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Development, Evaluation, and Future Directions of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

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The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) is a comprehensive, school-wide program that was designed in the mid-1980s to reduce bullying and achieve better peer relations among students in elementary, middle, and junior high school grades. Key program elements are described and a number of cultural adaptations to U.S. schools are noted. Several large-scale evaluations from Norway are reviewed, which provide compelling evidence of the program's effectiveness in Norwegian schools. Studies evaluating the OBPP in diverse settings in the United States are also reviewed. Although these studies have not produced completely uniform results, they have shown positive effects of the OBPP on students' self-reported involvement in bullying and antisocial behavior. Directions for ongoing and future research are noted.

KEYWORDS bullying, prevention

In 1983, three adolescent boys in Norway committed suicide, most likely as the result of persistent bullying that they had experienced by peers. In response to this very public tragedy, the Norwegian Ministry of Education launched a national campaign to reduce bullying in schools. It was within this context that the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) was developed and initially evaluated.

This article will provide an overview of the OBPP, including its goals, principles, key components, and some cultural adaptations of the model within the United States. It then will summarize evaluation findings of the

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program from Norway and the United States. Finally, it will discuss some future directions for program development and evaluation.

OVERVIEW OF THE OBPP

The OBPP was developed in the early 1980s by bullying research pioneer, Dan Olweus. It was first implemented and evaluated in what has come to be known as the First Bergen Project Against Bullying, which involved approximately 2,500 Norwegian school children between 1983 and 1985.

Program Goals and Principles

The OBPP was designed to reduce existing bullying problems among students at school, prevent the development of new bullying problems, and improve peer relations at school (Olweus, 1993; Olweus et al., 2007; Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 1999). To meet these goals, schools work to restructure their school environment to reduce opportunities and rewards for bullying and build a sense of community among students and adults in the school community (Olweus, 1993, Olweus et al., 2007).

The OBPP is based on four principles. Adults at school should (a) show warmth and interest in their students; (b) set firm limits to unacceptable behavior; (c) use consistent, nonphysical nonhostile negative consequences for violation of rules; and (d) act as authorities and positive role models (Olweus, 1993; Olweus et al., 2007).

Program Components

These principles, which have been derived from research on aggressive behavior (Baumrind, 1967; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986; Olweus, 1973, 1978, 1979, 1980), have been translated into specific program components at several levels: the school, classroom, individual, and (in some contexts) the community level (Olweus & Limber, 2010a, 2010b). Table 1 provides a summary of the components of the OBPP at each of these four levels, as typically implemented in the United States. It is beyond the scope of this article to describe all program components, but several that have proved particularly important, based on largely on our experience and some limited research are described next. These components will be highlighted briefly. (For a detailed description of all components, see Olweus and Limber, 2010b.)

Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee (BPCC)

This building-level committee is responsible for ensuring that the components of the OBPP are implemented with fidelity within a school.

TABLE 1 Components of the OBPP

School-level components
- Establish a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee (BPCC)
- Conduct trainings for the BPCC and all staff
- Administer the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (Grades 3–12)
- Hold staff discussion group meetings
- Introduce the school rules against bullying
- Review and refine the school's supervisory system
- Hold a school-wide kick-off event to launch the program
- Involve parents

Classroom-level components
- Post and enforce school-wide rules against bullying
- Hold regular (weekly) class meetings to discuss bullying and related topics
- Hold class-level meetings with students' parents

Individual-level components
- Supervise students' activities
- Ensure that all staff intervene on-the-spot when bullying is observed
- Meet with students involved in bullying (separately for those who are bullied and who bully)
- Meet with parents of involved students
- Develop individual intervention plans for involved students, as needed

Community-level components
- Involve community members on the BPCC
- Develop school-community partnerships to support the school's program
- Help to spread antibullying messages and principles of best practice in the community

Adapted from "The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program: Implementation and evaluation over two decades," by D. Olweus, and S. P. Limber, 2010, in S. R. Jimerson, S. M. Swearer, & D. L. Espelage (Eds.), *The handbook of school bullying: An international perspective* (pp. 377–402). New York, NY: Routledge, p. 380. Reprinted with permission.

