

An Exploratory Mixed Methods Study Considering Parents of Adolescents with Developmental Disabilities as Secondary Victims of Bullying Abuse

February 28th, 2024

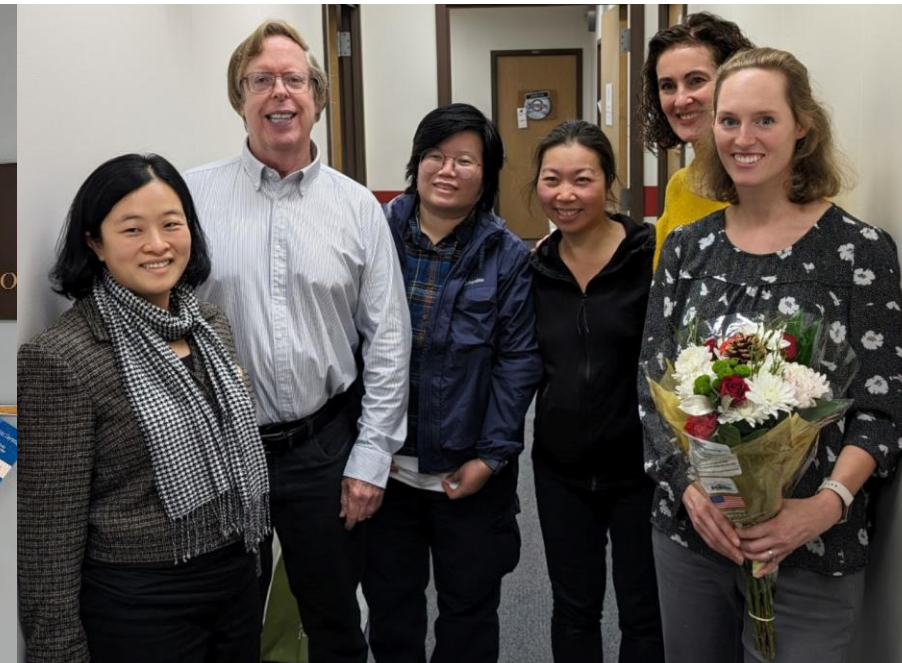
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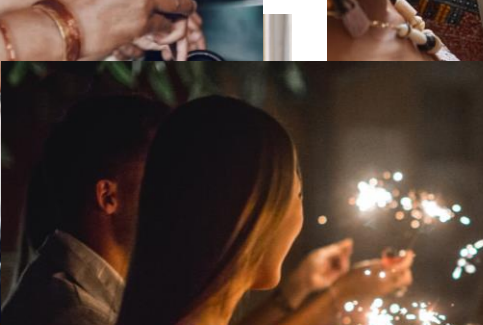




About Hannah

- Postdoctoral Associate at the Alberti Center
- From Madison, Wisconsin
- Background in forgiveness research and SEL





Secondary Victimization

- A secondary victim experiences harm when someone who they care about is wronged by another person(s) (Govier, 2002)
- Different than sympathy, empathy, and emotion-transfer—S.V. is specific to interpersonal offenses
- Different than tertiary victimization— A secondary victim has a close bi-directional relationship with the primary victim

Defining Forgiveness

- Forgiving someone who hurt a loved one (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2015, p. 287)
- Forgiveness is giving up resentment towards an individual who offended while fostering compassion towards them
 - NOT the same as giving up justice
 - NOT the same as friendship/relational restoration

Effects of Forgiveness

Forgiving others can lead to

- Hope (Freedman & Enright, 1996)
- Self-esteem (Lin et al., 2004)
- Lower blood pressure (Lawler et al., 2003; Waltman et al., 2008)
- Decreased anxiety & depression (Reed & Enright, 2006)

What does the research tell us about Secondary Forgiveness?

