and Shetgiri, Lin, and Flores (2015) found the same for single-mother households.

Similarly, academic achievement and bullying have an uncertain relationship—some researchers have discovered a connection between low academic achievement and bullying involvement (Nansel et al., 2001; Solomontos-Kountouri et al., 2017), while others consider low academic status as a cause of bullying to be a stereotype or myth (Olweus, 1993), and still others report that bullies achieve high scores academically (Ma, 2002). These differences among researchers may be due to country or culture, or study design.

Victims. In contrast to bullies, victims in general have empathy, but they are also prone to more emotional problems than students not involved in bullying as either bullies or victims (Solomontos-Kountouri et al., 2017). Also unlike bullies, many victims have an inability to make friends, often facing loneliness (Nansel et al., 2001; Rosen et al., 2017) and a decrease in favorable reception by peers (Kochel et al., 2015); therefore, victims lack in social and/or physical power (Olweus, 1993). Moreover, victims in general exhibit internalizing rather than externalizing behavior (Farmer et al., 2015; Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004).

In a literature review of research on bullied victims, Olweus (1993) recognized myriad characteristics often shared by victims, such as being depressed, excluded, low in self-esteem, anxious, withdrawn, self-critical, connected with adults more than peers, and timid. In contrast to bullies, victims hold an unfavorable view of violence and are generally non-aggressive (Olweus, 1993). This type of victim just described, however, is more common than what Olweus (1993) calls the “provocative victims” (p. 33), who are emotionally mercurial, aggressive, and

irritating to teachers and other students. These victims may resort to bullying others weaker than themselves, becoming bully-victims (Olweus, 1993).

The strength of gender's effect on victim status is nebulous among researchers. Kim and Yun (2016) found that girls were more likely to be targets than boys, Olweus (1993) and Nansel et al. (2001) found that boys were more likely to experience bullying than girls, and Scheithauer et al. (2006) found no difference by gender. Again, culture may play a role in these findings, as these studies were conducted in South Korea, Norway, the United States, and Germany, respectively. Bullying type may play a role in the gender of targets as well, with physical bullying more common among male targets (Davis & Nixon, 2014) and relational bullying more common than physical bullying among female targets (Crick et al., 2002; Young et al., 2006).

Although a common stereotype portrays victims as the smart "nerd," this may not always be the case (Sullivan, 2000). Teachers describe victims as possibly high or low in intelligence (Rosen et al., 2017). Ma (2002) found a similar contradiction depending on age, where victims in sixth grade were often high-achieving academically, but eighth-grade victims were low-achieving. Perhaps this regression of academic achievement as time passes is due to repeated bullying: this academic lapse may be one sign of a student's victim status (Olweus, 1993).

Reason for bullying. Bullies may victimize other students for a variety of reasons. A bully perceiving physical weakness in another student may increase the likelihood of that student being targeted (Olweus, 1993), as might the victim's lack of assertiveness (Rosen et al., 2017) and social ineptitude or lack of friends (Nansel et al., 2001). Teachers recognize victims as being bullied based on physical appearance, clothing, or hygiene (Rosen et al., 2017). Davis and Nixon (2014) found that 78% of victims reported being targeted due to either looks or body

shape. Students may also be bullied due to other characteristics, such as sex, sexual orientation, disability, and race (Davis & Nixon, 2014; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017; Sullivan, 2000).

Although researchers recognize common characteristics among students involved in bullying, whether as bullies or victims, students can be bullies or victims at various stages in life: “bullies come in all shapes and sizes, as do victims” (Sullivan, 2000, p. 16). Parental permissiveness or emotional absence on the part of parents may contribute to bullying behavior (Olweus, 1993), but to consider “a family as predictably producing either a bully or a victim is tantamount to blaming the family, which is not constructive. Research findings on bullying are useful if taken with a large dose of common sense” (Sullivan, 2000, p. 34).

Bystanders. Bullying does not take place in a vacuum, where only bully and victim are affected, and where no other students are witnesses. Song and Oh (2017) define the *bystander effect* in schools as “a student’s reluctance to help victims of bullying in the presence of other witnesses” (p. 321). The researchers discovered differences among bystanders depending on personal experience and the absence or presence of other bystanders. When no other bystanders were present, perceived self-competence in handling the bullying situation was the most influential predictor of bystander intervention, and bystanders were more likely to defend the victim if they were empathetic and had experience as a victim themselves. Conversely, in the presence of other witnesses, bystanders who were or had been bullies themselves were less likely to defend victims, whereas popular students may defend victims to maintain their social status among witnesses (Song & Oh, 2017). Although victims and bullies are the central protagonists and antagonists, respectively, of bullying situations, bystanders and their experiences play an important role in the bullying phenomenon.

Victim responses to bullying. Targets of bullying may respond in one or more ways to the victimization. Modifying Kochenderfer-Ladd's (2004) list of coping strategies used by victims of bullying, Flanagan et al. (2013) recognized nine categories of victim responses in their analysis of bullying-themed children's literature:

Revenge seeking (e.g. trick the bully, scare the bully), distancing (e.g. ignore the bully, physical escape), acceptance (e.g. passive acceptance, active acceptance), advice seeking (e.g. tell an adult, seek peer support), prosocial response (e.g. befriend the bully, compromising), skill development (e.g. confidence building, perspective taking), emotional expression (e.g. cry, yell), rumination (e.g. worry, wishful thinking), and bystander intervention. (p. 696)

Some items on Davis and Nixon's (2014) list of victim actions overlap with the nine categories recognized by Flanagan et al. (2013)—however, advice seeking could be separated into either “Told an adult at home . . . told a friend . . . told an adult at school” (Davis & Nixon, 2014, p. 30), and Davis and Nixon (2014) also recognized the use of humor, the victim verbally expressing how he or she felt about the harmful behavior, and directly telling the bully to stop as other possible actions.

Understanding the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of these responses is of vital importance, both for the purposes of this study as well as for student stakeholders hoping to reduce bullying or increase victim resilience. Kochenderfer-Ladd (2004) differentiate between adaptive and maladaptive responses to bullying. A response is effective if it either reduces or ends the bullying, or if the victim experiences “fewer internalizing adjustment problems” (p. 330). Conversely, a victim's response is ineffective if the bullying remains stable or increases, or if the victim experiences “exacerbated adjustment problems” (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004, p. 330).

We will use these definitions in the exploration of both effective and ineffective victim responses to bullying.

Effective victim responses. Using categories and responses from various research (Davis & Nixon, 2014; Flanagan et al., 2013; Garnefski & Kraaij, 2014; Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004; Martin et al., 2003), we recognized 14 victim responses to bullying behavior. Among these victim responses, six are considered effective by teachers and/or students at reducing either the bullying itself or the victim's internalizing of problems: prosocial response (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004; Rosen et al., 2017), skill development (Davis & Nixon, 2014; Garnefski & Kraaij, 2014; Rosen et al., 2017), using adaptive humor (Davis & Nixon, 2014; Martin et al., 2003), and advice seeking (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004; Rosen et al., 2017), which we divide into telling a friend, telling an adult at home, and telling an adult at school (Davis & Nixon, 2014) for specificity.

Prosocial response. In focus groups with public school teachers, Rosen et al. (2017) attempted to understand the educator perspective on effective and ineffective victim responses. Teachers considered conflict resolution—or prosocial response, per the wording of Flanagan et al. (2013)—to be an effective strategy. Students feel the same: 5- to 11-year-olds also perceived conflict resolution as effective in the face of bullying (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004).

Skill development. The victim response of skill development is synonymous with changing perspective or increasing confidence (Flanagan et al., 2013). Teachers considered positivity to be effective (Rosen et al., 2017), and bullied students found that reframing was a helpful response (Davis & Nixon, 2014). Furthermore, Garnefski and Kraaij (2014) found that positive reappraisal and positive refocusing were negatively correlated with anxiety and depression symptoms in 13- to 16-year-old students, although these results were self-reported rather than diagnostic.

Adaptive humor. Davis and Nixon (2014) found humor to be the most helpful self-action among bullied victims according to elementary school males, middle school males and females, and high school males and females. In fact, the only group who found humor to be unhelpful was elementary school females. It should be noted that, according to this research, the bullying behavior did not necessarily stop: “Often the humor was internal or used in a healing way with friends after the incident” (Davis & Nixon, 2014, p. 35).

In the above study, all students who used humor in response to bullying claimed to use positive humor (Davis & Nixon, 2014). However, for the purposes of this research, a distinction should be made between helpful and unhelpful humor types. In their creation of the Humor Styles Questionnaire, Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, and Weir (2003) recognized adaptive and maladaptive types of humor: individuals may use humor to enhance their own well-being or the well-being of relationships, or individuals may use humor to degrade themselves or others. More specifically, adaptive humor is affiliative in the form of jokes to uplift others, or it is self-enhancing by way of having using humor to help cope or taking a humorous perspective. These adaptive humor types were positively correlated with self-esteem and mental well-being and negatively correlated with anxiety and depression. Although the research of Martin et al. (2003) was focused on adolescents and adults, Klein and Kuiper (2006) make a case for its applicability to bullying in middle childhood.

Advice seeking. Overall, advice seeking is an effective victim response; however, according to teachers and students, a victim seeking advice from a peer or trusted adult can be either effective or ineffective depending on certain factors. Davis and Nixon (2014) surveyed 13,177 students from 31 schools in 12 states, ranging in age from 11 to 19. They found that the helpfulness of advice depended on how close students felt to adults at school. Additionally,

students are less likely to endorse telling an adult the older they get (Davis & Nixon, 2014; Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004), but the willingness to seek advice may depend on the resultant support or lack thereof on the part of trusted adults (Donoghue et al., 2015). In other words, advice seeking is an effective victim response when the adults and/or peers support the victim.

Advice seeking can take many forms. Davis and Nixon (2014) recognized three types of advice seeking on the part of victimized students: talking to a friend, talking to an adult at home, and talking to an adult at school. All three were considered helpful responses to bullying, regardless of student age or gender (Davis & Nixon, 2014).

Ineffective victim responses. Of the many possible victim responses, the following are considered ineffective at either reducing victim internalizing problems or reducing bullying behavior: maladaptive humor (Martin et al., 2003), retaliation (Camodeca & Goossens, 2005; Davis & Nixon, 2014; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; Rosen et al., 2017), emotional expression (Davis & Nixon, 2014; Mahady Wilton, Craig, & Pepler, 2000; Rosen et al., 2017; Smith, P. K., 2004), distancing (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004; Mahady Wilton et al., 2000; Rosen et al., 2017), rumination (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2014; Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004; Rosen et al., 2017), telling the bully how one feels (Davis & Nixon, 2014), telling the bully to stop (Davis & Nixon, 2014), and acceptance (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2014; Mahady Wilton et al., 2000).

Maladaptive humor. In their research of humor styles with adolescents and adults, Martin et al. (2003) found that maladaptive humor is that which is sarcastic, aggressive, at the expense of true emotions, or at the expense of self or others. In other words, this humor type is defined by its inconsideration of the impact of the humor. Maladaptive humor was positively correlated with neuroticism, and self-defeating humor in particular represented a lack in self-

esteem and was positively correlated with aggression, anxiety, and depression (Martin et al., 2003).

Retaliation. In children's media, bullying behavior is often resolved through the victim's revenge or retaliation. For example, in an analysis of 38 bully-themed picture books, 24% were resolved by revenge (Moulton et al., 2011). Flanagan et al. (2013) found similar percentages in an analysis of 73 picture books, where 25% of the books endorsed tricking, scaring, or retaliation in some way against the bully. Despite the literary prevalence of retaliation, aggression is considered ineffective at reducing bullying behavior (Mahady Wilton et al., 2000). Furthermore, teachers recognize retaliation as ineffective in schools (Rosen et al., 2017), and kindergartners feel retaliation may intensify the bullying behavior and the victims will remain victims (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997). Similarly, middle school students feel retaliation, as victims, is ineffective at reducing bullying (Camodeca & Goossens, 2005) and is "as likely to make things better as to make things worse" (Davis & Nixon, 2014, p. 41).

Emotional expression. Victims of bullying may express their emotions directly to the bully; however, in their observations of 120 first- through sixth-graders, Mahady Wilton, Craig, and Pepler (2000) found that expressing sadness was ineffective at diminishing bullying situations. Teachers recognized crying as ineffective (Rosen et al., 2017), and students perceived that, on average, expressing feelings verbally even made the bullying worse, particularly among middle school male students (Davis & Nixon, 2014). Bullies often lack empathy (Olweus, 1993; Rosen et al., 2017; Solomontos-Kountouri et al., 2017), which may explain the ineffectiveness of victims' emotional expressions.