It typically is comprised of 8–15 members, with representation from key constituencies at a school: administrators, teachers, nonteaching staff, counseling and mental health professionals, parents, and other school personnel who may bring particular expertise (e.g., nurse, Title IX representative, school resource officer; Olweus et al., 2007; Olweus & Limber, 2010b). In some cases, the committee may include 1–2 members from the broader community (e.g., staff from an after-school program or prominent youth organization). Student members may also be included where developmentally appropriate (typically at the level of middle, junior or high schools), although many schools have determined that development of a separate advisory committee of students may permit them more meaningful involvement in the planning and implementation of the program. The responsibilities of the BPCC include attending a 2-day training by a certified OBPP trainer; developing a plan to implement the OBPP within their school; communicating the plan to school staff, students, and parents; ensuring that the OBPP is coordinated with other relevant prevention and intervention efforts at the school; obtaining feedback from all constituents about the

program's implementation; and representing the program to the broader community (Olweus et al., 2007; Olweus & Limber, 2010b). Our experience in implementing the OBPP in the U.S. context suggests that a strong BPCC is important to the success of a school's program (Limber, in press). The committee meets throughout the life of the program (at least monthly for the first year) and typically is chaired by an on-site OBPP coordinator, who may be a counselor, administrator, prevention specialist, or other staff member.

Training and consultation

In addition to the 2-day training that the BPCC receives, a certified Olweus trainer provides at least 1 year of consultation (in person or via telephone, depending on location) to the on-site coordinator (typically 12–18 hours/year; Olweus et al., 2007; Olweus & Limber, 2010b). Members of the BPCC (usually with assistance from the Olweus trainer) provide a full day of training to the school staff prior to implementing the program. Yearly catch-up trainings for new staff members are encouraged, as are supplemental trainings to provide more detailed attention to particular topics of interest to school staff.

Administration of the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire (OBQ)

Based on our experience, another key component of the OBPP at the school-wide level involves the administration of the OBQ (Olweus, 1996), an anonymous self-report measure that is administered to students in Grades 3–12 prior to implementation of the OBPP and at regular intervals (ideally yearly) thereafter (Olweus, 1997; Solberg & Olweus, 2003). The questionnaire assesses students' experiences with and attitudes about bullying. Assessments of the reliability of the OBQ have been quite positive. At the individual level (with individual subjects as the unit of analysis), scales assessing frequency of being bullied and those assessing frequency of bullying others have typically yielded internal consistency reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) in the .80s or higher, depending on the number of items included in the scales. In analyses in which the school is the unit of analysis, the reliabilities have been even higher, typically in the .90s (Solberg & Olweus, 2003). Positive assessments have also been made regarding the validity of the OBQ. For example, Olweus (1994) reported that scales assessing being bullied or bullying others correlated in the .40–.60 range (Pearson correlations) with reliable peer ratings on related dimensions. Moreover, strong linear relationships have been found between children's degree of victimization and related variables such as depression, self-esteem, and peer rejection on the one hand, and children's bullying of others and various dimensions of antisocial behavior on the other hand (Solberg & Olweus).

A detailed report of findings is produced, which provides school personnel information about the students' responses, frequently broken down by grade and gender. Data from this report are used to help raise awareness about bullying, assist the BPCC to make specific plans to implement the OBPP, and assess change over time on key outcome variables (Olweus & Limber, 2010b).

Staff discussion groups

Recognizing that the initial training in bullying and the specifics of the OBPP are necessary but typically not sufficient to ensure implementation of the program with fidelity, schools are encouraged to form discussion groups of teachers and other school staff, which meet regularly and provide an opportunity for in-depth discussions about bullying and specific aspects of the OBPP. These groups, which typically consist of no more than 15 school personnel, are led by a member of the BPCC. It is recommended that they meet monthly during the first year of the program, and several times during the school year after that (Olweus et al., 2007; Olweus & Limber, 2010b).