Secondary Forgiveness Research

- Secondary victims might be less forgiving than primary victims
- Green et al. (2008) calls this phenomenon “the third-party (un)forgiveness effect”



Factors that Effect Secondary Forgiveness

Factors that Increase Secondary Forgiveness :

- Apology (Green et al., 2008)
- Time (Thorson, 2019)
- Less severe offense, or less consequences connected to the offense (Cooney et al., 2011; Thorson, 2019)
- No expectations for a trusting relationship between the offender and the victim (Cooney et al., 2011)
- Ability to cognitively empathize with the offender (Cooney et al., 2011)

Factor that Increase Secondary Victimization:

- Communal-coping/self-disclosure (Pederson & Faw, 2019)

Bullying Definition

- Bullying refers to intentional behaviors that hurt another person or put another person under stress; the hurt may be physical or psychological and is usually repeated; and there is a power imbalance that is either social, psychological, or physical (Farrington 1993, Olweus, 1993, p. 9; Rigby, 2002)

Examples:

Physical- shoves, property damage

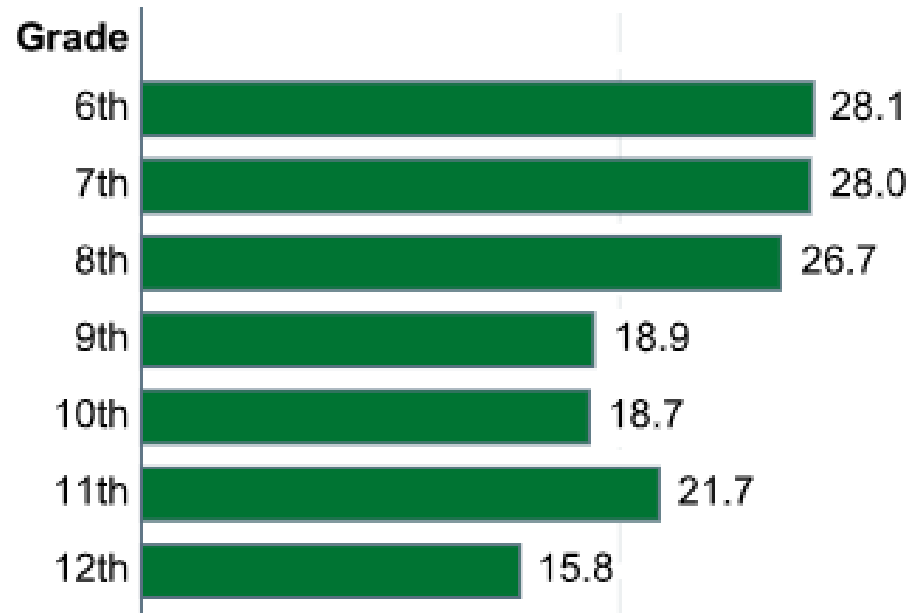
Verbal- threatens, made fun of, name-calling

Relational- excludes, spreads rumors about

Cyber- recording for the purpose of humiliation, posting content one doesn't want shared

Bullying & Adolescence

- **1 in 5 students** report being bullied in grades 6 through 12
- Bullying rates peak in middle school and decline at the end of high school



National Center for Educational Statistics, 2019.
<https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=719>

Bullying & Students with Disabilities

- U.S. K-12 students with disabilities are 1.5 times more likely to be victims of bullying abuse (Blake et al., 2012)
- Rate of bully victimization for students with disabilities was 34.1% in middle school and 26.6% in high school
- Emotional Disturbance was the disability with highest rates of bullying abuse (51.8%)
- Higher rates of bully victimization among children and adolescents with autism spectrum disorders (Humphrey & Hebron, 2015; Kloosterman et al., 2013; Maiano, et al., 2016; Wainscot et al., 2008;)

Parent & Child-with-Disability Relationship

- Adolescents with intellectual disabilities may spend most social time with family members rather than peers (Buttimer & Tierney, 2005)
- Relationship is characterized by highly involved caregiving, or “enmeshment” (Walton & Tiede, 2020)
- Perceive their child as vulnerable to bullying abuse:
 - Children with ASD without intellectual disability aged 11–16 years, parents reported being significantly more worried than their children about bullying (Ashburner et al., 2018)
 - Lack of friends to stand up to bullies (Koning & Magill-Evans, 2001)
 - Bullying related to being different (Mishna et al., 2020)

Parent as a Secondary Victim of Bully Abuse

26 parents of children aged 5-11 (Harcourt, 2015)

- Upset, frustrated, and powerless
- Loss of sleep, stress-induced illnesses, excessive alcohol consumption, and exhaustion
- 7 parents (27%) described feeling a sense of failure or guilt at not being able to keep child safe
- 10 parents (38%) made comments related to increased tension within the home, and stress between themselves and their partners

11 parents of middle schoolers (Brown, 2010):

- Helplessness, anger, guilt, disappointment, and frustration related to the school's failure to provide support to their child.
- "I told Mr. Vice Principal, 'I can see why kids take guns to school cause you guys can't do a damn thing'"

9 parents of children 14 to 16 (Herring, 2019):

- "It's impacted me personally because now I'm more cautious, I'm more overprotective of her."
- "And I looked at her and I said, 'they're not going to get away with this, because they hurt you, so they hurt me.'"