Distancing. Unfortunately for victims, a *lack* of emotional expression can also be an ineffective response: teachers perceived that "students who do not react or who react strongly are

more likely to be victimized” (Rosen et al., 2017, p. 129). Amid bullying behavior, distancing can refer to cognitive distancing (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004) or literal, physical distancing (Flanagan et al., 2013). According to students, cognitive distancing is ineffective (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004), and while avoidance—such as walking away from the situation or “pretended it didn't bother me” (Davis & Nixon, 2014, p. 30)—may be a separate strategy from doing nothing, neither of these strategies are considered helpful among bullied students (Davis & Nixon, 2014).

Despite the above research on the ineffectiveness of distancing, a survey of middle school students found nonchalance to be effective (Camodeca & Goossens, 2005), and Mahady Wilton et al. (2000) also found ignoring the bullying situation may be effective at reducing bullying; nevertheless, “by failing to confront their bullies, victims’ use of passive coping strategies positively reinforces the bully’s motivations of capitulation, low retaliation threat, and personal gain” (p. 242). Therefore, while ignoring or avoiding the situation could be effective at reducing victimization for an individual target, the decrease in bullying may be a short-term reduction, or the bully may still victimize others. Thus, we consider distancing an ineffective victim response.

Rumination. A target of bullying may internalize the victimization, which is ineffective from the perspective of teachers (Rosen et al., 2017). Not only is internalization correlated with victimization (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004), but “this strategy appeared to strengthen the effect of bullying on depression” (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2014, p. 1159). Because loneliness is a common characteristic among victims (Nansel et al., 2001; Rosen et al., 2017), and because victims are prone to internalizing behavior (Farmer et al., 2015; Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004), student stakeholders must be aware of the ineffectiveness of rumination, particularly as researchers have recognized a danger of victim suicidality (Copeland et al., 2013; Olweus, 1993; Sullivan, 2000).

Telling the bully how one feels. Davis and Nixon (2014) call these types of victim responses “I-messages,” which students felt were unhelpful in that they sometimes improved situations but sometimes made things worse, regardless of student age.

Telling the bully to stop. Among students of all ages surveyed by Davis and Nixon (2014), this response worsened bullying situations more than any other, although for middle school students, this confrontational response was not as detrimental as retaliation.

Acceptance. In their analysis of coping strategies in children’s books, Flanagan et al. (2013) claimed “coping through active acceptance of bullying was found to be utilized in many books, but historically has not been present on any coping measurement instruments” (p. 700). Despite this assertion, Mahady Wilton et al. (2000) found that, much like distancing, acquiescence is effective at reducing, but fails to resolve, the bullying, and the target may become a repeat victim. Acceptance is correlated with depression and anxiety as well among secondary school students, although these correlations are low (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2014).

Although student and teacher perspectives are important, a research limitation of both Davis and Nixon (2014) and Rosen et al. (2017) is the failure to provide their respective students and teachers a concrete definition of *effective* or *helpful* responses; no distinction was made on whether a victim response was helpful at reducing the bullying and/or helpful at reducing the victims’ internalizing problems. Despite this limitation, even imprecise perspectives are a key factor in beginning to understand the effectiveness of victim responses.

In summary, victims respond in myriad ways to bullying. Additionally, although some researchers use differing terms, they have studied these coping strategies or their synonyms from the perspectives of both students and school teachers.

Teachers, students, and researchers consider six victim responses to be effective: prosocial response, skill development, adaptive humor, telling a friend, telling an adult at home, and telling an adult at school. Additionally, eight victim responses are ineffective: maladaptive humor, retaliation, emotional expression, distancing, rumination, telling the bully how one feels, telling the bully to stop, and acceptance. Understanding the effectiveness of these victim responses is crucial both for school-wide bullying programs as well as in the analysis of books for bibliotherapeutic use—both interventions pursue the goals of reducing bullying behavior in schools and increasing the resilience of victims. Also crucial is the understanding that the effectiveness of a victim response may be situation- and bullying type-specific (Murray-Harvey, Skrzypiec, & Slee, 2012); thus, educators should take caution to understand the bullying situation and the most effective responses available for specific victims.

Peer responses to bullying. A victim of bullying behavior is not always alone—bystanders may be present, or the victim’s peers may hear about the bullying later. Kindergartners perceived bystander interventions to be effective at reducing bullying behavior (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997), which is aligned with teacher perspectives on bystander effectiveness (Rosen et al., 2017).

Davis and Nixon (2014) surveyed nearly 3,000 victims of bullying, who recognized multiple possible peer responses to bullying with varying levels of effectiveness—either “things got worse,” “nothing changed,” or “things got better.” Surveyed victimized students considered the most helpful peer responses to be spending time, talking with the victim at school, helping the victim to get away, giving advice, calling the victim at home, listening, telling an adult, helping the victim to tell an adult, distracting the perpetrator(s), and nicely asking the perpetrator to stop. The majority of mistreated students were often supported in helpful ways. These same

students considered the least helpful peer responses to be ignoring the bullying, blaming the victim, and mocking the victim for being bullied or seeking support—additionally, mistreated students did not consider a peer telling the bully to stop in a rude way to make things better. Unfortunately, nearly half of victimized students were ignored by their peers. Peer actions have the potential to have a more positive effect than victim responses or adult responses (Davis & Nixon, 2014); however, this does not negate the value of adult response. It should also be noted that Davis and Nixon's (2014) did not include retaliation or revenge as a possible peer response, nor did they include taking part in the bullying as followers of the bully; in addition to the above peer actions noted by Davis and Nixon (2014), we believe peers may also respond to bullying by retaliating on behalf of the victim or by becoming part of the problem as bullies themselves.

Furthermore, in a study of peer involvement in bullying, Hawkins, Pepler, and Craig (2001) concluded that peer aggression, or retaliation, may help in the short-term, yet it is not beneficial in the long-term. This aligns with research on victim revenge and retaliation, as previously stated above.

Adult responses to bullying. In their research on bullying among 11- to 19-year-old students, Davis and Nixon (2014) also surveyed students regarding adult responses and the helpfulness of these responses. Students considered giving advice, listening, follow-up, and amplified adult supervision to be the most helpful responses; the least helpful strategies were telling the victim to not “tattle,” ignoring the bullying behavior, telling the victim to solve the situation, and blaming the victim. Responses that resulted in no change, and were therefore ineffective at improving the situation, were punishing the bully, telling the victim they would talk to the bully, talking to the bully and victim together, speaking about the behavior during class, telling a large group (a class or entire school) about the bullying, and having a speaker come to

school. The surveyed students were often listened to (63%) and given advice (53%), but 30% were ignored and 29% were told to solve the situation themselves. Overall, regardless of grade or gender, victimized students were less traumatized when adults responded by listening (Davis & Nixon, 2014).

Adults can play a major role in intervening to support victims and reduce bullying behavior. In addition to the responses delineated above, the number of adults present at break times, such as recess, affects the amount of bullying behavior (Olweus, 1993); Siyahhan, Aricak, and Cayirdag-Acar (2012) found that, among 419 middle school students, victims of bullying who avoided talking with parents or educators about the bullying were more likely to feel hopeless. Similarly, students surveyed by Davis and Nixon (2014) reported less trauma from bullying when they felt supported by adults. In terms of parenting, proper boundaries and “non-physical methods of child-rearing create harmonious and independent children” (Olweus, 1993, p. 40), and strong parent-to-child communication is associated with non-bullies (Shetgiri et al., 2015).

Despite the constructive effect adults can have on bullying-involved students, Musu-Gillette et al. (2017) found that only 43 percent of victims in 2015 told an adult about the bullying. In this study, sixth and seventh graders were more likely to report bullying than ninth through twelfth graders (Musu-Gillette et al., 2017); however, bullying tends to peak in middle school (Copeland et al., 2013; Eslea & Rees, 2001; Ma, 2002; Nansel et al., 2001; Scheithauer et al., 2006). Yet students in middle school receive less teacher attention (Farmer et al., 2015) and less adult support (Olweus, 1993) than their younger counterparts. The above review of adult responses indicates that despite the positive impact adults can have on students involved in

bullying, many children, especially middle school students, are not experiencing support or intervention.

Bullying interventions. As stated above, the effects of bullying can be detrimental to students' physical, mental, emotional, and social health. Another adverse effect of bullying is its cyclicity and the message non-intervened bullying sends to students; as Olweus (1993) posited, if bullies don't face intervention from educators and parents, their aggressive behavior is being rewarded, and the inhibitions of other students to act aggressively will decrease, thereby increasing bullying involvement in the school. Peers and adult stakeholders—such as parents and educators—must know the available types of bullying interventions, and the effectiveness of various interventions in reducing bullying behavior and/or strengthening the victim's resilience.

Intervention types. Many interventions used in schools are based on the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (Smith, J. D., Cousins, & Stewart, 2005; Smith, P. K., 2004). With this program, Olweus (1993) advocates for opposing bullying at the schoolwide level, the classroom level, and the individual level. Intervention at the widest level, the school, sends bullies the message that bullying is not tolerated. At the classroom level, the intervention includes collaborative rule-setting, role-playing, cooperative group work, and reading bullying-themed fiction to increase empathy, with the caveat that teachers choose books with proper concepts of bullies and victims. Finally, at the individual level, educators can support and protect victims and work with bullies to reduce improper behavior. The core components of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program include involvement from parents and teachers, administrative support, collaborative classroom rules, proper teacher density during break times, and discussions with students involved in bullying (as bullies and victims) and their parents (Olweus, 1993).

Some schools may prefer incorporating a bullying prevention intervention into their already existing systems, and these institutions may favor positivity. Ross and Horner (2009, 2014) instituted a bullying intervention based on positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS), which focuses on teaching respect rather than admonishing negative behavior; the word *bullying* was never used. Students are told the expectations, with posters around the school as reminders, and they are encouraged to follow a three-step process if faced with disrespectful behavior (telling the disrespectful person to stop, walking away, and telling an adult).

Bullying interventions can take various forms, alone or in combination. P. K. Smith (2011) states, interventions “may well be complementary, some may improve general school climate and safety, some may target the motivations and thinking of pupils likely to bully others, some may help victims with coping strategies, some may encourage bystanders to be defenders” (p. 421). In their meta-analysis of bullying interventions, Ttofi and Farrington (2009) recognized 20 intervention types, with multiple types often used together: (1) working with victims, (2) working with bullies, (3) working with peers (bystander support), (4) providing information for parents, (5) parent training, (6) providing information for teachers, (7) teacher training, (8) providing curriculum materials, (9) creating classroom rules, (10) classroom management, (11) school conferences, (12) schoolwide bullying policies, (13) collaborating among stakeholders, (14) increasing student supervision, (15) disciplining, (16) alternative methods to punishment, (17) bully courts, (18) restorative justice, (19) videos, and (20) virtual reality or computer games. Prior to implementing one or more of these intervention types, however, educators and stakeholders must recognize intervention effectiveness.

Effectiveness of interventions. Individual studies have noted the effectiveness of bullying interventions in schools. For example, Midgett, Dumas, Trull, and Johnson (2017)

found positive gains in teaching occasional bullies to be effective bystanders, resulting in reduced bullying at one elementary school. Similarly, in a study by Stanbury, Bruce, Jain, and Stellern (2009), a seven-week empathy intervention was effective at reducing bullying in one middle school, and during their bully prevention in positive behavior support (BP-PBS) research, Ross and Horner (2014) recognized improved attitudes toward standing up to bullying behavior and toward bystander intervention. According to Olweus (1993), a large-scale study of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program recognized the reduction of bullying problems by 50 percent among all students, in physical, verbal, and relational bullying. The program's effectiveness was also exhibited in the "clear reduction in general antisocial behavior such as vandalism, fighting, theft, drunkenness, and truancy," and "there was no 'displacement' of bullying from the school to the way to and from school" (p. 113). Perhaps more importantly, life satisfaction of these students increased. It should be noted, however, that interpretation of these results may be limited due to the bias of the researcher analyzing his own intervention.