School rules

In order to ensure that students and adults have a clear understanding about expectations regarding their behavior, each school is asked to adopt four rules about bullying:

1. We will not bully others.
2. We will try to help students who are bullied.
3. We will try to include students who are left out.
4. If we know that somebody is being bullied, we will tell an adult at school and an adult at home.

These rules, which cover both direct and indirect forms of bullying, are posted widely and discussed frequently with students. School staff members apply consistent positive and negative consequences to reinforce the rules (Olweus et al., 2007; Olweus & Limber, 2010b). Research by Olweus in Norway (Olweus & Alsaker, 1991; Olweus & Kallestad, 2010) confirmed that those classes in which these rules were adopted experienced greater reductions in bullying.

Classroom meetings

The key classroom-level component of the OBPP involves holding weekly classroom meetings about bullying and related issues. These meetings are intended to build cohesion among the class, provide an opportunity to

discuss rules about bullying, help students understand the roles that they all have in preventing bullying, and provide an opportunity for students to problem-solve ways to address bullying, through role-play and other strategies (Olweus et al., 2007; Olweus & Limber, 2010b). Olweus (Olweus & Alsaker, 1991; Olweus & Kallestad, 2010) has found greater reductions in bullying among those classes that held regular class meetings and among those that used role play to explore issues of bullying.

On-the-spot and follow-up interventions

Although school-level and classroom-level interventions likely will reduce the likelihood that students will be bullied, it is, nevertheless, critical that schools have training, policies, and procedures in place to ensure that bullying is dealt with quickly and effectively when it occurs or is suspected. To that end, school personnel receive training and guidance in developing procedures to make certain that (a) all staff within a school intervene on-the-spot if they observe or suspect bullying, and (b) follow-up meetings are held as appropriate with involved students. Follow-up meetings are held separately with children who are bullied and those who bully (and often their parents). In some schools, these meetings are led by administrators or counselors, but whenever possible it is recommended that the meetings involve the children's primary teacher or the staff member with the closest relationship with the student(s) who are involved (Olweus & Limber, 2010b). In these meetings, a clear message is sent that the bullying will be stopped and that the situation will be closely monitored by adults in the school (and often home). Bullied students are provided support and safety plans are developed with them, as appropriate.

Community involvement

Although the original Norwegian model did not include community-level components, our experience in implementing the OBPP the United States (Limber, in press) suggests that American schools will benefit from involving one or more community members on their BPCC, finding ways for the broader community to support the school's bullying prevention program, and collaborating with community members to spread bullying prevention strategies and messages beyond the doors of the school and into community settings where children and youth congregate. The nature of this community involvement is as varied as the communities themselves. Examples have included infusing OBPP principles and components into community organizations (e.g., establishment of consistent rules about bullying in community-based youth clubs), involving community members in program kick-off events at the school, enlisting support of local businesses for needed supplies, and including staff from after-school programs on the school's BPCC.

Parent involvement

Recognizing the importance of parental support for successful school-based strategies to reduce bullying, efforts are made to involve parents at all levels of OBPP implementation. At the school-wide level, school personnel are encouraged to invite parents to attend school kick-off events and school-wide parent meetings about the program, send regular communications to parents about bullying and the OBPP, and have active parental involvement on the BPCC. At the classroom level, teachers are encouraged to hold two to three classroom-level parent meetings during the school year, during which they can discuss the program and, more generally, build a sense of class cohesion and support (Olweus et al., 2007). As noted previously, at the individual level, parents are actively involved by school personnel if their child is involved in a bullying incident at school. Finally, based on our experience in implementing the OBPP, parents are often key agents of community engagement and support in bullying prevention.