Bowen's Family Systems Theory

- Family members are emotionally interdependent in that they react to each other's changes in needs, expectations, and challenges (Bowen, 1971)
- Mothers' stress moderated the association between bullying victimization and anxiety among young adults with autism spectrum disorder (Weiss et al., 2015)




Developmental Implications

- Parents' responses to bullying abuse are likely to influence their children's responses
- Parental anger management or the regulation of the expression of anger in front of one's child while the child was in 6th grade was significantly associated with adolescent problem-solving behaviors in 11th grade (Donohue et al., 2022)
- Children who engaged in aggressive strategies towards bullies (i.e., verbal aggression, physical aggression, venting) tended to prolong bullying episodes and were **13 times less** likely to de-escalate the severity of aggression in an episode than children who used a problem-solving strategy such as avoidance, ignoring, or seeking help (Mahady-Wilton et al., 2000)

We know that...

- Bullying disproportionately affects adolescents with developmental disabilities
- Parents of adolescents with developmental disabilities may be more closely involved in their child's social lives
- Only a handful of studies have considered parents' mental health impacts in the context of bullying abuse

Research Questions

1. How are parents of bullied adolescents with developmental disabilities affected by bullying abuse?
 2. What factors impact those outcomes?
 3. What has helped parents to manage their anger towards people or systems that contributed to bullying abuse?
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Research Design

- Online survey
- Sample of convenience
- Demographic questions (race, sexuality, education, etc.)
- Four open-ended response questions
- Five self-report scales
- Mental health measures: 1) Forgiveness, 2) Desire for Revenge, 3) Hurt from interpersonal offense (specific to the offense). 4) Aggression (anger, hostility)

HAS YOUR CHILD WITH A LEARNING DISORDER OR DISABILITY BEEN BULLIED?

HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED?

Parents are invited to participate in a psychological research study through the University of Wisconsin-Madison regarding parents' experiences with bullying. This online survey takes 30 minutes to complete and you will receive a \$20 Amazon gift card for your time.

At this time we invite participants:

- Whose child was between the ages of 10 and 18 when the incident(s) of bullying abuse occurred (They can be any age now).
- Whose child has a learning disorder, a developmental disability, or a developmental delay
- Bullying abuse happened in the past, not on-going



SURVEY LINK HERE:
<https://go.wisc.edu/zyb6ff>

Questions? Contact Hannah Rapp, Ph.D
student from UW Madison's School of
Education: Oury@wisc.edu or (608) 572-7926

Measure Name	Scale	Score Range	Subscales	α	Example Item
<i>Enright Forgiveness Inventory Short Form (EFI-30)</i>	strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6)	30 to 180	1. Behavior (I do..) 2. Cognition (I think..) 3. Affect (I feel..)	.97	“I think he or she is dreadful”; “I wish him or her well.”
<i>Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire-Short Form</i>	extremely uncharacteristic (1) to extremely characteristic (5)	12 to 60	1. Anger 2. Hostility 3. Verbal aggression 4. Physical aggression	.88	“I have trouble controlling my temper”; “At times I feel I have gotten a raw deal out of life.”
<i>TRIM: Revenge motivations subscale</i>	strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)	5 to 25		.92	“I want him/her to get what he/she deserves”; “I wish that something bad would happen to him/her.”
<i>Revised Empathetic Distress Questionnaire</i>	does not describe me at all (0) to describes me very well (4)	Mean of the item scores (18 total)		.96	“I felt just as upset over the problem as my child did”; “I felt very worried about my child”
<i>Wounds of Injustice Checklist</i>	strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6)	16 to 96	*used as checklist for total number of wounds present out of 8 as well	.92	The offense caused a permanent change in my and my child’s lives”