Many factors can influence the effectiveness of a bullying intervention. Peer involvement is often prescribed as an effective tool to be utilized by schools (Song & Oh, 2017; Davis & Nixon, 2014), considering the influence of peers on stability in bullying or victim roles (Farmer et al., 2015). Davis and Nixon (2014) also recognized respect as a component of successful adult interventions; middle school students reported less trauma from bullying when they felt respected at school. Other influencers on intervention effectiveness are the sustainability or length of the intervention (Smith, P. K., 2004; Smith, P. K., 2011; Smith, P. K., Ananiadou, & Cowie, 2003), and, perhaps more simply, the effort extended by the school (Smith, P. K., et al., 2003). According to P. K. Smith (2004), no panacea for bullying interventions exists, yet "the most important factor is the extent to which schools take ownership of the anti-

bullying work, whatever form it takes” (p. 101). This aligns with the perspective of school principals, who feel “the investment of time, effort, and money in school-based antibullying initiatives can yield valuable returns by helping to create school environments that are safer and more peaceful for children, and, by implication, more conducive for learning and healthy development” (Smith, J. D., et al., 2005, p. 753).

Despite the positive results of single-school interventions or even a large-scale study like that of Olweus (1993)—and despite the prescription of certain intervention characteristics like peer inclusion, respect, time, and effort—research has wavered on the effectiveness of bullying intervention programs. For example, even with positive support to deter disrespectful behavior, some students may continue to bully (Ross & Horner, 2014). Interventions based on the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program tend to be more effective in Norway, its country of origin, than other countries (Smith, P. K., 2004; Smith, P. K., et al., 2003). Furthermore, in a meta-analysis of bullying intervention programs, Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, and Isava (2008) found only tentative evidence that interventions can increase the self-efficacy of teachers in bullying intervention, student self-esteem and social competence, and bullying behavior reduction. The inclusion criteria for this study, however, were not as strict as those of the meta-analysis by Ttofi and Farrington (2009) on intervention effectiveness. For example, both studies required research that included experimental and control groups, but the latter study also included the criterion of at least 200 sample participants. Thus, we find strength in the conclusions of Ttofi and Farrington (2009), who discovered that bullying reduced 20–23% in schools implementing a bullying intervention compared to schools without an intervention. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program was more effective than others, and the most effective of the 20 intervention types were increased student supervision, disciplining, videos, school conferences, providing

information for parents, training parents, classroom management, creating classroom rules, and working with peers (Ttofi & Farrington, 2009). Along with Merrell et al. (2008), we advocate for further research on the effectiveness of bullying interventions and specific variables that lead to successful outcomes.

Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy as an intervention is the use of books to help participants improve behaviorally, socially, mentally, or emotionally. Therapists can use bibliotherapy alongside formal therapy (Fitzgerald & Wienclaw, 2012), and school teachers can use bibliotherapy in their classrooms (Heath, Sheen, Leavy, Young, & Money, 2005; Moulton et al., 2011). Montgomery and Maunders (2015) distinguish between self-help bibliotherapy, or the use of nonfiction self-help books, and creative bibliotherapy, which is the use of fiction for therapeutic purposes. Fiction in bibliotherapy has been shown to be significantly more effective than non-fiction in reducing adjustment problems (Betzalel & Shechtman, 2010), perhaps because fictional “stories create therapeutic distance from problems and allow clients to explore painful topics” (p. 436). Creative bibliotherapy can also utilize film (McCulliss & Chamberlain, 2013; Montgomery & Maunders, 2015; Shechtman, 2000; Shechtman, 2009) or poetry (Montgomery & Maunders, 2015) as intervention tools, but the focus of this study is on fictional books in the classroom.

Bibliotherapy is a logical intervention in schools, as students already expect literature to be part of the curriculum (Sullivan & Strang, 2003). Classroom bibliotherapy “involves reading a carefully selected book independently or in a group, discussing the story, and applying lessons learned in activities that build on the story’s message” (Moulton et al., 2011, p. 122), which can help young students better handle the problems faced at school or home (Heath et al., 2005). The purpose of classroom bibliotherapy is “to foster healthy social and emotional growth in children

and young adults to develop insight, a deeper understanding of self, solutions to personal problems, development of life skills, or enhanced self-image” (McCulliss & Chamberlain, 2013, p. 13). Additionally, bibliotherapy can supplement other resources in supporting personal improvement in classrooms (Fitzgerald & Wienclaw, 2012). Before teachers, counselors, or school psychologists can use bibliotherapy in the classroom, they must understand its structure.

Structure. To educate professionals hoping to utilize books to help students, Heath, Sheen, Leavy, Young, and Money (2005) have given two overarching steps of bibliotherapy. The first step is selecting books; many researchers stress the importance of selecting appropriate books for bibliotherapy, specifically books with realistic plots (Heath et al., 2005; Olweus, 1993), positive coping strategies (Entenman et al., 2005; Flanagan et al., 2013; Heath et al., 2005), and desired messages (Moulton et al., 2011; Sjostrom & Stein, 1996), as well as how these factors will align with the student(s) in question (Heath et al., 2005). Furthermore, the story’s characters must be relatable to the students (Heath et al., 2005), to counteract the loneliness students feel amid certain issues, achieved through empathizing with and feeling a kinship to fictional characters and the situations they face (Forgan, 2002). Research and the opinion of experts (Heath et al., 2005) and librarians (Forgan, 2002) can be valuable resources for selecting suitable books. More information on using research to select appropriate books will follow in another section.

The second major step of bibliotherapy is in the sharing of the story itself, with the inclusion of pre- and post-reading activities (Heath et al., 2005). Prior to reading, educators may share the cover with the group (Forgan, 2002; Heath et al., 2005). This step of sharing the story also includes guided reading and reflection (Heath et al., 2005), role-playing or reading more appropriate books (Entenman et al., 2005), or other post-reading activities, such as class

discussions about the difficult topic (Heath et al., 2005). Educators can encourage dialogue with their students about the book, using questions to spur the conversation, such as the following:

- Are you like any of the story's characters?
- Do any of the characters remind you of someone?
- Who would you like to be in the story?
- Is there anything you would like to change about the story?
- How would you change the characters, what happened, or how the story ended?
- What is your favorite part of the story?
- Did anything in the story ever happen to you?
- What do you think will happen to the characters in this story tomorrow, in a few weeks, or a year from now? (McCullis & Chamberlain, 2013, p. 28)

As Forgan (2002) has stated, the “dialogue helps students as they develop insight into the character’s difficulty and discuss the merits and shortcomings of any solutions. In addition, the class can generate possible solutions to their own problems by using their newly acquired insight” (p. 77). The structure of bibliotherapy is amenable for guiding students through numerous problems, an exploration of which follows.

Uses of bibliotherapy. Reviewing bibliotherapy literature published between 1997 and 2011, McCulliss and Chamberlain (2013) discovered that professionals have used bibliotherapy to address aggression, abuse, illness, disability, depression, bereavement/grief, anxiety, social development, issues with parents, and self-esteem, among other issues. In the classroom, educators should focus on developmental rather than clinical topics for bibliotherapy (Forgan, 2002), or “everyday life problems such as anger, teasing, bullying, and issues of self-concept” (Forgan, 2002, p. 76).

Many results of the application of bibliotherapy have been positive. For example, researchers have recognized gains in using bibliotherapy to treat aggression (Shechtman, 2000, 2006), adjustment problems (Betzalel & Shechtman, 2010), fears (Lewis, Amatya, Coffman, & Ollendick, 2015), and anxiety (Betzalel & Shechtman, 2010) in children. Furthermore, students are not the only benefactors—teachers have recognized increased empathy following the implementation of bibliotherapy (Shechtman & Tutian, 2016). In a systematic review, Montgomery and Maunders (2015) analyzed 8 controlled bibliotherapeutic trials for children 5–16 years old, concluding that “creative bibliotherapy can have a small to moderate positive effect on child and adolescent internalizing, externalizing, and prosocial behaviors” (p. 44).

Despite these positive results, bibliotherapy is not a panacea for the classroom (Heath et al., 2005). Additionally, some researchers have found no significant positive results in the use of bibliotherapy. For example, in a study of the effectiveness of bibliotherapy among children with cancer, reading a book combined with follow-up coping questions showed no statistically significant gains in the children’s perceived self-efficacy in handling nervousness (Schneider, Peterson, Gathercoal, & Hamilton, 2013); however, this study had no control group for comparison, therefore the study implications are limited. Similarly, Monasch (2004) found no effect in the reading of folk stories on social skills improvement or problem behavior reduction among elementary school students. The lack of statistically significant results in some studies, however, should not keep educators from recognizing it as a possible intervention to address topical classroom issues, nor should this blind educators from its effectiveness in some areas. In their systematic review of bibliotherapeutic trials, Montgomery and Maunders (2015) found no negative effects of bibliotherapy, and experimental research on the outcomes of creative bibliotherapy is scarce compared to self-help bibliotherapy, despite the ubiquity of creative

bibliotherapy in practice (Montgomery & Maunders, 2015). More research is needed to determine the effectiveness of bibliotherapy in addressing issues faced by students and educators in schools (Heath et al., 2005). School psychologists, school counselors, teachers, and other educators using bibliotherapy in the classroom should not only monitor its effectiveness but should also recognize this intervention as an adjunctive tool among many possible interventions (Heath et al., 2005)—professionals interested in using bibliotherapy in the classroom shoulder the responsibility of researching its effectiveness in addressing specific topics.

A dearth of studies exists on the effectiveness of bibliotherapy at reducing bullying or strengthening victim resilience; further research should study outcomes in these areas as well. However, many interested institutions include lists of books to counteract bullying in schools. For example, in 2002 the American Library Association listed applicable fiction books with bullying themes, including 13 books for young readers and 15 books for older readers (James, 2002). Additionally, authors of anti-bullying interventions include bibliotherapy or the use of fiction as an option for educators, with the caveat that books be selected carefully (Olweus, 1993; Sjostrom & Stein, 1996).

Despite the lack of research specifically studying the outcomes of bibliotherapy in reducing bullying or supporting victims of bullying, Zipora Shechtman (2000, 2006, 2009) has focused on bibliotherapy and the treatment of aggression, under the assumption that “Children, in general, and aggressive children in particular, do not love therapy, but they do love stories” (Shechtman, 2009, p. 40). These children are reticent to give up their aggression, therefore the goals of bibliotherapy are to reduce this defensiveness and include the aggressors as partners in the intervention (Shechtman, 2009). In 2000, Shechtman used aggression-themed literature and films with 70 students with behavioral problems. These students, all in special education

programs, were randomly separated into control and experimental conditions. The students in the experimental condition generally self-reported reductions in aggressive behavior following bibliotherapy, which included not only readings of the literature (or viewings of the films) but also recognizing aggression in themselves and making connections with the fictional characters. Of the self-reported skills gained, 62% of the students recognized increased insight and 56% recognized self-control. Regarding benefits, 53% of students reported catharsis, 38% reported increased interpersonal learning, and 26% reported learning social skills. This study was limited in that teachers recognized reductions in behavioral problems among students in the both the experimental and control conditions. Additionally, regarding social validity, 44% of students recognized films as the most meaningful activity, compared to 26% of students who reported stories as the most meaningful. Finally, no data on long-term reductions in aggressive behavior were presented (Shechtman, 2000).

In 2006, Shechtman conducted another study of bibliotherapy and aggression, specifically to determine the effectiveness of bibliotherapy in combination with counseling. Aggressive boys ($N=61$) were randomly divided into one of three conditions: integrative counseling with bibliotherapy, integrative counseling without bibliotherapy, and a control group. Both counseling conditions resulted in a general reduction of aggression compared to the control condition; however, counseling combined with bibliotherapy resulted in increased empathy and less resistance to the intervention generally among participants (Shechtman, 2006).

Bibliotherapy may help in the context of bullying when combined with other methods. For example, Harrist and Bradley (2003) incorporated fairytales and roleplaying with discussions regarding social exclusion, an aspect of relational aggression. Over 140 kindergartners participated in the study, with students in the experimental group reporting significantly more

inclusive attitudes toward their classmates compared to students in the control group. However, participating students did not perceive themselves as liked at the conclusion of the study, and the intervention's short duration make interpretation limited (Harrist & Bradley, 2003).

The above studies demonstrate bibliotherapy's possibilities in reducing aggression and social exclusion, both aspects of bullying. Nevertheless, further research in this area is vital for understanding the long-term effects of bibliotherapy on bullying behavior and victim support.

Selecting appropriate books. Educators, parents, and students must choose suitable books for counteracting or preventing bullying, yet the number of accessible books with bullying themes can be daunting (Moulton et al., 2011). This section will review various analyses of bullying-themed books as well as areas for further research.