A NOTE ABOUT CULTURAL ADAPTATION OF THE OBPP

Neither the principles of the OBPP nor its core program components have changed significantly from those originally implemented in Norway. However, experience in implementing the program in U.S. schools has naturally led to some adaptations of the model to fit the American educational context (Limber, in press; Olweus & Limber, 2010b). For example, in U.S. schools, the BPCC appears to have a more prominent role in program planning and coordination than in Norway (Limber; Olweus & Limber, 2010b). There likely are several reasons why this is the case. As noted elsewhere, "the size and complexity of American schools [particularly middle schools], and the volume of prevention and intervention initiatives demand particularly tight coordination" (Limber), and the BPCC appears to serve these coordination purposes well. In addition, the BPCC appears to have assumed some of the coordinating functions that our Norwegian colleagues have ascribed to the staff discussion groups. Because of time constraints, American educators have tended to devote comparatively less time to meeting in staff discussion groups (Olweus & Limber, 2010b).

Teachers in U.S. schools also have experienced somewhat greater challenges in holding classroom meetings than our Norwegian counterparts. These challenges include time constraints during the school day to schedule these meetings, as well as experience with and skills facilitating discussions with students about relationships and social issues (Limber, in press). As a result, implementation of the OBPP in American schools has often included: (a) intensive consultation with BPCCs and administrators to ensure that these meetings are scheduled consistently and championed among staff, and (b) extra training for teachers in the use of classroom meetings. Additional

program resources have also been developed to help teachers conduct these meetings effectively, including a DVD which provides examples of class meetings in elementary and middle school settings (Flerx et al., 2008), and developmentally appropriate activities that may be used to facilitate discussions (Flerx et al., 2009a, 2009b).

The content and organization of the training sessions for BPCCs and school staff naturally vary somewhat in Norway and the United States (Olweus & Limber, 2010b), reflecting differences in educators' time available to attend staff development sessions, differences in available supportive materials, and differences in how program components are implemented in the different school structures. Finally, as noted previously, engagement of the broader community has proven important in the American context, whereas this typically has not been the case in Norway.

EVALUATION

The OBPP has been evaluated in a number of large-scale studies in Norway as well as in the United States. Major findings will be discussed, including preliminary data from an ongoing large-scale study in Pennsylvania schools.

Initial Research

The initial evaluation of the OBPP took place in Bergen, Norway and targeted 2,500 students in Grades 5–8 over a period of 2.5 years between 1983 and 1985. Since the project was part of a national campaign against bullying, it was not possible to use an experimental study with schools or classes randomly assigned to conditions (Olweus & Limber, 2010b). As a result, researchers employed an extended selection cohorts design, in which same-age students could be compared across time. This strong, quasi-experimental design has been used in many of the subsequent studies involving the OBPP (Olweus, 2005; Olweus & Limber, 2010a, 2010b). In this and a number of other studies of the OBPP, researchers have used a measure of relative (percentage) change, which is calculated as the difference in percentages between the control condition (the Time 1 measure in a selection cohorts design) and the intervention condition 1 year later, divided by the control condition value. To illustrate, if the percentage of bullied students is 20% among students in Grade 5 at Time 1 and 15% among students in Grade 5 at Time 2, the relative change score would be: $(20–15) \times 100/20 = 25\%$ reduction. (See Olweus & Limber, 2010b, for additional discussion about measurement of program effects for the OBPP.)

Findings from this initial study (later referred to as the First Bergen Project Against Bullying) revealed marked reductions in students' self-reports of being bullied (reductions of 62% after 8 months and 64% after 20

months) and bullying others (reductions of 33% after 8 months and 53% after 20 months), as well as reductions in teachers' and students' ratings of bullying among students in the classroom (Olweus 1991, 1997; Olweus & Limber, 2010a, 2010b). Positive program effects were also found for students' self-reported antisocial behavior (involvement in vandalism, theft, and truancy) and students' perceptions of positive school climate (e.g., more satisfaction with school and improved order and discipline; Olweus, 1991, 1993; Olweus & Limber, 2010a, 2010b). Fidelity of program implementation was found to be related to program outcomes; those classes that had implemented key components of the program (i.e., rules about bullying, class meetings, and role playing) showed the greatest reduction in bullying (Olweus & Alsaker, 1991; Olweus & Kallestad, 2010).