Example Other 1-item Measures	Variable Type	Score Unit	Questions
Child's vulnerability to bullying abuse	Continuous	0 (Not vulnerable) to 4 (Extremely Vulnerable)	On a scale of 0 to 4, how vulnerable would you say your child is to bullying abuse?
Parent's perceptions of their child's forgiveness (primary forgiveness)	Continuous	4 = definitely forgiveness 3 = probably forgiveness 2 = probably no forgiveness 1 = definitely no forgiveness	Has your child forgiven the person who bullied them?
Severity of the bullying abuse offense	Continuous	No hurt (1) A little hurt (2) Some hurt (3) Much hurt (4) A great deal of hurt (5)	How deeply was your child hurt when the incident occurred?
Reconciliation	Dichotomous	Yes/no 1= reconciliation 0 = no reconciliation	Has your child returned to having a friendship with the person who bullied them?
Apology to the child from the person who bullied them	Dichotomous	Yes/no 1= apology 0 = no apology	Did your child receive an apology from the person who bullied them?
Friendship between the child and the person who bullied them prior to the bullying abuse	Dichotomous	Yes/no 1= no prior friendship 0 = prior friendship	Was your child friends with the person who bullied them?

Wounds of Injustice

1. Unhealthy Anger- *"I have trouble stopping being mad about what happened"*
2. Shame- *"Others are gossiping or have gossiped about what happened"*
3. Guilt- *"I feel upset at myself for what happened to my child"*
4. Depleted Energy- *"I have had a lot less energy since the offense happened"*
5. Cognitive rehearsals- *"What happened often replays in my mind"*
6. Comparison to the offender- *"I often think about how the offending party is doing compared to my child"*
7. Permanent Change- *"The offense caused a permanent change in my and my child's lives"*
8. Altered Just Worldview- *"I trust people or systems less since the offense happened"*

Open-Ended Questions

- How did the experience of your child being bullied affect your well-being? (Please consider your physical health, mental health, moods, perceptions of the world and justice, changes in your household, changes in your relationships or interactions with others, and financial changes.)
- Do you view your child as more vulnerable to bullying abuse when compared to other children their age? Why or why not?
- What has helped you to manage your anger or resentment related to the incident(s) of bullying abuse?
- Please share if you can:
How your child's school could have handled the situation better

Methods of Analysis: Mixed

Quantitative data:

- Bivariate correlations & descriptive statistics (mean, SD, etc.)
- Multiple regression models for four dependent outcomes

Qualitative data:

- Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
- Typically inductive, but some deductive coding via wounds of injustice
- Trustworthiness: Cohen's Kappa interrater reliability, case frequencies documented

Triangulation:

Primary RQs:	Method 1	Method 2
1. How do parents experience secondary victimization related to their child's bully victimization?	Qualitative component: Open-ended response question. Responses will be coded using inductive coding and deductive coding via the seven wounds of injustice framework.	Quantitative component: Parent(s) will be given a 1) Forgiveness measure, EFI-30; 2) Wounds of injustice checklist; 3) Measure of desire for revenge, TRIM: revenge subscale 4) Aggression measure (i.e., anger, hostility)

Parent Participants

65 participants
in the final
sample

Parent characteristics

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender		
Female	58	89%
Male	6	9%
Prefer not to say	1	2%
Identify as Mother or Mother figure	59	91%
Identify as Father or Father figure	6	9%
Age		
25-34	1	2%
35-44	13	20%
45-54	26	40%
55-64	20	31%
65+	5	8%

Highest Level of Education

Some high school or less	1	2%
High school	4	6%
Some college, no degree	10	15%
Associates or Technical degree	7	11%
Bachelor's Degree	23	35%
Graduate or Professional degree	20	31%

Household Income

Less than \$25,000	5	8%
\$25,000-\$49,999	9	14%
\$50,000-\$99,999	20	31%
\$100,000-\$199,000	24	37%
More than \$200,000	6	9%
Prefer not to say	1	2%

Sexuality

Heterosexual/Straight	57	88%
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual	4	6%
Prefer not to say	4	6%

Race

White	54	83%
Black	4	6%
Asian	2	3%
Other	5	8%

Hispanic

Yes	5	8%
No	60	92%

Characteristics of Participant's Adolescent Child

Characteristics of Participant's Adolescent Child (n =65)