Multiple researchers have analyzed the bullying content of children's picture books. Although these content analyses often included multiple aspects of the bullying situation (identifying the bully, the victim, the setting, the bullying type, etc.), of interest to the current study are the coping strategies used by victims.

Entenman et al. (2005) analyzed the appropriateness of 25 bullying-themed books from the 1995 to 2003 that were written for students in kindergarten through third grade. In every story, the victim of bullying gained confidence and self-esteem (Entenman et al., 2005). Although the character focus of these stories was the victim and not the bully, the bully faced negative consequences for the bullying behavior in 80% ($n=20$) of the stories. In 24% ($n=6$) of the books, the bullying stopped due to bystander or adult intervention. In 20% ($n=5$) of the books, the victim (or a bystander) was kind to the bully. Victims in 16% ($n=4$) of the books confronted the bully after receiving this direction from an adult. The victim (or a bystander) outsmarted the bully in 12% ($n=3$) of the stories, and 20% ($n=5$) of books portrayed the bullies

experiencing victimization themselves (Entenman et al., 2005), although the researchers are unclear if this is the result of revenge. Despite the apprehension over ineffective coping strategies promoted in these picture books, Entenman et al. (2005) conclude that most of these stories portray adults and peers as effective supports for victims.

Attempting to extend the findings of Entenman et al. (2005) to more recent years, Moulton et al. (2011) analyzed 38 bullying-themed picture books, in the same range of K–3 literature, from January 2004 to January 2010. In 44% ($n=11$) of the stories, a bystander supported the victim directly, with the bully present, and 40% ($n=10$) of the stories portrayed a bystander supporting the victim indirectly, such as through consolation. Only 8% ($n=2$) of the stories portrayed a bystander telling an adult. Most adults in the analyzed stories supported the victim emotionally, at times training the victims in coping strategies, which is similar to the findings of Entenman et al. (2005). In the books analyzed by Moulton et al. (2011), the victim grew in self-confidence—often coupled with support—in 61% ($n=23$) of the books. In 42% ($n=16$) of the books, the victim befriended the bully. The victim coped through retaliation in 24% ($n=9$) of the books, with 16% ($n=6$) of the books portraying the coping strategy of avoidance. In other words, these picture books promoted both effective and ineffective coping strategies. Additionally, many stories were resolved through magical means, which may not help real-life bullied students; these unrealistic resolutions instead act as masks to learning effective coping strategies (Moulton et al., 2011). The selection of books may have affected the results; for example, books were selected based on adequate reviews in the Horn Book Guide. By the authors' own admission, this criterion may have excluded moralistic books that some educators might consider helpful in the classroom setting. While the research of Moulton et al. (2011) is

focused on children's picture books, the authors note the need for content analyses of books for older children, such as students in middle school.

In a content analysis of 73 picture books published between 1985 and 2010, but within the 4 to 11 age range, Flanagan et al. (2013) focused specifically on the coping strategies used by victims. This focus and the authors' categories of coping strategies served as major impetuses for the present study. Flanagan et al. (2013) describe nine coping strategy categories: prosocial response, skill development, bystander intervention, advice seeking, retaliation, emotional expression, distancing, rumination, and acceptance. As stated above, we consider the first four categories as effective (prosocial response, skill development, bystander intervention, and advice seeking) and the latter five categories are ineffective (retaliation, emotional expression, distancing, rumination, and acceptance) at either reducing the bullying or supporting the victim. Flanagan et al. (2013) also categorized each book as having a positive, neutral, or negative resolution. A total of 67% ($n=49$) of the books portrayed a positive resolution (the bullying was effectively and positively stopped), 8% ($n=6$) portrayed a neutral resolution, and 25% ($n=18$) portrayed a negative resolution (resultant harm to victim, bully, or others). Regarding effective coping strategies, 68% of the books included prosocial coping strategies, 53% portrayed advice seeking, and 44% depicted help from a bystander. Regarding ineffective coping strategies, 25% of the stories analyzed promoted revenge in the form of retaliation, tricking, or scaring the bully; and 14% of the books portrayed active acceptance. The researchers also discovered that as book reading level increased, so did the portrayal of rumination and emotional expression, both ineffective coping strategies; relatedly, the portrayal of prosocial coping strategies—such as finding a compromise, becoming friends, etc.—decreased as reading level increased (Flanagan et

al., 2013). Therefore, educators of middle school students must be vigilant in selecting books that promote effective coping strategies.

Compared to picture book analyses, few studies have analyzed middle grade or young adult fiction. Scholastic, a major publisher in the United States, defines middle grade books as those aimed at students in third through sixth grade—providing *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* as one example—and young adult novels as those aimed at students in seventh through twelfth grade (Mascott, 2015). In a master's thesis, Wann (2017) explored the Newberry Medal and Honor books between 1996 and 2016, analyzing for the presence and extent of relational bullying, as well as the coping strategies used by victims. Out of the 88 books in this 20-year span, 10 books portrayed relational bullying and contained realistic plots—fantasy and historical fiction books were omitted from the analysis because, according to the author, “it is imperative that that book the child is reading closely aligns with his or her real life” (Wann, 2017, p. 16). Of these 10 books analyzed, many victims chose ineffective coping strategies. For example, 10% portrayed victim rumination, 40% depicted emotional expression in front of the bully, 40% showed the victim avoiding or hiding from the bully, 30% portrayed the victim ignoring the situation, and 10% portrayed a victim physically confronting the bully. Regarding effective coping strategies, only three victims sought advice or support from adults, only two victims grew in self-confidence, and only one book promoted help from bystanders (Wann, 2017). These results are not confined to middle grade fiction, however, as the Newberry Medal is granted to books aimed at children up to the age of 14 (Newberry Medal terms and conditions, 2008).

In a qualitative analysis of bullying-themed young adult novels, Larson and Hoover (2012) found revenge to be promoted less often in post-2000 books compared to their earlier counterparts. Other complex themes related to bullying included empathy, difficulties at home,

sexuality, or identity—while not exhaustive of books available to young adult readers, the authors' list of 18 bully-themed young adult novels is useful for educators and parents searching for books with strong literary value and appropriate themes related to bullying among young adults (Larson & Hoover, 2012).

Educators and researchers should be troubled by the paucity of research analyzing bullying in both middle grade and young adult fiction. Many content analyses have focused on bullying in picture books, yet bullying peaks during the middle school years (Copeland et al., 2013; Eslea & Rees, 2001; Ma, 2002; Nansel et al., 2001; Scheithauer et al., 2006). We assert that students and student stakeholders would benefit from more content analyses of middle grade fiction. The coding and analysis of picture books requires less time than novels, and researchers of middle grade fiction may have to analyze smaller samples due to novel length; however, we emphasize the value of analyses of books for older students to help counteract bullying and support its victims within this volatile age group.

Harry Potter

The first novel in J. K. Rowling's popular Harry Potter series is aimed at children in grade three to grade seven ("*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*"), with the final book in the series aimed at youth up to grade 11 ("*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*")—Harry and his friends face greater dangers, crime, and violence as the stories progress, which explains the change in demographic by series end. As of 2017, the books have been translated into 79 languages and have sold over 450 million copies (Rowling & Kay, 2017). Despite many of today's children being born after the initial run of publication (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, the first novel, was published in 1997), the Harry Potter series is still popular. For instance, Amazon, which tracks the most sold and most read—digitally—of books available on

its website, listed five of the seven Harry Potter books in the top 20 of the most read books during the week of December 31, 2017, with *Sorcerer's Stone* at number three (“Most Read”) and number 14 (“Most Sold”) of all books read and sold, respectively. While these numbers evince the popularity of the Harry Potter series, Amazon does not track the age of readers or buyers—the books may be aimed at children, but these readers could be made up of children and adults of any age.

Past research has focused on realism in bibliotherapy, seemingly avoiding fantasy and magic. Wann (2017) and Moulton et al. (2011) vouch for realistic portrayals of bullying in fiction, devoid of magic. The former analyzed bullying in realistic fiction specifically, promoting books that closely parallel the lives of readers. The latter, however, does not censure fantasy wholesale but admonishes magical solutions or coping strategies to bullying.

This avoidance of fantasy, magic, and witchcraft may have fueled what Bridger (2002) called “Potterphobia” (p. 10), or the attempts of concerned parents and educators to ban the Harry Potter books from school curricula and libraries. However, as the author stated, the world of Harry Potter gives readers a safe place to find courage among their own struggles. The Harry Potter books allow readers to examine the world more deeply, or develop “imaginative skepticism” (Bridger, 2002, p. 117). This aligns with Strimel (2004), who considered magic “a psychologically safe vehicle for the lessons contained throughout the Harry Potter series” (p. 37).

According to both qualitative and quantitative research, adults’ fears of fantasy diluting reality are unfounded. In semi-structured interviews with 20 children from ages 11 to 18, Das (2016) found that most interviewees connected to the reality in Harry Potter, or the connections to real life within the fantasy world. Their dialogue about the series tended toward emotional connections to the characters and sub-textual meanings and how those elements related to their

own lives, rather than the surface of wizards and witches; because of the strong element of the realistic within the fantastic, the interviewed readers considered the stories therapeutic (Das, 2016). However, the interviewees' strong affinity for the Harry Potter series may limit this qualitative study's generalizability to students unfamiliar with the series or those less inclined to read in general. Relatedly, in an experimental comparison of children and adults, Martarelli, Mast, Läge, and Roebbers (2015) investigated the ability of children to distinguish between fantastic and realistic characters, with participants evaluating whether pictured characters—some real, some fantastic—could meet each other in reality. The researchers found that 3- to 4-year-old children distinguished between real and fantastic characters less often than 7- to 8-year-old children, with the latter group recognizing the distinction on a level comparable to adults (Martarelli, Läge, Mast, & Roebbers., 2015).

Similarly, Subbotsky and Slater (2011) studied the effect of the first Harry Potter film on 6- and 9-year-old children—a control group was shown a non-fantasy film. After viewing the film, the children were asked to distinguish between real and fantasy images on a computer screen. Not only were the children in the experimental group able to distinguish the real images from the fantastic, but they also performed better than the children in the control group. The researchers therefore conclude that watching a fantasy film may improve viewer distinction of reality versus fantasy (Subbotsky & Slater, 2011). Because students recognize the differences between fantasy and reality more fully as they age, and because experiencing fantasy may even improve children's recognition of the reality/fantasy dichotomy, parents and educators have minimal basis for concern that the Harry Potter books may elicit fear among children.

Similarly, the Harry Potter series provides social value. Vezzali, Stathi, Giovannini, Capozza, and Trifiletti (2015) presented prejudice-themed passages from the Harry Potter series to Italian

elementary students in an experimental group, with a control group reading passages unrelated to prejudice. Those students in the experimental group who connected to Harry as a character improved in their attitudes toward immigrants, compared to students in the control group. The researchers stipulate that these results are due to the fantastical nature of the character groups within the Harry Potter series, who serve as analogues to real-world out-groups (Vezzali, Stathi, Giovannini, Capozza, & Trifiletti, 2015). However, the generalizability of this study is limited due to its focus on a small group of Italian elementary students.

In the area of neuroscience, Hsu, Conrad, and Jacobs (2014) studied the effects of reading empathy-inducing passages from the Harry Potter series on participants' MRI results. The authors conclude that "descriptions of protagonists' pain or personal distress featured in the fear-inducing passages apparently caused increasing involvement of the core structure of pain and affective empathy the more readers immersed in the text" (Hsu, Conrad, & Jacobs, 2014, p. 1356). Therefore, the empathic power of the Harry Potter series could possibly have a valuable effect on bullies, who often lack emotional empathy or the ability to relate to other students (Olweus, 1993; Rosen et al., 2017; Solomontos-Kountouri et al., 2017). The participants in this study were 18 to 31 years old, however, so generalizability to young students is limited without further research.

CHAPTER 3

Method

Book Sample Criteria and Selection

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone was selected for analysis of responses to bullying used by victims, peers, and adults within the text. Three major criteria were necessary for selecting this book: (1) the book must contain instances of bullying and evidence of victim, peer, and adult responses; (2) the book must be accessible for educators and readers; and (3) the book must be written for middle school–age children. This final criterion is of interest both because of bullying's peak in middle school (Copeland et al., 2013; Eslea & Rees, 2001; Ma, 2002; Nansel et al., 2001; Scheithauer et al., 2006) and to fill the gap in content analyses of the bullying phenomenon in middle-grade novels.

