



## Transcript of NCSET Conference Call Presentation

# Bullying, Teasing, Youth Violence and Prevention: Addressing the Needs of Youth with Disabilities

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presented by:

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**MS. STENHJEM:** Hi, everybody and welcome to the teleconference call sponsored by the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition. My name is Pam Stenhjem, and I am an Associate Director of the Youth and Family Network at the National Center. I will be the moderator for this particular teleconference call.

The title of the call today is "Bullying, Teasing, Youth Violence and Prevention: Addressing the Needs of Youth with Disabilities." This issue is reaching critical proportions for all youth; however, for youth with disabilities, it's a topic that often goes unnoticed, is not very well researched, and is rarely discussed in a public venue. It's often labeled as a disability harassment issue rather than bullying and teasing, but in essence, it amounts to the same thing. We're very fortunate to have with us today Dr. John Hoover and Dr. Dorothy Espelage, as well as Dr. Liza Little, three people who have extensive knowledge within this area.

Dr. Hoover is a Professor with the Department of Special Education at St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Dr. Hoover has done extensive research in the area of teasing, bullying, youth violence, intervention, and prevention and has served as a consultant and expert witness. Dr. Hoover has authored and co-authored numerous publications focused on bullying and teasing including the following books: "Teasing and Harassment: The Frames and Script Approach for Parents and Teachers"; "Risk in our Midst: Empowering Teenagers to Love the Unlovable"; and "The Bullying Prevention Handbook: A Guide for Teachers, Administrators and Counselors." He will be sharing some information and insights regarding research in the areas of teasing, bullying, youth violence, and prevention.

Dr. Espelage is an Associate Professor of Educational Psychology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Espelage has been developing and implementing research on the area of bullying and teasing since the early 1990s. As a part of this teleconference call, Dr. Espelage will provide information regarding critical components in the design of programs for prevention and intervention of teasing and bullying. Her particular area of expertise and interest focuses on the issue of peer influence and peer pressure with regard to teasing and bullying. Dr. Espelage has a new book currently in review for publication entitled "Bullying in American Schools: A Social, Ecological Perspective on Prevention and Intervention."

We're also very excited to have a third presenter who came to us at the last minute, which is wonderful, Dr. Liza Little, was brought onto the call by Dr. Hoover. She has written an article on bullying and teasing which will be discussed during part of Dr. Hoover's presentation. I want to say a special thanks to John, Dorothy, and Liza for being with us here today to share their insights and expertise. This topic is one that I have a personal passion for and an interest in pursuing, so it's with great enthusiasm that I welcome our presenters.

Now, before we get started, I just want to take a minute to talk about the format. As the conference group said, we will first have presentations in a listen-only format and then we will open it up to questions and discussion. I would ask that if you are on a speakerphone, that you put on your mute button and that if you are working on other things that you try to stay as quiet as possible as that can interfere with the sound and quality of our teleconference call. I'm going to turn the

call over to Dr. Hoover and let him get us started.

**DR. HOOVER:** Thank you, Pam. First of all, I want to welcome everyone. This is a really interesting format, and I think the idea that we get a transcript of it later is great because we can sort of look back at it and rethink the issues in terms of what we said here and that's real nice. And then last, I've been very interested, for more than a year, in anecdotal evidence that's come into my possession that students with Asperger's Syndrome – high end of the autism spectrum disorders, generally, and students who could be described with the term non-verbal learning disability – for some reasons I think that are fairly understandable tend to get picked on a lot, but I never could find any data. And much to my excitement, I ran across finally a wonderful paper, and that's how I got in touch with Dr. Little. So, again, Dr. Little, I appreciate your willingness on short notice to join us.

**DR. LITTLE:** Well, I'm honored to be invited even at the last minute.

**DR. HOOVER:** If it's possible and again, leaving some time for Liza Little to talk – to take a few of my minutes, whereas all of Gaul was divided into three parts, I want to make eight points and I can't do them justice in the amount of time we've got, and I may not get to them all. So, as a starting point, what I'm going to do is just give a brief list for those of you who are notetakers to listen for – and this is in no particular order.

First, at the risk of being personal, I wanted to offer a little bit of history of my interest in bullying because I think it relates to the issues as it concerns students with disabilities. So, that's the first thing I'll talk about.

Second, I want to just throw out the idea for discussion of the larger group at some point, or at least to tickle people's imaginations about whether or not bullying or victimization in and of themselves could be almost considered a brand of disability given our current understanding of how we talk about disabilities.