Factors Affecting Implementation

In order to assess teacher and school-level factors that may account for differences in implementation of the OBPP, Kallestad and Olweus (2003) analyzed data from 89 teachers and 37 schools involved in the First Bergen Project Against Bullying, at two points in time. Results confirmed that teachers were "key agents of change with regard to adoption and implementation of the OBPP" (Olweus & Limber, 2010b, p. 379). Several teacher-level variables that accounted for substantial amounts of variance in program implementation included perceived staff importance (teacher efficacy in addressing bullying), having read (more of) the program materials, and affective involvement (empathy with victims of bullying). Several school-level variables (openness in communication among staff and the school's attention to bullying problems were also significant predictors of program implementation.

Subsequent Evaluations in Norway

Following the First Bergen Project Against Bullying, six follow-up evaluations of the OBPP have taken place in Norway, involving more than 20,000 students from more than 150 schools. Findings from students in Grades 4–7 have revealed consistently positive program effects (Olweus & Limber, 2010b). Of particular note is a 5-year follow-up study of 14 schools in Oslo, which employed an extended selection cohorts design and included approximately 3,000 students at each of five assessment points between October 2001 and October 2006. The study revealed relative reductions in self-reports of bully victimization of 40%, and relative reductions of self-reported bullying of 51%. As Olweus and Limber (2010b) noted, "these results are important, since it has been shown (e.g., Beelman, Pfingstein, & Lösel, 1994) that many program effects are short-lived and are found to be considerably reduced when longer-term effects have been assessed (even

after only 2 months after the end of the program phase)" (p. 393). Positive program outcomes also have been noted with Norwegian students in Grades 8–10, although these results have been less consistent and effects have been somewhat weaker (Olweus & Limber, 2010b).

Evaluations in the United States

Several studies have evaluated the effectiveness of the OBPP in diverse settings within the United States. These findings will be reviewed briefly, including preliminary results from an ongoing evaluation in Pennsylvania.

South Carolina

The first evaluation of the OBPP in the United States involved students in elementary and middle schools in South Carolina in the mid-1990s (Limber, Nation, Tracy, Melton, & Flerx, 2004; Melton et al., 1998; Olweus & Limber, 2010b). Participants were predominantly African American; school districts were located in largely rural communities of low socioeconomic status. After 7 months of implementation of the OBPP, significant Time × Group (intervention vs. comparison schools) interactions were found for students reports of bullying others. In intervention schools, researchers documented a 16% decrease in rates of bullying among students in implementation schools and a 12% increase in bullying among students in comparison schools, resulting in a 28% relative reduction of bullying others in intervention versus comparison schools. Researchers also observed significant differences between intervention and control schools in self-reported delinquency, vandalism, school misbehavior, and sanctions for school misbehavior. There were no significant program effects for students' reports of being bullied. Although the program continued for an additional year, we documented particularly low fidelity of implementation among these schools (Limber et al., 2004) during the second year of implementation and concluded that it could no longer be considered a faithful implementation of the OBPP.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The OBPP was evaluated in six large public elementary and middle schools in Philadelphia over the course of 4 years (Black & Jackson, 2007). Evaluators used an observational measure of bullying incident density and the OBQ. The observational measure consisted of a checklist of bullying behaviors that assessed physical, verbal, and emotional bullying, including name-calling, teasing, taunting, cursing, raising one's voice in anger, pushing, hitting, spitting, inappropriate touching, rumor-spreading, social exclusion, and threatening gestures. Observations of elementary students took place during recess; observations of middle school students took place

during lunch time. These areas were selected because they had been identified (using the anonymous questionnaire) as being "hot spots" for bullying. Bullying incident density decreased 45% over the course of the 4 years of the project, from 65 incidents per 100 student hours, to 36 incidents. Researchers also assessed program effects using student self-reports on the OBQ. However, because of substantial attrition among respondents, conclusions cannot be drawn from these self-report data.