The first novel in the Harry Potter series—*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*—met all three criteria: this book was recognized by the researchers as containing multiple possible bully–victim relationships (Dudley/Harry, Malfoy/Harry, Malfoy/Hermione, etc.), as being continually popular and therefore easily found by educators, and as being written for the age group of interest, middle school—books later in the series are aimed at older readers. Thus, we selected the first Harry Potter novel for analysis of responses to bullying. We consider the bullying content from this book to be ample for analyzing responses to bullying as well as valuable for presenting these responses in bibliotherapeutic, real-world school settings.

Measures

Each bullying relationship and the victim's, peers', and adults' responses were analyzed using a three-part coding instrument (see Appendix A). Two research assistants and the primary author pilot-tested this coding instrument by completing Part 1. This pilot test allowed us to

answer emergent questions, improve coding instrument training, and tune the instrument for better coding. Following this pilot test and updating of the coding instrument, two more research assistants independently answered Part 1 of the instrument for each possible bully/victim relationship (e.g., the readers answered a separate coding instrument for Dudley and Harry and Malfoy and Harry). The primary author's answers for Part 1 were combined with the research assistants' answers to create a master coding instrument for each possible bully and victim relationship.

Part 1 contains six questions for documenting (1) instances of harmful behavior from a perpetrator toward a victim, with definitional reminders of physical, verbal, and relational bullying types; (2) the power dynamic between perpetrator and victim (i.e., whether the perpetrator has more power, or is attempting to gain more power, over the victim, or if the bully uses followers to outnumber the victim); (3) the perpetrator's intent, or lack of intent, to harm the victim; (4) any victim responses to the behavior; (5) any peer responses to the behavior; and (6) any adult responses to the behavior.

The primary author provided a sample coding instrument (using information from a separate middle-grade novel) to the two research assistants in order to familiarize them with and train them for the research project. After answering initial questions, the three readers began answering Part 1 of the coding instrument. The primary author also instructed the two research assistants to use a separate coding instrument for each possible bully/victim relationship, to ask any questions that arose while answering Part 1, and to only include instances of child-to-child or student-to-student harmful behavior (adult-to-student or adult-to-adult harmful behavior was not included in this study). Additionally, the research assistants were instructed to treat multiple

instances of harmful verbal behavior as separate instances if the verbal behavior occurred in separate paragraphs, but not in a single paragraph.

The answers to Part 1 were combined into master coding instruments. Using these master coding instruments, coders completed parts 2 and 3. The coders included the primary author, the secondary author, and a research assistant. Three coders were used in case of disagreements about answers—i.e., the third coder was a tie breaker. The coders completed parts 2 and 3 on separate coding instruments but in the same room, to ask questions and discuss answers or disagreements.

First, the coders completed Part 2 to determine if each incident from Part 1 constituted a bully/victim relationship, as opposed to other similar but definitionally distinct behavior, such as violent accidents or peer teasing. If a depicted incident did not present all definitional necessities for bullying—the intent to harm, a physical or social power differential, and more than one instance of the behavior—then responses to bullying for that incident were not analyzed. However, if answers from Part 2 determined the presence of bullying behavior, coders continued to Part 3 of the coding instrument. This last section of the coding instrument used documentation from Part 1 to determine the existence and frequency of victim, peer, and adult responses to the bullying behavior.

For victims, we considered 16 possible responses to bullying, adapted from responses recognized by Martin et al. (2003), Davis and Nixon (2014), and Flanagan et al. (2013): skill development, prosocial response, talked to a friend, talked to an adult at home, talked to an adult at school, used adaptive humor, distancing, retaliation/venge seeking, acceptance, emotional expression, rumination, told the bully how he/she felt, told the bully to stop, used maladaptive humor, other, and no response described. For the purposes of this study, we included “Other”

and “No response described” in the coding instrument for victim, peer, and adult responses. Each possible response was defined further to aid coding. Coders explained further any “other” responses.

For peers, we used 12 responses recognized by Davis and Nixon (2014), in addition to four others, for a total of 16 peer responses: helped the victim get away; listened to the victim; spent time with the victim; told the bully to stop, nicely; told the bully to stop, rudely or angrily; ignored the bullying; gave the victim advice; blamed the victim; mocked the victim for being bullied or for seeking support; distracted the bully; participated in the bullying; retaliated or planned to retaliate; told an adult; helped the victim tell an adult; other; and no response described. We added “retaliated or planned to retaliate” and “participated in the bullying” to the coding instrument, despite their absence from the responses recognized by Davis and Nixon (2014), in addition to adding “Other” and “No response described.”

For adults, we included 14 possible responses as recognized by Davis and Nixon (2014), in addition to “Other” and “No response described,” for a total of 16: listened to the victim, gave advice to the victim, followed up with the victim, blamed the victim, ignored the bullying, punished the bully, increased adult supervision, told the victim they would talk to the bully, talked to the bully and victim together, told the victim not to “tattle” or its equivalent, told the victim to resolve the bullying, spoke about the behavior during class, told a large group (class, entire school) about the bullying, had a speaker come to school, other, and no response described.

Research Design

The present research involved a content analysis of the first novel in the Harry Potter series—*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone*—for instances of victim, peer, and adult responses

to bullying. Each of the bully/victim relationships and subsequent responses were analyzed using a coding instrument. Descriptive statistics were utilized to determine frequency counts of victim, peer, and adult responses to bullying within the novel—this was accomplished to answer the first research question. Response effectiveness was determined using past research on victim, peer, and adult responses that either reduce bullying or support the victim (Camodeca & Goossens, 2005; Davis & Nixon, 2014; Garnefski & Kraaij, 2014; Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004; Mahady Wilton et al., 2000; Martin et al., 2003; Rosen et al., 2017; Smith, P. K., 2004). Descriptive statistics were utilized to determine the frequency of effective versus ineffective responses, to answer the second research question. A secondary goal of practical applications in the classroom guided the creation of a table of descriptive samples from Harry Potter. This information will provide educators and their students with discussion items based on bullying situations in Harry Potter and whether victims responded effectively or ineffectively.

Data Analysis

To understand the depicted victim, peer, and adult responses within the sample text, descriptive statistics were used to collect frequency count data from the coding instrument. The aim of frequency data was to answer the first research question: *How do victims, peers, and adults respond to bullying in the first Harry Potter novel?* The coding instrument also provided the ability to understand the effectiveness of each response according to research on response effectiveness. The aim of quantifying response effectiveness was to answer the second research question: *How do victim, peer, and adult responses to bullying in the first Harry Potter novel align with research on response effectiveness?* Results from the first two research questions led to the creation of a table to provide specific examples and quotations from the text. This

information is proposed to assist teachers and other school-based professionals in reducing bullying and strengthening victims through classroom discussion.

Interrater agreement was determined for each possible bully/victim relationship among the three coders. Disputes about whether an incident was bullying were settled by a two-thirds majority. Interrater agreement for the presence or absence of a bullying incident was 99.34% among the coders. The presence, frequency, or absence of a response was also settled by a two-thirds majority. Interrater agreement for the victim, peer, and adult responses to bullying was 99.45% among the coders.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Research Question #1: The Responses

Utilizing Part 1 of the coding instrument, initial readers determined that the total number of possible bullying relationships in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* was nine. Three of these relationships—Hermione Granger and Neville Longbottom, Ron Weasley and Draco Malfoy, and Ron Weasley and Neville Longbottom—had single incidents of harmful behavior. Because one criterion for bullying is the presence of multiple incidents, the behavioral responses in these three relationships were excluded. One of the nine possible bullying relationships, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, included two possible incidents of bullying behavior, but according to the coders, neither incident met both criteria of a power differential *and* the intent to harm. Thus, out of nine possible relationships, five were considered bullying relationships with quantifiable responses to the bullying from victims, peers, and adults. These bullying relationships were (a) Draco Malfoy and Neville Longbottom, (b) Dudley Dursley and Harry Potter, (c) Draco Malfoy and Harry Potter, (d) Fred and George Weasley and Percy Weasley, and (e) Draco Malfoy and Ron Weasley.

Out of these five bullying relationships, 46 incidents met criteria for bullying behavior. Among these 46 incidents, 30.4% ($n=14$) were perpetrated by Dudley toward Harry, 28.3% ($n=13$) were perpetrated by Draco toward Ron, 19.6% ($n=9$) were perpetrated by Draco toward Harry, 17.4% ($n=8$) were perpetrated by Draco toward Neville, and 4.3% ($n=2$) were perpetrated by Fred and George toward Percy. Out of the total incidents, 65.2% ($n=30$) of bullying behavior in the novel was perpetrated by Draco Malfoy.

Coders counted victim, peer, and adult responses to bullying behavior. These frequency counts were converted to percentages to answer the first research question: *How do victims, peers, and adults respond to bullying in the first Harry Potter novel?* These percentages are described below.

Victim responses. Victims responded to bullying incidents 60 times. The most common recorded response was “No response described” with 23.3% ($n=14$) of victim responses. Among the remaining victim responses, 21.7% ($n=13$) was retaliation/vengeance seeking, 13.3% ($n=8$) was distancing, 8.3% ($n=5$) was talking to a friend, 8.3% ($n=5$) was ruminating, 5% ($n=3$) was using maladaptive humor, 5% ($n=3$) was other, 3.3% ($n=2$) was telling the bully to stop, 3.3% ($n=2$) was emotional expression, 3.3% ($n=2$) was talking to an adult at school, 3.3% ($n=2$) was skill development, and 1.7% ($n=1$) was told the bully how he/she felt. Victims did not use a prosocial response (attempting to befriend the bully), talk to an adult at home, use adaptive humor, nor accept the bullying behavior. See Table 1 and Appendix C.

Coders considered victim responses as other if they did not fit the definition of any of the predetermined response types. These other victim responses in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* included chasing the perpetrators to retrieve a stolen item, trying to stop the perpetrator from stealing, and self-blaming.

Table 1

Victim Response Frequencies and Percentages

Victim Responses	Frequency	Percentages
No response described	14	23.3%
Retaliation/revenge seeking	13	21.7%
Distancing	8	13.3%
Talked to a friend	5	8.3%
Rumination	5	8.3%
Maladaptive humor	3	5.0%
Other	3	5.0%
Told the bully to stop	2	3.3%
Emotional expression	2	3.3%
Talked to an adult at school	2	3.3%
Skill development	2	3.3%
Told the bully how he/she felt	1	1.7%
Prosocial response	0	0.0%
Talked to an adult at home	0	0.0%
Adaptive humor	0	0.0%
Acceptance	0	0.0%
TOTAL	60	

Peer responses. Peers responded to bullying incidents 129 times. The most common response type was “No response described,” with 41.1% ($n=53$) of the total peer responses. The next highest response was participating in the bullying at 17.1% ($n=22$), followed by retaliated or planned to retaliate at 10.9% ($n=14$) and other at 8.5% ($n=11$). Peers responded by mocking

the victim for being bullied or seeking support 5.4% ($n=7$) of the time, by listening to the victim 4.7% ($n=6$) of the time, and by ignoring the bullying 3.9% ($n=5$) of the time. Less frequently recorded peer responses included rudely telling the bully to stop (2.3%, $n=3$), giving the victim advice (2.3%, $n=3$), telling an adult (1.6%, $n=2$), blaming the victim (0.8%, $n=1$), nicely telling the bully to stop (0.8%, $n=1$), and spending time with the victim (0.8%, $n=1$). Peers never responded by helping the victim to tell an adult, by distracting the bully, or by helping the victim get away. See Table 2 and Appendix D.

Coders categorized peer responses as other if they did not fit the definition of any listed response type. Other peer responses in the novel included challenging the perpetrator, defending or sticking up for the victim, explaining the situation, trying to retrieve a stolen item, helping the victim, comforting the victim, encouraging the victim, giving a verbal response of support, using maladaptive humor, and trying to calm the victim.