The third thing I want to talk about very briefly is a topic near and dear to my heart, and that is what I consider the importance of teasing and verbal harassment in this picture. The fourth thing is maybe most germane to the larger topic and that's the degree of correlation between disability status and risk for victimization status. So, Liza, that's when I'll call on you a little bit during point number four. Does that make sense?

**DR. LITTLE:** OK.

**DR. HOOVER:** Number five – again, if I get to all of these - and it's okay if I don't – I wanted to again throw out the idea that as a society, for some reasons I'll share with you, I think we actually harbor some mixed

feelings about violence and bullying reduction. And I want to explain why I think that.

Number six, I want to talk about the relationship between school climate and learning. I think whenever we're talking about schools, no matter what topic we're on, we need to go back at some point to academic achievement. And I think that those of you out there – listeners who want to argue for anti-bullying school climate improvement projects in your districts, can make a fairly strong case that this has an impact on academic achievement.

Number seven, I wanted to make just a couple of comments about the legal aspects of bullying – again, with the caveat emptor there that I'm not a lawyer. Number eight – but I've been thinking a lot about this – number eight and last, just some brief comments about bullying prevention and reduction per projects.

All right. Number one, my background is special education. I was a teacher of students with developmental disabilities for quite a few years. In fact, I lived in a residential training program for persons with mental disabilities for eight years. Then I graduated and got my own apartment. It's a joke I tell my students, but it was a fantastic experience. And so, it came to pass about the time that the full inclusion movement was being bandied about and I can preface this by saying that I, in broad strokes, am very much in favor of the full inclusion movement. But I got to wondering whether the experience I had when I was a teacher suggested to me when I was in graduate school that maybe one of the things we had to talk about along with the full inclusion movement would be the nature of the experience of kids with disabilities, their quality of life so to speak.

And it just so happened that one of my mentors in graduate school, a fellow named Dr. Kristen Juul (I think he's actually called in today because I mentioned this to him), from Norway originally, and he mentioned the Scandinavian research tradition in bullying and that's really what got me started. So, even though I have never gotten back to the exact issue of the degree of risk for bullying among students with disabilities, it really is what led me into the field. So, I think it's a real important topic as far as I'm concerned.

Number two, I posed the question about whether bullying and victimization are in themselves kind of a brand of disability and whether we need to maybe look at it that way. Maybe not – we don't want to develop a whole bunch of new disability categories, but I certainly think we can make a good argument that there are mental health issues there. Let me give you examples in two domains. One for victims and one for bullies broadly

speaking. In terms of victims, there's a fair amount of pretty convincing research out there to suggest that victims actually do better in adulthood than bullies do, that once they get out of that kind of vicious climate that they might find themselves in school, that they do fairly well.

That being said, however, there is I think pretty strong evidence – and here I'm going to cite Ken Rigby's research in Australia and Kaltalaa-Heino's work in Finland among others. Those are two that really come to my mind that have shown that children with the internalizing type of disorders – and here I'm talking about depression and anxiety broadly speaking – those types of youngsters are among the most that are at risk for being bullied. But perhaps what's even more pernicious is that those very same youngsters also seem to get more depressed, more anxious, as a function of the length of time and the severity of the bullying they undergo. So, we're talking about a situation here where kids are actually damaged and hurt by it, made disabled.

Even without the other disabilities that might be involved, conduct disorder, as an example, or oppositional disorder. The type of angry reaction patterns (but I happen to think that Dorothy Espelage will talk about that in a minute) – in a way, I'm going to use, kind of be loose here; I'm going to say that they're habit-forming.

There are a lot of different ways we can look at that, but there's pretty good evidence from both the Scandinavian studies and what's been done here, that young people who manage their relationships by means of violence in school tend to continue that into their adult lives and have frankly a pretty miserable time of it. It's been estimated just by way of example that students who bully others are four to five times more likely to come into contact with the criminal justice and/or mental health systems. In one of my studies in North Dakota, we found that being a bully was the single best predictor in one study of the risk – the set of risk factors that also predict dropout status. In another study, we found that among fourth through sixth grade students, those who admitted to picking on others also identified in the safe and drug-free school study, the exact factors that would predict dropout status. So, all in all, we're talking about if we allow bullying in our schools, that we're debilitating a lot of kids on both sides, the victims and the bullies.