Washington

Bauer, Lozano, and Rivara (2007) evaluated the OBPP using a nonrandomized control study with middle school students in seven intervention and three control schools in the state of Washington. Researchers assessed students' self-reports of involvement in and perceptions of bullying using the OBQ. They observed positive program effects with regard to students' perceptions that other students actively intervened in bullying incidents. They also observed significant program effects for physical and relational victimization among White students (with relative decreases of 37% and 28%, respectively). However, they did not find similar program effects for students of other races/ethnicities.

California

In a small-scale study involving three elementary schools in southern California, Pagliocca, Limber, and Hashima (2007) evaluated the effectiveness of the OBPP over a period of 3 years using a selection cohorts deign. Researchers collected survey data from students (using the OBQ) and teachers (using a measure developed for this study and modeled after the OBQ). Students' self-reports of being bullied decreased by 21% after 1 year and 14% after 2 years; self-reports of bullying others decreased by 8% after 1 year and 17% after 2 years. The evaluation also revealed increases in bullied students' propensities to tell a teacher about being bullied and their perceptions that teachers and other adults at school try to stop bullying. Results from the anonymous teacher surveys revealed improvements in teachers' perceptions that there were clear rules about bullying at the school, teachers' beliefs that they knew how to respond to bullying, and their perceptions that the school's bullying policies had been clearly communicated to students, parents, teachers, and nonteaching staff (increases of 72%–97%).

Pennsylvania

A collaboration of researchers has recently embarked on a large-scale evaluation of the OBPP in Pennsylvania schools. Preliminary analyses of more than 56,000 students and 2,400 teachers from 107 elementary, middle, and

high schools have been conducted using a selection cohorts design (Masiello et al., 2009). For 9 schools, program effects were examined for 2 years of program implementation (Cohort 1), but for the remaining 98 schools (Cohort 2) program effects were examined for only 3–9 months of program implementation. Analyses to date have focused on students' perceptions of adults' responsiveness to bullying, students' attitudes about bullying, and students' reports of bullying others and being bullied.

Researchers have observed reductions in students' self-reports of bullying others among nearly all cohorts and age groups (elementary, middle, and high schools) (Masiello et al., 2009). Results appeared to be particularly positive among high school students, where reductions of bullying other ranged from 15% to 39%, depending on the cohort. Almost universally, across age groups and cohorts, positive changes were observed in students' perceptions that adults in the school were actively working to address bullying. For example, researchers observed reductions of 11% to 53% in the percentage of students who felt that their teacher had done little to address bullying. There also were positive changes across most age groups and cohorts in students' attitudes towards bullying, with more students indicating they would try to help a bullied student and fewer believing they would passively observe or join in bullying. Finally, researchers have noted very positive changes in elementary, middle, and high school teachers' perceptions of bullying and activities to address bullying at school. For example, there were marked increases in the percentage of teachers who noted that they regularly talked with their class about bullying (from 14% to 131% depending on the cohort and age group). Similarly, there were consistently positive and significant increases in teachers' perceptions that their school's rules and policies about bullying had been clearly communicated to students, parents, teachers, and other staff. These preliminary findings that examine OBPP effects after as little as 3 months of implementation are encouraging, but ongoing analyses clearly are needed to assess the effects of the OBPP over longer periods of time.

Evaluations of Other Bullying Prevention Programs

In addition to these evaluations in Norway and the United States, it should be noted that quite a few bullying prevention programs inspired by the OBPP have been implemented in western countries, including Belgium (Stevens, de Bourdeaudhuij, & Van Oost, 2000; Stevens, Van Oost, & de Bourdeaudhuij, 2004), Canada (Pepler, Craig, Ziegler, & Charach, 1994; Pepler, Craig, O'Connell, Atlas, & Charach, 2004), Germany (Hanewinkel, 2004), and the United Kingdom (Eslea & Smith, 1998; Whitney, Rivers, Smith, & Sharp, 1994; P. K. Smith, Sharp, Eslea, & Thompson, 2004). As Olweus and Limber (2010b) have noted, "the programs used in these interventions have deviated considerably, but to different degrees, from the OBPP model in