Table 2

Peer Response Frequencies and Percentages

Peer Responses	Frequency	Percentages
No response described	53	41.1%
Participated in the bullying	22	17.1%
Retaliated or planned to retaliate	14	10.9%
Other	11	8.5%
Mocked the victim	7	5.4%
Listened to the victim	6	4.7%
Ignored the bullying	5	3.9%
Told the bully to stop, rudely	3	2.3%
Gave the victim advice	3	2.3%
Told an adult	2	1.6%
Blamed the victim	1	0.8%
Told the bully to stop, nicely	1	0.8%
Spent time with the victim	1	0.8%
Helped the victim tell an adult	0	0.0%
Distracted the bully	0	0.0%
Helped the victim get away	0	0.0%
TOTAL	129	

Adult responses. Adults responded to bullying incidents a total of 55 times. The most common adult response was “No response described,” at 74.5% ($n=41$). Adult responses also included other (7.3%, $n=4$), listening to the victim (5.5%, $n=3$), giving the victim advice (3.6%, $n=2$), ignoring the bullying (3.6%, $n=2$), talking to the bully and victim together (3.6%, $n=2$),

and following up with the victim (1.8%, $n=1$). Adults never responded in the following ways: blaming the victim, punishing the bully, increasing adult supervision, telling the victim they would talk to the bully, telling the victim to not “tattle,” telling the victim to resolve the bullying, speaking about the behavior during class, telling a large group about the bullying, or having a speaker come to school. See Table 3 and Appendix E.

Coders placed adult responses in the other category if they did not fit the definition of any listed response type. Other adult responses in the novel included laughing about the incident or encouraging the behavior, not discouraging retaliation, and talking to another teacher to clarify the incident.

Table 3

Adult Response Frequencies and Percentages

Adult Responses	Frequency	Percentages
No response described	41	74.5%
Other	4	7.3%
Listened to the victim	3	5.5%
Gave the victim advice	2	3.6%
Ignored the bullying	2	3.6%
Talked to the bully and victim together	2	3.6%
Followed up with the victim	1	1.8%
Blamed the victim	0	0.0%
Punished the bully	0	0.0%
Increased adult supervision	0	0.0%
Told the victim they would talk to the bully	0	0.0%
Told the victim not to “tattle”	0	0.0%
Told the victim to resolve the bullying	0	0.0%
Spoke about the behavior during class	0	0.0%
Told a large group about the bullying	0	0.0%
Had a speaker come to school	0	0.0%
TOTAL	55	

Research Question #2: Response Alignment with Research

Victim response effectiveness. Response types in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone* were those considered by research as effective or ineffective at either reducing bullying behavior or supporting the victim. The category of ineffective victim responses included distancing,

retaliation/revenge seeking, emotional expression, rumination, telling the bully how he/she feels, telling the bully to stop, or using maladaptive humor. The category of effective victim responses included skill development, talking to a friend, and talking to an adult at school. Additionally, two categories—other and “no response described”—were unknown according to research on effectiveness. For “no response described,” coders could not be sure if this response type was akin to (a) the victim ignoring the bullying or (b) the author simply not describing a response that may have occurred outside the published text—thus, effectiveness was undeterminable.

Out of 30 responses, Harry responded effectively 3.3% of the time, ineffectively 66.7% of the time, and gave no response 30% of the time. The single effective response was skill development (3.3%, $n=1$). Among all of Harry’s responses, his ineffective responses included distancing (23.3%, $n=7$), retaliation/revenge seeking (20%, $n=6$), rumination (16.7%, $n=5$), maladaptive humor (6.7%, $n=2$), and telling the bully to stop (3.3%, $n=1$). See Appendix C.

Out of 60 total victim responses, 56.7% ($n=34$) fit in the ineffective category, the most of any response types. Among ineffective responses, the most common was retaliation/revenge seeking, at 38.2% ($n=13$). The second highest response was “no response described” at 23.3% ($n=14$). Third, effective responses made up 15% ($n=9$) of total responses. Among effective responses, the most common was talking to a friend, at 55.6% ($n=5$). Last, other responses made up 5% ($n=3$) of total victim responses. See Figure 1.

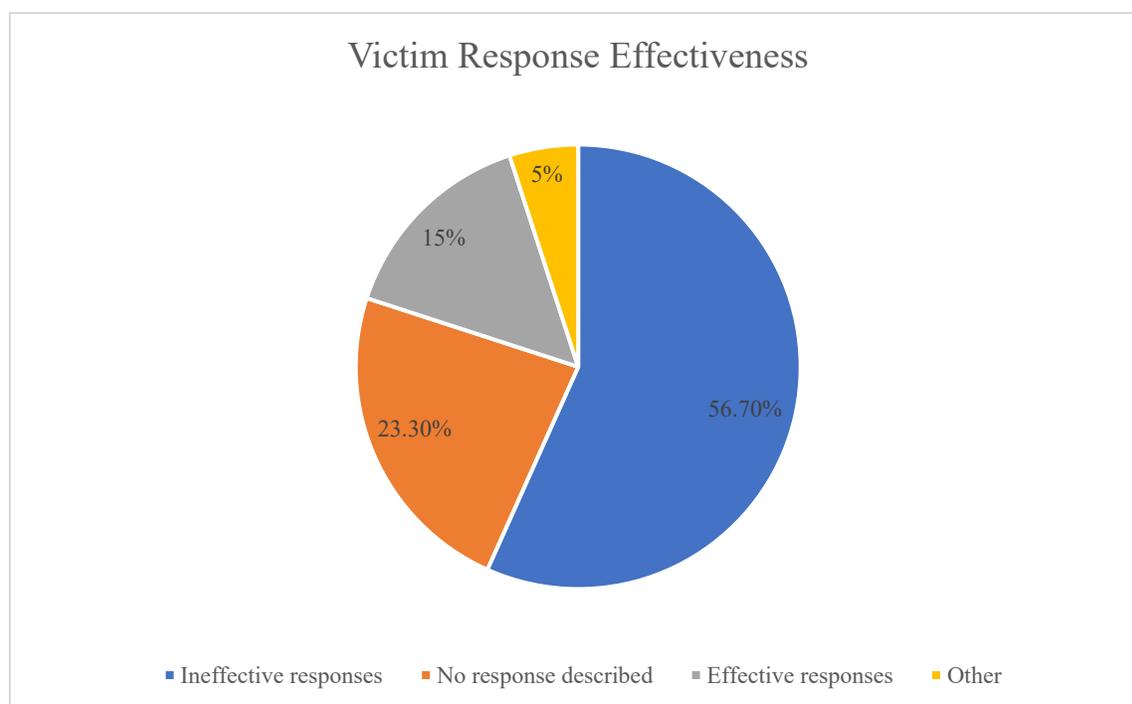


Figure 1. Victim response effectiveness.

Peer response effectiveness. The category of ineffective peer responses included telling the bully to stop, rudely or angrily; ignoring the bullying; blaming the victim; mocking the victim for being bullied or for seeking support; participating in the bullying; and retaliating or planning to retaliate. The category of effective peer responses included helping the victim get away; listening to the victim; spending time with the victim; telling the bully to stop, nicely; giving advice to the victim; distracting the bully; telling an adult; and helping the victim to tell an adult. Additionally, two categories—other and “no response described”—were unknown according to research on effectiveness. For “no response described,” coders could not be sure if this response type was akin to (a) the peer ignoring the bullying or (b) the author simply not describing a response that may have occurred outside the published text—thus, effectiveness was undeterminable.

Out of 129 total peer responses, 41.1% ($n=53$) were “no response described,” the most of any peer response types. Ineffective responses were the second highest, at 40.3% ($n=52$).

Among ineffective responses, the most common was participated in the bullying, at 42.3% ($n=22$). Retaliating or planning to retaliate made up 26.9% ($n=14$) of ineffective responses. Out of all response types, effective responses made up 10.1% ($n=13$) of total responses. Among effective responses, the most common was listening to the victim, at 46.2% ($n=6$). Last, other responses made up 8.5% ($n=11$) of total peer responses. See Figure 2.

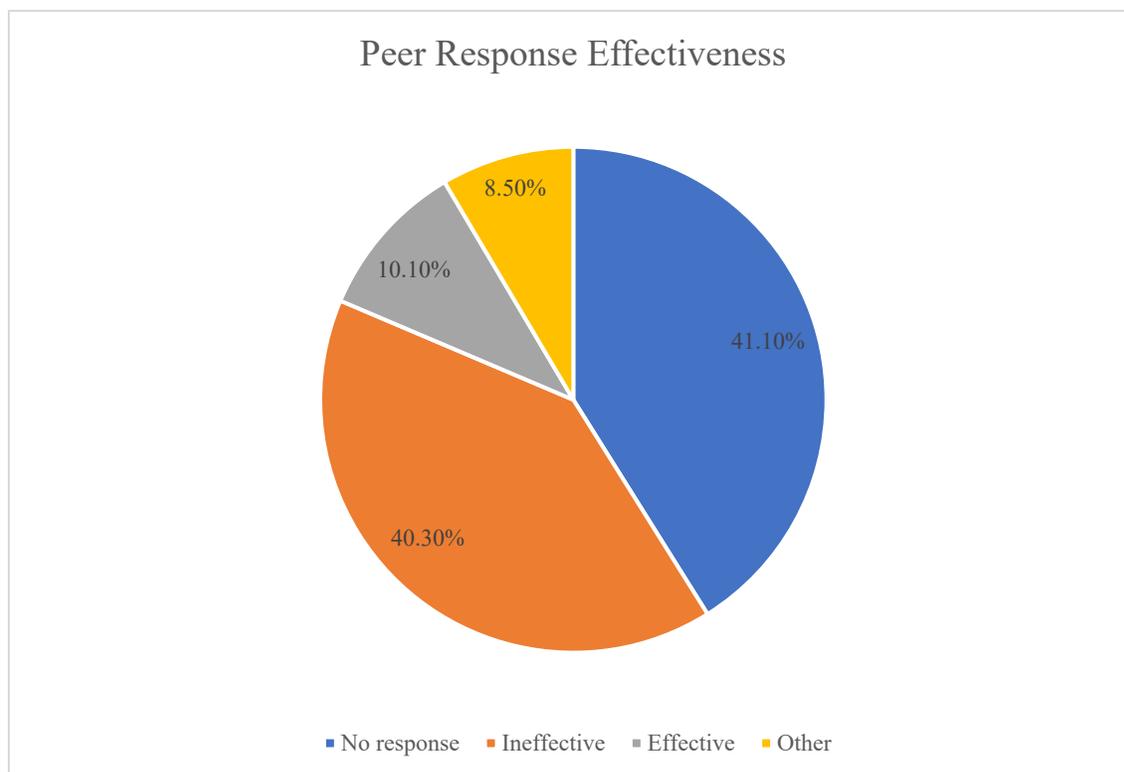


Figure 2. Peer response effectiveness.

Adult response effectiveness. The category of ineffective adult responses included blaming the victim, ignoring the bullying, punishing the bully, telling the victim they would talk to the bully, talking to the bully and victim together, telling the victim not to “tattle,” telling the victim to resolve the bullying, speaking about the behavior during class, telling a large group (class, entire school) about the bullying, and having a speaker come to school. The category of effective adult responses included listening to the victim, giving advice to the victim, following up with the victim, and increasing adult supervision. Additionally, two categories—other and

“no response described”—were unknown according to research on effectiveness. For “no response described,” coders could not be sure if this response type was akin to (a) the peer ignoring the bullying or (b) the author simply not describing a response that may have occurred outside the published text—thus, effectiveness was undeterminable.

Out of 55 total adult responses, 74.5% ($n=41$) were “no response described,” the most of any adult response types. Effective responses were the second highest, at 10.9% ($n=6$). Among effective responses, the most common was listening to the victim, at 50% ($n=3$). Out of all response types, ineffective responses made up 7.3% ($n=4$) and other made up 7.3% ($n=4$) as well. See Figure 3.