Child characteristics		
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender		
Female	26	40%
Male	39	60%
Transgender		
	2	3%
Grade Level when Bullied		
4-5 th (elementary)	20	31%
6-8 th (middle school)	19	29%
9-12 th (high school)	15	23%
Multiple levels	11	17%
Sexuality		
Heterosexual/Straight	56	86%
Gay/Lesbian/Bisexual	4	6%
Prefer not to say	5	8%

Race			
White	47	72%	
Black	7	11%	
Asian	2	3%	
Biracial	3	5%	
Other	6	9%	

Hispanic			
Yes	3	5%	

Special Education			
Yes	38	58%	

Disability Type	
Angelman syndrome	1
Anxiety	42
ADHD	36
Autism Spectrum Disorder	30
Bipolar Disorder	3
Cerebral Palsy	5
Conduct disorder	1
Congenital birth defect	1
Depression	22
Disruptive Mood Dysregulation Disorder	1
Down Syndrome	7
Epilepsy	1
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome	1
Hearing Loss	5
Intellectual Disability	16
Language and Speech disorder	14
Learning Disorders	22
OCD	2
Oppositional Defiant disorder	8
PTSD	10
Tourette Syndrome	2
Vision Loss	5

Bullying Offenses

- Average time since bullying offense was 8.4 years ($SD = 7.70$)

Offending parties:

- 62% were the adolescent's peer(s)
12% were school administrators
11% were teachers
- 11% were parents of the child's peer
- 3% involved multiple categories of persons
- 2% were Aspergers professionals ($n = 1$).

Types of bullying abuse experienced

by primary victims ($n = 64$)

Number of Cases

Made fun of, called names, insulted	33
Physical aggression (shoved, tripped, slapped)	13
Excluded from activities on purpose	8
Property stolen or destroyed	8
Subject of rumors	6
Shamed by an adult authority	6
Taken advantage of disability to make do things they shouldn't do	5
Sexual harassment	5
Cyberbullying	4

RQ1: How do parents experience secondary victimization?

Average participant experienced:

- Low levels of forgiveness
- Low levels of hurt

Average participant was NOT vengeful or aggressive

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations

	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	V1	V2	V3	V4
V1:	Forgiveness (<i>n</i> = 64)	30	178	83.05	31.94	—			
V2:	Wounds of Injustice	20	84	48.40	17.48	-.50**	—		
V3:	Revenge	5	25	9.85	5.32	-.62**	.51**	—	
V4:	Aggression	12	46	23.48	8.87	-.36*	.50**	.44**	—

RQ1 Qualitative analysis: Deductive Coding

Quantitative and Qualitative Triangulation: Frequencies of Wounds of Injustice

Wounds of Injustice	Quantitative (<i>n</i> = 65)	Qualitative (<i>n</i> = 64)	Sample Quotes
1. Altered just worldview	51	30	"I felt alone and betrayed by the educational system."
2. Permanent Change	47	24	"I removed him from the school and enrolled him to online schooling. I had to quit my job and rely on my significant other to support us."
3. Cognitive Rehearsals	39	7	"I was distracted in my thinking by dwelling on it, how to fix it, angry, etc that interfered with my focus and sense of calm."
4. Unhealthy Anger	36	25	"To this day... 5-6 years later..I still hate the parent the kids.. I will forever not be the same." "... my well-being has been slightly shifted to 'hell hath no fury'"
5. Guilt	34	10	"One of my most immediate reactions was a profound sense of helplessness. I want to protect my children, and feeling unable to do so can be deeply distressing."
6. Comparison to offender	32	4	"School administrators did not help or support her, nor were there any consequences for the bullies behavior."
7. Shame	26	3	"Worries about being judged."
8. Depleted Energy	22	7	"I struggled with my own mental health trying to cope with his issues. I was depressed, withdrawn, overwhelmed."

Note: For the quantitative measure, participants indicated "slightly agree", "agree", or "strongly agree" to least one of the two relevant items for each wound.