Number three, teasing. I just wanted to mention here quickly that in my studies, and it may be the thing that struck me the most when I asked young people if they'd been bullied. I asked them by means of surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and et cetera, how they get bullied. Teasing and verbal harassment always wins what I call the booby prize as the most common forms of bul-

lying. And what's more, there doesn't seem to be a whole lot of relationship between the type of bullying they receive and how hurt they seem to be by it. So, I've kind of come to the conclusion – I've been thinking about this and writing about this maybe more than anything else the last couple of years, that right now it looks like bullying in the form of teasing over the long haul can be just as debilitating as mild and infrequent physical contact. It can hurt kids, young people a lot, so that our programs need to address teasing.

Number four, disability and risk for victimization status. I got into this again because I thought that students with mild behavioral problems, often the very students that don't know they have a disability – and linguistic problems whose language is either a little bit different or whose mannerisms or the way they carry themselves, especially sometimes when other students don't know that they have a disability, would put them at risk for victimization. It's kind of what I would call the soft underbelly of full inclusion. That in a system where the youngsters don't know that their cohorts have disabilities, they will tend to miss that the youngster is disabled and zoom in on to their behavior. As I've looked at this, I picked out two conditions that I thought were particularly interesting in this regard that worried me from my teaching career.

One was students who are labeled as having non-verbal learning disabilities, and the other was students who had some of the higher functioning autism conditions. And I just had lots of anecdotal reports from parents and youngsters that fit those descriptions, that they got picked on a lot and, furthermore, that they had a particularly difficult time dealing with it.

And that's where I'd like to bring in Dr. Little, because I happened to run across a paper of hers in "Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing." Liza, would you be willing to share us a little bit about your study?

**DR. LITTLE:** Sure. I just want to say hi to everyone and let people know that I'm an Associate Professor of Nursing at the University of New Hampshire and I'm also a clinical psychologist. I've been interested in victimization issues for children and adults for a long time. I have done a study that I've been writing from in the last four years on the experiences of children with Asperger's (AS) and nonverbal learning disorders (NLD). I also surveyed parents; it was a fairly large survey with over 400 parents.

In one of the studies we've looked at peer victimization and, like John is saying, I had both some clinical experience and personal experience that led me to wonder about children with invisible disabilities, particularly

ones with social skills deficit as a primary issue, which they so often are, with children with nonverbal learning disorders and Asperger's and surveyed the parents and found out the percentages of children being hit by peers and their siblings being bullied.

We broke bullying down into two categories, emotional bullying, which is more verbal bullying and then bullying where you're pulling hair and sort of pushing people around. We compared them to two national studies, one was an Internet study. I got names from the Internet for my participants. So, I had a comparable study that was also an Internet study and then another national study and my rates were very high in comparison. It is preliminary work so you need to look at it carefully. But it really did confirm some of the suspicions and concerns that I have for these children.

I'd like to say maybe one last piece is that we also looked at social exclusion, which is a type of shunning, children that avoid other children. It seemed to me that this was another form of victimization that could be painful and have some impact in terms of children's mental health and their well-being. We thought that whether or not a child with AS or NLD had been to a birthday party in the last year, whether they were sitting alone at lunchtime, and whether or not they were being picked last for teams. Again, the data was very confirming that these were major problems for these children. So, not only were they being emotionally bullied and hit and in small numbers, attacked by gangs, but they were also being shunned and excluded from everyday functional activities by other children. And that was kind of new data. We haven't really studied those forms of victimization.

**DR. HOOVER:** I might summarize the disability risk section that I've been talking here about – and that Dr. Little has talked about, suggesting that disabilities that produce or are associated somehow with factors that mark the student as somehow different in ways that disturb other kids and, again, in the absence of remediation programs and informational campaigns, do in fact render them vulnerable to bullying. Now, one group that I think deserves special consideration is students with Attention Deficit Disorder.

In several of the studies that have looked at provocative victims, these are youngsters who get bullied and then, once in a while, fight back, although typically – it's characterized as sort of ineffectual. They're not – they're not good "fighters back." Whenever I've seen those studies with students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, I think it's because of problems with impulse control. They'd like to ignore the bullying, but every

once in a while they act out on it. Those youngsters I think, are at times at particular risk and really deserve the caring attention of school officials, teachers, counselors, social workers.

I'm not going to take any more of Dorothy's time. I'm sure that all of the points will eventually be gotten to.

**DR. ESPELAGE:** Okay. That's me. All right. I'd like to, one, just thank you for this opportunity, as well. What I am going to talk about, because most of my work is at a larger school-based prevention and intervention kind of research, is trying to help teachers and administrators design programs. I haven't necessarily looked specifically at children with disabilities although we have had these students in our samples.