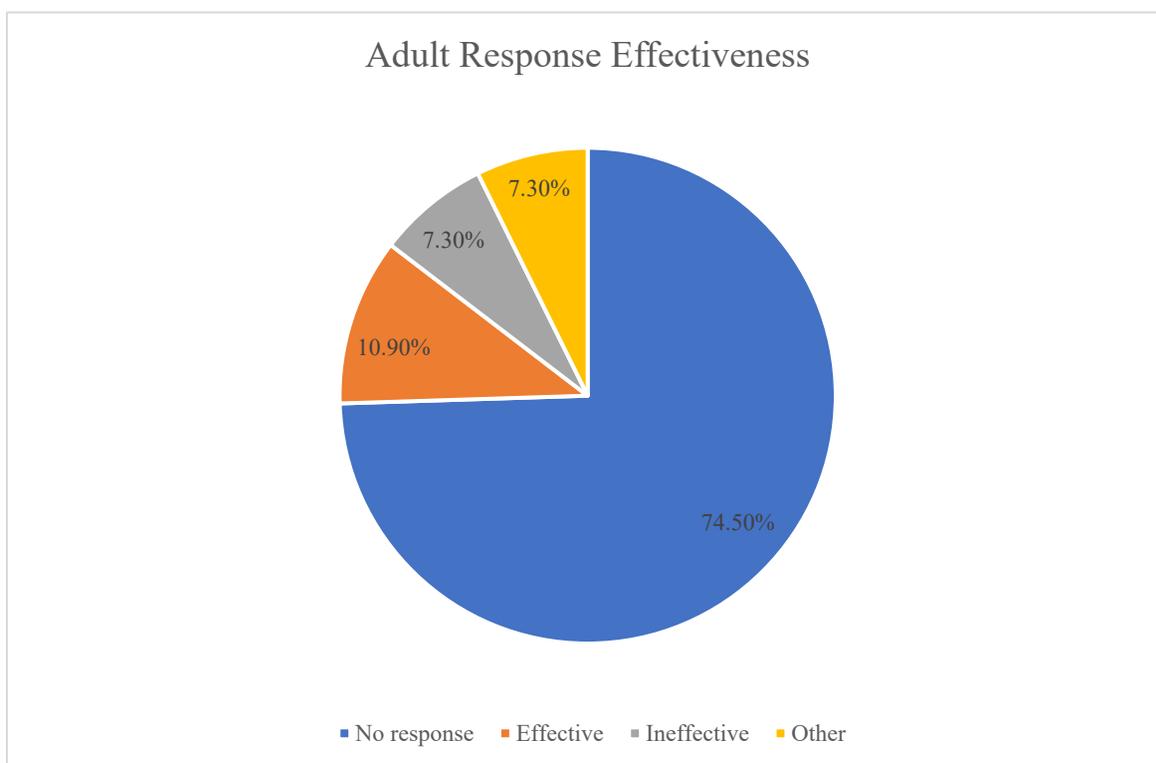


Figure 3. Adult response effectiveness.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Findings

This analysis was intended to determine the frequency of responses to bullying from victims, peers, and adults in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* as well as to compare these responses to previous research on responses that reduce bullying and/or support the victim (effective response) or do not reduce bullying and/or do not support the victim (ineffective response). Additionally, completion of the coding instrument allowed the authors to compile a table of example responses from the novel for bibliotherapeutic purposes.

Results from this study reveal that the most common response to bullying among victims, peers, and adults in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* is “no response described.” Coders in this study could not determine if this lack of response was effective or ineffective in view of current research because victims, peers, and adults may have responded in appropriate ways outside the purview of the text. In other words, more than any other possible response, victims, peers, and adults either did not respond to bullying at all or they responded atextually (outside the written text).

Retaliation or planning to retaliate were the second and third most common responses of choice for victims and peers respectively. The recognition that victims and peers commonly sought revenge may send the perilous message to readers that retaliation is an appropriate coping strategy in the face of bullying. Revenge and retaliation are not effective responses to bullying (Camodeca & Goossens, 2005; Davis & Nixon, 2014; Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; Mahady Wilton et al., 2000; Rosen et al., 2017), and student stakeholders are cautioned from promoting such responses. If *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* is to be used in a bibliotherapeutic

setting, interventionists should stress the ineffectiveness of retaliation both within the novel and in real-world bullying situations. Additionally, interventionists using the novel for bibliotherapy should also provide alternative, positive responses to replace retaliation, such as telling a trusted adult and/or friend or developing skills of mindset.

Victim response findings. The majority of victim responses to bullying in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* are considered ineffective at reducing bullying or supporting the victim, according to current research. For example, retaliation is repeatedly desired or enacted by victims in the novel, as stated above. Nearly 22% of victim responses in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* were retaliatory, which is similar to content analyses by Moulton et al. (2011) and Flanagan et al. (2013), who found that bullying-themed picture books promoted retaliatory or vengeful responses in 24% and 25% of analyzed books, respectively.

Often, these victims also attempted to distance themselves physically from the bullying or ignore it. Cognitive distancing from bullying is considered ineffective from the perspective of students (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004) and is merely a short-term solution that reinforces bullying behavior (Mahady Wilton et al., 2000). Victims in the novel also responded to bullying by ruminating or worrying about the bullying. Teachers consider internalizing the victimization to be ineffective (Rosen et al., 2017), and this internalized victimization may correlate with depression (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2014). In the novel, Harry Potter ruminates about bullying from both Dudley at the beginning of the novel and from Draco Malfoy later at school. Although Harry gains the friendships of Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger, results from this study reveal that he never talks to them about the bullying from Dudley or Draco. Conversely, Ron and Neville, both targets of bullying from Draco, respond at times by talking to their friends.

Overall, Harry is more likely to respond ineffectively than effectively, using strategies such as revenge or retaliation, distancing, and ruminating, in addition to not responding at all. Because Harry Potter is the main character of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, readers may incorrectly assume that his responses to bullying are effective, positive, and prosocial coping strategies. Despite Harry's myriad ineffective strategies, student stakeholders can create opportunities for students to learn from Harry's poor responses by considering and discussing more effective ways he could have responded in the novel. For example, Harry could have used adaptive rather than maladaptive humor—Martin et al. (2003) found a negative correlation between adaptive humor and poor mental health. Additionally, seeking advice from a friend or trusted adult is recommended in the literature (Davis & Nixon, 2014; Donoghue et al., 2015), and Harry has friends who would support this communication. Avoiding talking to adults about bullying incidents can lead to feelings of hopelessness (Siyahhan, Aricak, & Cayirdag-Acar, 2012); in bibliotherapy, readers could discuss the supportive adults at Hogwarts with whom Harry could communicate. Another effective response is skill-building, such as positivity or reframing, which is considered effective by teachers (Rosen et al., 2017) and students (Davis & Nixon, 2014) respectively. In a bibliotherapeutic setting, students can think of ways to replace Harry's ruminating with positively framed thought patterns.

Harry's upbringing cannot be disregarded when considering his response tendencies. Harry grew up in a home that promoted bullying by his cousin and neglect and harm by his aunt and uncle. Although talking to a trusted friend or adult are effective responses to bullying, Harry has no friends, nor does he have trusted adults in his life to whom he can turn. Therefore, Harry's tendency for rumination and other ineffective responses is understandable within the context of the story.

Some victims responded in effective ways in the novel and may be positive examples of handling bullying situations. For example, as stated above, both Neville and Ron talk to their friends about Draco's bullying. Another positive takeaway from victim responses is that none of the victims accepted the bullying as part of life, which generally fails to resolve bullying (Mahady Wilton et al., 2000). Adults using the novel in bibliotherapy should focus on these positive examples of victim reactions. See Appendix E for a table of novel examples that correspond to effective and ineffective responses to bullying.

Peer response findings. Bystander interventions in bullying situations often reduce bullying behavior (Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1997; Rosen et al., 2017). However, the specific type of peer response and its effectiveness is important to consider. In *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, the majority of peers responded with either no response or ineffective responses. More specifically, in some situations where Draco Malfoy exhibited bullying behavior toward Neville, Harry, or Ron, peers responded by retaliating or planning to retaliate. Much like research on victim retaliation, peer retaliation is not an effective response in reducing bullying, at least not long-term (Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001).

Additionally, peers in the novel often participated in the bullying, supporting the perpetrators rather than the victims. For example, Dudley often bullies Harry with the physical help of his peers or through relational means: "Nobody liked to disagree with Dudley's gang" (Rowling, 1999, p. 30). Similarly, Draco Malfoy often uses the aid of his friends Crabbe and Goyle as intimidating forces and participants in the bullying. Although not addressed in this research, we make note that the setting and environment may influence bullying and breed contempt among classmates, particularly when considering the house system in place at Hogwarts. In bibliotherapy, instructors can hold a discussion with their students about

competition and its place in their own school, and they can make actionable goals to support system-level changes, if necessary, to reduce school culture's effect on bullying.

In past research (Davis & Nixon, 2014), students have perceived other peer responses to be ineffective as well, many of which take place in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Although victim blaming was a rare response by peers in the novel, at times peers mocked the victim for being bullied or for seeking support (particularly in the case of Neville Longbottom), rudely told the bully to stop, or ignored the bullying altogether, all of which are harmful responses or, in the best case, do not help (Davis & Nixon, 2014).

The absence of effective responses in some cases is worth noting. For example, Harry, as victim to both Dudley and Draco, had peers respond effectively only one time. Peers did not listen or spend time with Harry related to the bullying. This lack of peer listening could be explained by Harry's reluctance to talk to his friends about his victimization, as mentioned above; however, instructors wishing to use the novel in bibliotherapy may remind peers that their friends who are victims do not have to communicate first—a good friend can broach the subject too. From the lack of responses from peers, and the lack of peer listening in the case of Harry, readers may glean the idea that victims often face bullying alone or that peers should not help at all. Teachers and instructors reading this novel with their students have an important opportunity to counter these messages.

Although the novel contains many examples of ineffective peer responses, some peer actions are considered effective and positive cases. For example, peers listen to Ron's and Neville's predicaments (conversely to Harry), and in the case of Neville, peers tell an adult about the harmful behavior. Both listening and telling an adult make bullying situations better, according to some real-world student perspectives (Davis & Nixon, 2014).

Adult response findings. Some adults in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* responded in effective ways. For example, when Draco Malfoy insults Ron Weasley's family, Hagrid listens to Ron and gives him advice, both of which are effective adult responses (Davis & Nixon, 2014). However, this same incident also reveals lack of adult support from Professor Snape, who ignores the bullying. Perhaps this ignoring of the bullying reveals an undercurrent of adult insensitivity about the bullying that takes place at Hogwarts.

Relatedly, the most common adult response to bullying in the novel was “no response described.” This lack of response illustrates that many adults in the text of the novel are either oblivious to the bullying, such as the professors at Hogwarts, or may support the behavior, such as Dudley Dursley's parents. Unfortunately, Hogwarts seems to reflect the reality that students of middle school age lack teacher support and attention (Farmer et al., 2015) despite the research claiming increased adult supervision is a deterrent to bullying behavior (Olweus, 1993). Much like the lack of responses from peers, the overwhelming frequency of no responses from adults in the novel may imply that students who face bullying will do so by themselves—but real-world adults have a responsibility to the safety of their students, which includes freedom from bullying.

Author intent and the power of *Harry Potter*. Although *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* contains multiple incidents of peer victimization, we doubt author J. K. Rowling's objective was to create a didactic lesson on appropriate responses to bullying. Rather, a writer's purpose is generally to tell a good story in an immersive setting. The intent of this research was to explore bullying through the lens of Rowling's work; the intent was not to shine an over-critical light on the story of *Harry Potter*. If anything, bullying in *Sorcerer's Stone* is presented as a reflection of the real world rather than the ideal, with adults lacking competency regarding bullying and victims and peers resorting to knee-jerk retaliatory replies. As reviewed

above, bullying is prevalent worldwide, and its victims, bystanders, and interested adults may not have been taught how to respond positively or effectively, much like the characters in the novel. In other words, Rowling was not writing a prescription of appropriate reactions to bullying but a description of realistic situations many children face (albeit in a fantasy world), with bullying being merely one.

The value of the Harry Potter series is profound, and even if the presentation of bullying is wanting at times, we would be remiss to disregard the merit of other powerful themes throughout: love, family, friendship, maturation, perseverance. As characters, Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, and Ron Weasley serve as encouraging examples of standing up for the oppressed and transitioning from childhood to adulthood despite unwarranted darkness; they are bastions of hope for many readers worldwide. The stories are appealing on multiple thematic and storytelling levels, and we feel that they will continue to resonate with children and adults alike for years to come.

Limitations and Future Research

The coding instrument used in this study to analyze responses to bullying was created without tests of validity. This questionable validity may be a limitation despite the use of past research in its creation and despite the determination of coder reliability. An additional limitation of this study includes the authors' focus on a single novel. The time required to read and analyze a novel, compared to a picture book, should be carefully considered in future research. Finally, responses to bullying in the novel were coded as effective or ineffective based on previous research; however, the actual effectiveness of responses to bullying within the novel's setting was not determined, which may be a limitation or an area for future research.

Another limitation may be the definition of bullying itself and our attempt to translate that definition into the story. Although multiplicity of bullying incidents is straightforward, recognizing a power differential and the intent to harm is subjective. Who has the power, and what their intent truly is, are difficult to define. This subjectivity affects both one's reading of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* and also how student stakeholders define bullying. In other words, research generally agrees on a definition of bullying to include a power imbalance and the intent to harm, yet this definition may be indistinguishable to how students, parents, teachers, and administrators define it in practice, whether in the hallways of schools or the pages of a book.

