

AN EXPLORATORY MIXED METHODS STUDY CONSIDERING PARENTS OF ADOLESCENTS WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES AS SECONDARY VICTIMS OF BULLYING ABUSE

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Bullying disproportionately affects adolescents with emotion regulation and communication deficits, such as adolescents with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental disabilities (Blake et al., 2012). The present mixed-methods study explored how parents of bullied adolescents with developmental disabilities experience secondary victimization and secondary forgiveness or forgiving someone who hurt a loved one. The three primary research questions were: 1) How are parents of bullied adolescents with developmental disabilities affected by bullying abuse?, 2) What factors impact those outcomes?, and 3) What has helped parents to manage their anger towards people or systems that contributed to bullying abuse? An online survey composed of four open-ended response questions and six self-report scales was provided to 65 parents (91% mothers, 83% White) whose adolescents with developmental disabilities (aged 12 to 18) had been affected by bullying abuse. Multiple regression analyses revealed that the adolescent's forgiveness, vulnerability to bullying abuse, and prior friendship with the person who bullied them significantly predicted parents' secondary victimization outcomes, including unforgiveness and hurt from injustice. Thematic analyses helped to triangulate parents' mental health outcomes (i.e., altered worldviews on justice) and reveal novel themes (i.e., harmed relationships). Secondly, thematic analyses provided greater understanding regarding why parents perceived their adolescents as more vulnerable to bullying abuse, and how parents managed anger towards individuals or systems who hurt their children. Results from this study provide helpful insights for mental health professionals and school personnel seeking to address the effects of bullying abuse through a family systems approach.

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11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. ET

Baldy Hall, Room 479 & virtually via Zoom

This is a free event, but registration is required at

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One hour of NASP approved continuing professional development (CPD) is available for this event