RQ1 Qualitative analysis: Inductive Coding

Effects of Secondary Bullying Abuse: Key Themes ($n = 64$)

Higher-order Themes	Number of Cases	Sample Quotes
Affected Mental Health	50	“It made me feel sad and traumatized.”
Relationships Harmed	29	“It caused my husband and I to argue more. There was a lot of turmoil and tension in the house.”
Lifestyle changed	14	“We are all much happier, though homeschooling is exhausting and I cannot work.”

- anxiety ($n = 12$)
- distress or stress ($n = 10$)
- upsettedness ($n = 10$)
- anger ($n = 10$)
- worry ($n = 9$)
- depression ($n = 8$)
- sadness ($n = 7$)
- helplessness ($n = 6$)
- hurt ($n = 3$)
- fury ($n = 3$)
- exhaustion or overwhelmingness ($n = 3$)
- hopelessness ($n = 3$)
- fear ($n = 2$)
- defeat or failure ($n = 2$)
- isolation or being alone ($n = 2$)
- hate ($n = 1$)
- pressure ($n = 1$)
- uncertainty ($n = 1$)

Relationships Harmed

- Frequency: 29/64 participants
- School personnel ($n = 23$), a co-parent or significant other ($n = 6$), their child's sibling or other household members ($n = 2$), and with people in general ($n = 4$)
- 8 parents removed their adolescents from school
- Household tensions: *“This caused me stress not as much that she was being bullied, but stress from my wife's emotions. My wife was extremely upset that this was happening to our daughter, and this brought stress on to me. But yeah, the stress was very bad in the house, because my daughter brought her hidden emotions home.”*

Lifestyle Changes

He was bullied on the school bus, and the only way to fix it was to start driving him to and from school every day, just to get him off that bus. I talked to the school, and they said there were no other real options. Driving him every day started in 6th grade and continued until he was a Senior--7 years! I feel like I lost 7 years of my life. I had no time to do anything other than that. I wanted to get a job and bring some money into the house, but I couldn't. **Driving him every day for 7 years consumed my time.** I started seeing a counselor and she said my diagnosis was that I was just "exhausted and burned out". Not only did I drive him back and forth to school, but also to things like band practice and shows, medical appointments, counseling, etc. I used to say **if I wrote a book about my life, it would be titled "Sitting in Cars in Parking Lots"**. Looking back, there is some sadness when I think about things I wanted to do, but I saved him emotionally--and that is priceless.

Analysis of RQ2: “Do certain factors affect secondary victimization outcomes?”

Variables		Model 1 Forgiveness (<i>n</i> = 64)			Model 2 Wounds of Injustice (<i>n</i> = 65)		
		<i>b</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>S.E.</i>	<i>t</i>
	Intercept	-0.32	0.50	-0.63	-0.24	0.46	-0.52
Predictor Variables	Empathetic Distress	-0.08	0.14	-0.59	0.20	0.12	1.67
	Vulnerability	-0.16	0.14	-1.16	0.28	0.12	2.33*
	Severity of offense	0.05	0.14	0.37	0.02	0.12	0.17
	Time since offense	-0.25	0.13	-1.88	0.04	0.12	0.33
	Apology/Friends	0.75	0.41	1.80	-0.18	0.37	-0.47
	Child Forgiveness	0.36	0.12	2.93**	-0.32	0.11	-2.86**
Control Variables	Prior Friendship	-0.08	0.27	-0.28	0.60	0.24	2.46*
	Mother	0.08	0.42	0.19	-0.11	0.38	-0.29
	Child’s Gender	0.15	0.26	0.58	0.06	0.23	0.26
	P_White/nonhisp	-0.001	0.38	-0.004	0.33	0.34	0.98
	C_White/nonhisp	-0.23	0.35	-0.67	-0.09	0.31	-0.27
	P_Education	0.39	0.26	1.50	-0.20	0.24	-0.84
	<i>R</i> ²	0.21			0.35		
<i>F</i>	2.36*			3.83***			

Note. Adjusted R-squared presented. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01. ****p* < .001. Apology (1 = Yes and 0 = No). Reconciliation (1 = Yes and 0 = No). Prior Friendship (1 = Yes and 0 = No). Child’s Gender (1 = Male). Parent’s Education (1 = college degree).

