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Bullying in School: Summary of Findings
Research Brief | www.rochester.edu/warner/cues/
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October 2018

On Prevalence:
- 20-29% of students are involved in bullying (either as a bully, victim, or bully-victim) at least once per year.
- Bullying has been on the decline in U.S. public schools for the past two decades.
- Bullying occurs throughout the grades, peaking during adolescent middle school years.
- Forms of bullying include traditional (physical, verbal, relational) and cyber.
- Cyberbullying occurs far less frequently than traditional bullying.
- There are no measurable differences in bullying prevalence between suburban, urban, and rural schools.
- When considering race as a predictor of bullying and victimization, context must be taken into account, for race alone is not helpful in understanding bullying's prevalence.
- At-risk student populations for increased bullying and victimization include students with disabilities and students who identify as LGBTQ.
- Peer norms play a significant role in bullying prevalence.

Contributing Factors:
- Bystanders can have a powerful effect on either stopping or encouraging bullying, depending on the peer group norm they ascribe to.
- Teachers can either intensify, encourage, or limit bullying depending on their approach.
- Bullying perpetrators and victims share many of the same risk factors (e.g., negative perceptions of school).
- Youth who perceive parental support are less likely to bully.
- A shared belief that normalizes and approves of bullying is a strong predictor of bullying.
- Schools that are perceived as unpleasant, unfair, and unwelcoming increase the likelihood of bullying.
- Positive school climates characterized by: a perception of school as a 'good place to be,' trust among students and teachers, and a sense of fairness, belongingness, and safety is negatively associated with bullying and victimization.

Contributing Factors (continued):
- School climate has a moderating effect on the likelihood that students with high self-esteem will bully. In schools with positive climates, students with high self-esteem are less likely to bully. In schools with negative climate, they are more likely to bully.
- Bully-victims, who represent the smallest percentage of students involved in bullying, have the greatest number of risk factors and suffer both internal and external struggles.

Recommendations for Bullying Interventions:
- School-based anti-bullying programs have a 0%-23% effectiveness rate.
- An approach to creating a positive school climate shows the most promise in preventing and remediating bullying.
- Peer norms must first be modified before any real change in bullying behaviors can take place.
- Successful interventions promote pro-social behavior and align with research.
- Successful interventions are implemented across nested, broader communities of support (school, community, neighborhood, family).
- Directing efforts on counteracting the more prevalent category of traditional bullying will in turn lower incidences of cyberbullying.