terms of program content, implementation model, or actual implementation" (p. 383). Therefore, none can be seen as true replications of the OBPP. The findings from these studies have been mixed, with some producing positive and others negative results (Olweus & Limber, 2010b). Similarly, Roland (1989) has argued that an intervention study parallel to the Bergen project was conducted in Rogaland, Norway, with negative results. As has been noted elsewhere (Olweus, 1999, 2004; Olweus & Limber, 2010b), this project differed so substantially from the OBPP model that it cannot be viewed as an implementation or evaluation of the OBPP.

Several research teams have synthesized evaluation results across various bullying prevention programs (e.g., J. D. Smith, Schneider, Smith, & Ananiadou, 2004, which examined 14 studies) or conducted meta-analyses of programs (e.g., Merrell, Guelder, Ross, & Isava, 2008, which included 16 studies; Ttofi, Farrington, & Baldry, 2008; Ttofi & Farrington, 2009, which included 59 studies) and have come to somewhat different conclusions about the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs. The meta-analysis by Ttofi and Farrington (Ttofi et al., 2008; Ttofi & Farrington, 2009) is widely recognized as the most comprehensive and rigorous to date on bullying prevention programs. As Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, and Hymel (2010) note, this study is "noteworthy because of the rigorous study selection procedures used" (p. 42). The OBPP was the only program in this meta-analysis that had been replicated. A conclusion from this meta-analysis is that whole-school programs can be successful but also that there are great variations in the effects of different programs. The authors concluded that that programs "inspired by the work of Dan Olweus worked best" (Ttofi et al., 2008, p. 69) and that future efforts should be "grounded in the successful Olweus programme" (p. 72).

Summary and Future Directions

Nearly 25 years ago, the OBPP was created upon the belief that bullying need not be a commonplace experience for students in school (Olweus & Limber, 2010a, 2010b). Results from research in Norway and the United States, where this model has been most extensively disseminated, have confirmed that bullying can be systematically reduced by efforts among adults and students to restructure the social environment of a school—reducing opportunities and rewards for bullying and building a sense of cohesion and community (see also Ttofi & Farrington, 2009; Ttofi et al., 2008). Results to date in Norway suggest that it has been somewhat more difficult to reduce bullying problems among students in Grade 7 and above than among those in Grades 3–7. Others (P. K. Smith & Sharp, 1994; Stevens et al., 2000; Salmivalli, Kaukiainen & Voeten, 2005) have come to similar conclusions. One possible reason has to do with the changing structure of schools. Many of the roles previously assumed by homeroom teachers in lower grades

may not be assumed by educators in higher grades, who are more subject-oriented and may be less attuned to the social needs of the numerous students in their classes (Olweus & Limber, 2010b). Consequently, one may expect to see implementation of the OBPP with lower fidelity among these higher grades. Indeed, Olweus and Kallestad (2010) observed just this in preliminary analyses of the New National Initiative in Norway. In this context, it is interesting that very preliminary results from the Pennsylvania study in the U.S. show particularly positive results among high school students.

Large-scale outcome studies are underway in the United States and other countries, which will provide additional critical information about the effectiveness of the OBPP among different age groups and in different cultural contexts. We also continue to work to better understand which schools are ready to implement the program, which teacher- and school-level variables best predict adequate implementation of the program, and which program components are ultimately the most important to the program's success.

Recent international (Molcho et al., 2009) and national studies (Finkelhor, Turner, Ormrod, & Hamby, 2010b) have shown modest reductions in bullying among children in the United States in recent years. Although it is uncertain what combination of factors may have contributed to these positive trends, it is clear that there is much work left to be done, as approximately 29% of American boys and girls (ages 11–15) experience occasional bullying and 11% experience frequent bullying (Molcho et al., 2009). Evidence-based bullying prevention programs will continue to play important roles in ongoing efforts to reduce these numbers, which remain unacceptably high.

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