Perceptions of the Child's Vulnerability: Key Themes (*n* = 64)

Themes	Number of Cases	Sample Quotes
Disability emphasized	35	<p>"I believe any person with a disability could always be vulnerable or a target to bullying because of their inability to know how to handle conflict and or wanting to please others."</p> <p>"I view my son as extremely vulnerable since he has autism and intellectual delays."</p>
Different from others	22	<p>"...the children could tell he was a little different. Anything that makes you different in the public education system, makes you a target."</p> <p>"My child being differently-abled, coming from poverty, as well as being differently colored (as the neighborhood children)..."</p> <p>"She marches to the beat of her own drum and typically does not stand down. Kids say she is weird. She loves animals, bugs and reptiles."</p>
Social skills deficit	38	<p>"He has some behaviors (making nonsense noises, interrupting others, being louder than expected, fidgeting, bumping into others, talking about unrelated topics, tattling/concerning self with others' business...) that many would perceive as annoying"</p> <p>"He is very trusting and naive and does not understand sarcasm, jokes or insinuations."</p>
Communication difficulties	13	<p>"he was made fun of for his speech..."</p> <p>"My youngest was very shy so he was very reluctant to share the bullying with anyone."</p>
Physical attribute	13	<p>"I think the main reason is that my child's disability is obvious and readily visible."</p> <p>"...he was small for his age; He wore glasses with thick lenses and he had severe allergies, so when he sneezed, lots of snot flew out."</p>
Environment	12	<p>"I will blame their parents for not instilling values and teaching their children decency and kindness."</p> <p>"He was a targeted by administrators and teachers and school staff."</p>
Inability to do daily activities as others <u>do</u>	5	<p>"...Students, teachers, and even the principal bully her because she doesn't learn like everyone else. It takes her longer to understand assignments, and she's considered lazy."</p> <p>"More vulnerable than her peers (especially when she was in school) because she did poorly academically..."</p>

Considerations for Improvements at School: Key Themes ($n = 48$)

Themes	Number of Cases	Sample Quotes
Consequences for bullying	14	“I think they could have had stricter ramifications on the offender so they learn not to bully other students”
Proactive bullying monitoring & prevention measures	12	“Supporting help, being proactive, counseling, increased monitoring of behavior. Instead of only being reactive once an incident occurs.” “Better monitoring of interaction and proactive stepping in and correction instead of leaving it to the victim to ‘run and tell’...”
Improve communications with families	10	“I would have appreciated communication from the school as they became aware of the issue. They should have responded to my emails regarding the incidents.” “The school could have handled the situation better by having a meeting with teacher, parents, administration, and student to advocate and explain.”
Listen to and validate the victim	9	“Took the time to talk with him about the root of the problem...”; “They could have given me and my child the benefit of the doubt but instead they didn't believe us from the beginning”
Address the bullying abuse right away	9	“When a school becomes aware of bullying, they need to act immediate, proactive steps.” “They should have addressed it sooner and had stronger consequences”
Educate staff and students about developmental disabilities	8	“Educating teachers and students how to deal with children facing various developmental disabilities.” “They could have talked about accepting people who look different and pointed out what is SIMILAR among the children.”
Quality school professionals	5	“Not hired this teacher to begin with. The teacher herself could have been more understanding.” “Adults need to have more dignity and integrity and step in rather than participate or giggle from the sideline.”
Social skills trainings for students with developmental disabilities	4	“...provided social skills instruction/support to my child...”

Theme 2: Proactive bullying monitoring and prevention measures

- Increase the supervision of students, particularly students with developmental disabilities
- All students should be incentivized to report bullying behaviors
- Creating or allowing physical separation between the person bullying and victim
- Educational training for students regarding bullying abuse

“They should have left my son's individual paraeducator with him at all times.”

Theme 3: improved communications with schools regarding bullying abuse

- Inform parent of the bullying abuse
- Involve parent in the action plan
- Enable parent communication with the other family involved

“Include communication to the parents on both ends of the situation. Accept that every child learns differently and accept parent input vs asserting apparent authority.”

RQ3: What do parents perceive has helped them to manage anger and resentment related to their child's bully victimization?