The possibilities of future research related to bibliotherapy, bullying, and literature are myriad. Because this analysis was focused entirely on the first novel in the Harry Potter series, future researchers can utilize the coding instrument to consider the frequency and effectiveness of responses to bullying in subsequent novels in the series. Moreover, the coding instrument could potentially be used for analyses of bullying responses in any book for readers of any age, thus improving the lack of content analyses in books for middle grade and young adult readers. Finally, this study answered questions about responses to bullying within *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, yet the novel and series contain many situations and themes that may be beneficial for bibliotherapy. Future research should determine the appropriateness of the Harry Potter books for bibliotherapy from other perspectives.

Conclusion

This study involved a content analysis of responses to bullying in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* to understand both the response frequency and the responses' alignment with research on effectiveness. A coding instrument was created to derive response frequencies,

which were then converted to percentages for analysis. Findings revealed that victims, peers, and adults in the novel exhibited no response to the bullying more often than they provided a response—these characters either did not respond, or they responded atextually outside the knowledge of the reader.

Among actual responses, victims responded most often using ineffective means, such as revenge seeking or distancing. Individual victims often responded differently from one another. For example, Harry Potter—as a victim of bullying from both Dudley Dursley and Draco Malfoy—responded often by ruminating, distancing (ignoring or running away), or retaliating or planning to retaliate, all of which are considered ineffective. In contrast, Ron and Neville, also victims of bullying, responded through more effective means, such as talking to friends or adults. When peers responded to bullying behavior, they also responded most often through ineffective means, such as helping the bully or planning to retaliate on behalf of the victim. More specifically, peers listened to and spent time with Ron and Neville related to their bullying, whereas peers participated in the bullying more often than they helped in Harry's situations; for example, Dudley's friends and Draco's lackeys were a major presence in Harry's victimization. When adult responses were represented in the text, which was rare, these responses were effective more often than ineffective, such as when adults listened to the victim or provided advice. Interestingly, however, Draco's victimization of Harry never resulted in an adult response.

Although books recommended for bibliotherapy are often based in reality, fantastic stories may allow students to process their adversities—such as bullying—through its portrayal of relatable characters within a fantasy world. Despite the overwhelming lack of character responses and ineffective responses to bullying presented in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's*

Stone, results from this analysis can still be valuable in classroom bibliotherapy. The positive examples of effective responses in the novel may clearly lend themselves to classroom lessons on bullying; however, teachers and other student stakeholders can utilize both the effective *and* ineffective examples in the book, using the latter examples to discuss how characters could have responded more effectively. This analysis adds value to the use of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in bibliotherapy to promote the use of effective responses to bullying among victims, peers, and adults—all with the hope of supporting those who face the trauma of bullying in our schools.

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APPENDIX A

Coding Instrument

Documenting Victim, Peer, and Adult Responses to Bullying
in Youth Literature

Part 1: Possible Bullying Behavior and Victim, Peer, and Adult Responses

<i>Perpetrator:</i>
<i>Victim:</i>
<p>1. Describe the possible incidents of bullying behavior (with applicable quotations) below.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;"><i>Include instances of the following behavior: physical (hitting, kicking, damage to personal property, or other physical acts of harm), verbal (mocking, name-calling, threatening, or other uses of words to cause harm), and/or relational (spreading rumors, gossiping, social exclusion, silent treatment, or other uses of a relationship to cause harm).</i></p> <p>1a. Incident</p> <p>1b. Incident</p> <p>1c. Incident</p> <p>1d. Incident</p> <p>1e. Incident</p> <p>1f. Incident</p> <p>1g. Incident</p> <p>1h. Incident</p>

2. Describe any moments, behaviors, or other information that reveals (or fails to reveal) the perpetrator as having more power than the victim, as attempting to gain power through the harmful behavior, or as outnumbering the victim with other peers (with applicable quotations). Connect each power dynamic with the incidents from Question #1:

1a. Power Dynamic

1b. Power Dynamic

1c. Power Dynamic

1d. Power Dynamic

1e. Power Dynamic

1f. Power Dynamic

1g. Power Dynamic

1h. Power Dynamic

3. Describe any moments, behaviors, or other information that reveals (or fails to reveal) the perpetrator as intending to harm the victim (with applicable quotations). Connect each intent of harm with the incidents from Question #1:

1a. Intent to Harm

1b. Intent to Harm

1c. Intent to Harm

1d. Intent to Harm

1e. Intent to Harm

1f. Intent to Harm

1g. Intent to Harm

1h. Intent to Harm

4. Describe any victim response(s) to the harmful behavior, either during or after the harmful behavior (with applicable quotations). Connect each response with the incidents from Question #1:

1a. Victim Response(s)

1b. Victim Response(s)

1c. Victim Response(s)

1d. Victim Response(s)

1e. Victim Response(s)

1f. Victim Response(s)

1g. Victim Response(s)

1h. Victim Response(s)

5. Describe any peer response(s) to the harmful behavior, either during or after the harmful behavior (with applicable quotations). Connect each response with the incidents from Question #1:

1a. Peer Response(s)

1b. Peer Response(s)

1c. Peer Response(s)

1d. Peer Response(s)

1e. Peer Response(s)

1f. Peer Response(s)

1g. Peer Response(s)

1h. Peer Response(s)

6. Describe any adult response(s) to the harmful behavior, either during or after the harmful behavior (with applicable quotations). Connect each response with the incidents from Question #1:

1a. Adult Response(s)

1b. Adult Response(s)

1c. Adult Response(s)

1d. Adult Response(s)

1e. Adult Response(s)

1f. Adult Response(s)

1g. Adult Response(s)

1h. Adult Response(s)

Part 2: Defining the Bullying Relationship

- To be considered bullying: a) the relationship between bully and victim is defined by an imbalance of power (physical or non-physical; bully may have more power or is attempting to gain power), b) the bully intends to harm the victim, and c) the bullying behavior is continual or persistent (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999).

Power Differential:

7. Return to each incident in question #1. Mark “**P**” next to each incident with an imbalance of power. Mark “**NP**” next to each incident *without* an imbalance of power. (Use information from question #2 to determine the power differential for each incident.)

Intent to Harm:

8. Return to each incident in question #1. Mark “**H**” next to each incident where the perpetrator intends to harm the victim. Mark “**NH**” next to each incident where the perpetrator *does not* intend to harm the victim. (Use information from question #3 to determine the intent to harm for each incident)

Multiple Incidents:

9. Return to question #1. Are multiple incidents (more than one) marked *both H and P*?

Yes	
No	

If the answer to question #9 was “No,” do not proceed. If the answer to question #9 was “Yes,” proceed through Part 3 of the coding instrument.

Part 3: Responses to Bullying Behavior

10. See questions #1 and #4 above. Using only the incidents marked *both P* and *H* in question #1, determine **the victim responses**. Mark all that apply. (Responses adapted from Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, J., Weir, K [2003]; Davis and Nixon [2014]; and Flanagan et al. [2013].)

Victim Response	Frequency	Incident #
Skill development		
Prosocial response		
Talked to a friend		
Talked to an adult at home		
Talked to an adult at school		
Used adaptive humor		
Distancing		
Retaliation/revenge seeking		
Acceptance		
Emotional expression		
Rumination		
Told the bully how he/she felt		
Told the bully to stop		
Used maladaptive humor		
Other		
No response described		

Skill development: Did the victim build his/her confidence, shift his/her perspective, and/or mentally reframe his/her experience of the bullying?

Prosocial response: Did the victim seek compromise or attempt to befriend the bully?

Talked to a friend: Did the victim tell a peer about the bullying situation?

Talked to an adult at home: Did the victim tell an adult at home about the bullying situation?

Talked to an adult at school: Did the victim tell an adult at school about the bullying situation?

Used adaptive humor: Did the victim use humor to enhance personal well-being or the well-being of relationships?

Distancing: Did the victim attempt to physically distance him/herself from the bullying and/or did the victim attempt to ignore the bullying?

Retaliation/revenge seeking: Did the victim retaliate (physically, verbally, or relationally) or plan to retaliate against the bully?

Acceptance: Did the victim passively and/or actively accept the bullying?

Emotional expression: Did the victim cry or yell at the bully?

Rumination: Did the victim worry about or ruminate on the bullying?

Told the bully how he/she felt: Did the victim verbally express his/her feelings about the harmful behavior?

Told the bully to stop: Did the victim ask or tell the bully to cease the harmful behavior?

Used maladaptive humor: Did the victim use humor that was at the expense of self or others, such as self-defeating humor, name-calling, or sarcasm?

11. If "Other" was answered on the previous question, please describe:

12. See questions #1 and #5 above. Using only the incidents marked *both* **P** and **H** in question #1, determine **the peer responses**. Mark all that apply. (Responses recognized by Davis and Nixon [2014].)

Peer Response	Frequency	Incident #
Helped the victim get away		
Listened to the victim		
Spent time with victim		
Told the bully to stop, nicely		
Told the bully to stop, rudely or angrily		
Ignored the bullying		
Gave the victim advice		
Blamed the victim		
Mocked the victim for being bullied or for seeking support		
Distracted the bully		
Participated in the bullying (i.e., helped the bully)		
Retaliated or planned to retaliate		
Told an adult		
Helped the victim tell an adult		
Other		
No response described		

13. If "Other" was answered for the previous question, please describe:

14. See questions #1 and #6 above. Using only the incidents marked *both* **P** and **H** in question #1, determine **the adult responses**. Mark all that apply. (Responses recognized by Davis and Nixon [2014].)

Adult Response	Frequency	Incident #
Listened to the victim		
Gave advice to the victim		
Followed up with the victim		
Blamed the victim		
Ignored the bullying		
Punished the bully		
Increased adult supervision		
Told the victim they would talk to the bully		
Talked to the bully and victim together		
Told victim to not “tattle,” or equivalent		
Told the victim to resolve the bullying		
Spoke about the behavior during class		
Told a large group (class, entire school) about the bullying		
Had a speaker come to school		
Other		
No response described		

15. If “Other” was answered for the previous question, please describe:

APPENDIX E

Examples of Victim, Peer, and Adult Responses**Victims**

Response	Example from <i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone</i>
Skill development (effective response)	Harry Potter finds hope, despite bullying from Dudley and his friends (Rowling, 1999, p. 31).
Talked to a friend (effective response)	Neville talks to his friends about Draco's bullying (Rowling, 1999, p. 218).
Talked to an adult at school (effective response)	After Draco takes Neville's Remembrall, Neville tells Professor McGonagall (Rowling, 1999, p. 145).
Distancing (ineffective response)	When Neville's friends encourage him to talk to an adult about the bullying from Draco, Neville says he doesn't want any more trouble, trying to ignore the situation (Rowling, 1999, p. 217–218).
Retaliation/revenge seeking (ineffective response)	When Draco insults Ron's family, Ron dives at Draco in an attempt to fight him. Soon after, Ron talks about retaliating against Draco. (Rowling, 1999, p. 195–196).
Rumination (ineffective response)	Harry thinks about how worried he is of looking like a fool in front of Draco (Rowling, 1999, p. 143).
Used maladaptive humor (ineffective response)	When Dudley threatens to put Harry's head down a toilet, Harry uses humor at Dudley's expense (Rowling, 1999, p. 32).

Peers

Response	Example from <i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone</i>
Listened to the victim (effective response)	Hermione and Harry listen to Ron talk about Draco tormenting him in the hospital wing (Rowling, 1999, p. 238).
Spent time with the victim (effective response)	Hermione, Harry, and Ron spend time with Neville and urge him to tell an adult after Draco performs a magical leg-locking curse on him (Rowling, 1999, p. 217–218).
Participated in the bullying (ineffective response)	“Harry Hunting” is the favorite sport of Dudley’s four friends (Rowling, 1999, p. 25).
Ignored the bullying (ineffective response)	Other students at school ignore Dudley’s treatment of Harry because “nobody liked to disagree with Dudley’s gang” (Rowling, 1999, p. 30).
Retaliated or planned to retaliate (ineffective response)	When Draco steals Neville’s Remembrall, Harry threatens Draco (Rowling, 1999, p. 148–150).

Adults

Response	Example from <i>Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone</i>
Listened to the victim (effective response)	After Draco insults Ron’s family, Hagrid is present to support Ron and listen (Rowling, 1999, p. 195–196).
Ignored the bullying (ineffective response)	After Draco insults Ron’s family, Professor Snape ignores the bullying situation (Rowling, 1999, p. 195–196).

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