Anger Management Strategies & Supports: Themes (n = 50)

Themes	Number of Cases	Sample Quotes
Child now safe	18	"Strong support system especially in school; my child is well liked and when others found out about what happened they kept an eye out for trouble..."
Processed the offense with others	12	"When dealing with the issue, it was helpful to talk with my husband, a close friend, my parent coach, and my son's therapist."
Religious beliefs	9	"I leave it in God's hands and move on."
Empathy for the person(s) who bullied	6	"The bullies also need counseling as much as the bullied do." "Just trying to realize that these are young people and people make mistakes."
Time	6	"Time. It's been years and it just gets easier as time goes by."
Life-giving activities	4	"Yoga, meditation, pranayama, Ayurveda"
Rationalizing the effects of the bullying	3	"But this was a catalyst to my child getting the help they needed. I also realize that some of this was part of being a kid and it could have been a learning experience if there hadn't been other factors involved. We all face unkind people and we have to learn to have a little bit of thick skin."

Theme 1: Child Now Safe

- *“When the situation came to light several teachers addressed the bullying and how disappointed they were, I feel like it was handled appropriately”*
- *“My son is out of school, working at Goodwill, and has found good friends that are supportive. And not demeaning. This makes me feel good.”*

Recommendations for School Personnel

- Do parents feel heard?

Responding to Bullying of Students with Disabilities: What Schools Can Do

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Colloquium Date: February 8, 2022

This panel discussion will address the issue of bullying of students with disabilities. A special education and disability rights law attorney, an attorney representing school districts, and a family peer advocate will share their experience and perspectives on how schools can best address these issues and support students and their families.

Moderator



Amanda Nickerson, PhD

Professor and Director
Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention
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Panelists



**Michael Gilberg,
Esq.**
Attorney at Law



**Tara L. Moffett,
Esq.**
*Girvin & Ferlazzo,
P.C.*



Steve Oill
Credentialed Family
Peer Advocate
*Northern Rivers
Family of Services*

Recommendations for School Personnel

- School personnel responses are SO important
- Support seeking strategies, such as reporting a bully to the school administration, is associated with decreases in victimization and fewer internalizing problems among victims of bullying abuse (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004)
- Four parents in the current study attributed their decrease in anger after the bullying abuse to the help that they received from their child's school system (e.g., teachers, IEP team members, superintendent)



Recommendations for Parents

- Community support group
 - Process experiences, normalize emotions, and learn together how to best support adolescents
 - Not alone in their experience
- Mental health counseling
 - Parents felt unforgiveness towards offending parties, on average, 8 years after the bullying abuse had occurred
 - Consider Forgiveness therapy
 - Forgiveness therapy: significant decreases in anger among severely hurting people, including incest survivors (Freedman & Enright, 1996), victims of childhood abuse (Lee & Enright, 2014), and victims of spousal emotional abuse (Reed & Enright, 2006)

Resources for Parents: No Blanket Solution

- Interventions for bullying behaviors. Consider if the child doing the behaviors ...
 - is also a victim of hurt
 - has a social skill deficit/uncertain of their impact on others
 - wants power/control/status

Tool: https://bullyfreeworld-bully.nationbuilder.com/bullying_in_schools
- How to communicate with your child if they are being bullied. Consider...
 - Your emotional reaction
 - Tools for problem-solving
 - Your child's opinion regarding a solution (self-advocacy)

Tool: https://bullyfreeworld-bully.nationbuilder.com/conversation_starters
- If communicating with school. Consider....
 - Who knows your child best (especially if they have an IEP team)
 - How to state what has happened and what you believe your child needs additional assistance with

Tool: <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/info/publications/notifying-the-school.asp>

Limitations

- Nonrandom sample of participants/non-generalizable
- Small sample size
- Low diversity in identities, not enough dads
- Bullying was considered a discrete offense...but it's not
- Severity of offense measure needs to change to account for parents' perspective

Future Directions

- Ongoing data collection (if you want to share my survey, let me know!)
- A measure for a family systems approach in schools should be developed to examine how this approach in schools relates to parent mental health and wellbeing outcomes following bullying abuse
- Community support groups

Future replications of this study should consider several adjustments:

- Recruiting participants who had experienced bullying abuse around the same time in the past (i.e., “within the past year” etc.)
- Recruiting participants whose children have the same developmental disability to see if factors such as perceived vulnerability as well as parents’ outcomes, differ from the current findings

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THANK YOU FOR
LISTENING!



QUESTIONS & COMMENTS
ARE WELCOME!