We've had students report about how it is that they're at-risk and I just want to add that a number of ours, and I've surveyed thousands and thousands of students over the last eight years, that a lot of the kids with disabilities that are at risk for victimization are actually within that provocative victim group. And in most of our schools that we've surveyed, kids are familiar with their status. They tend to be small schools in rural Illinois and Nebraska and Wisconsin, in which these kids grow up together for many, many years. And despite knowing the status and potential difficulties that students have, it doesn't stop them from victimizing their peers even if they have a disability. But I would agree that the majority of them are in that category of provocative victimization in which they might in some way bring on their victimization because of lacking in certain areas of social skills.

But I want to confirm, that from a research side, what we're trying to do is understand not only the detrimental effects that victimization has on all children, but to begin to understand what are those characteristics at schools and other social agents that might be maintaining this so that we can actually do some prevention work in the schools that address those things that are contributing to it. So, it's much more than just individual characteristics of kids with disabilities or other children that might contribute to the risk for victimization, but it's other things like school climate and teacher's attitudes.

And I think it gets to the one point that Dr. Hoover was talking about, this idea that there is a huge reluctance on the part of many teachers, administrators, and general citizens of the United States to even begin to address bullying in and of itself as many of us hold on to this notion. I don't, of course. But many teachers and administrators that I work with still struggle with this notion, isn't this kind of part of growing up? Isn't this what makes boys into men? Isn't this what really makes

us strong as adults to be able to deal with the problematic middle school years and the risk of victimization? So, I would confirm that point to say that I think although we've made tremendous progress in recognizing and increasing awareness of the serious effects of victimization in our schools, I think there continues to be reluctance on the part of many players to actually implement programs in our schools.

But one area that I'm interested in – and I adopt this even in the book that's coming out – we really adopt this social ecological perspective – and I know that Dr. Little has written in this area, the social ecological perspective contributing to other things that she has studied – but as far as victimization, we really for the longest time have been trying to identify both the individual characteristics of a child that places them at risk for victimization like disability status, size, and other types of things. In addition to understanding how it is that peers contribute, how it is that teacher's attitudes of being nonchalant towards bullying contributes to bullying in a school, but also community, parents' influence, and all of these interplay into a larger idea that really bullying unfolds within a larger social climate and socio-ecological perspective beyond personality characteristics of a child. Not to discount those, but it's the interaction of the disability status of a child within the school in which there's no discussion of the child's disability. There's perhaps an administration that doesn't feel that they have a bullying problem, completely ignore it upon reports of bullying, might actually make the bullying worse.

So, we say that all of these interact to promote a risk factor within a school and that kids might experience victimization. And one area that is relatively a different way of thinking about bullying and victimization is that as kids go through late elementary school and transition into middle school, what we're finding is that there is a huge peer pressure, tremendous peer influence that is holding even really good kids, holding them down from intervening, preventing them from going against the peer group. And in some cases, they are engaging in victimization; they are teasing other kids. And again, we find that name-calling is the most prevalent, and that's the worst in Dr. Hoover's work, too, that they are going along with the group because, as you remember, in adolescence, they want to fit in.

And whatever that means, we want to fit in, we want to have friends, be popular – and it used to be that we only really kind of thought of other health behaviors as being held by peer pressure. So, if you hang out with kids that smoke, you're going to smoke. If you hang out with kids that experiment with other types of drugs,

you're most likely probably going to be engaged in those behaviors. We now recently have found that bullying is the same. Teasing and name-calling, there are kids that go along with other kids. They might engage in those behaviors. They might tease along with them, or they'll just stand by and do nothing. And these are your sons and your daughters that have very high levels of empathy for the victims. But it's just not part of the climate to go against the very strong social agent of the peer group, because no one wants to be left out. And so, I think if we're going to think about kids with disabilities being victimized, we cannot think of just one single bully that's doing this. It's the peer group process. There's not a single prevention program in this country that addresses peer pressure at more than two activities. In the Bully Busters Program developed by Arthur Horne there's two activities out of 300 activities that address peer pressure.

And so, I think that what we're finding is that if we're in fact going to create a climate in which students feel safe in our schools, then we need to recognize that this isn't just some big bad bully that we need to pull out of the school, but in fact, there's a peer group, there's a climate that's promoting this type of behavior. And this isn't really new. This is new in the United States, but certainly if we look at Canadian researchers like Pepler and Craig who videotaped kids on the playground this is not a simple dyadic relationship where a bully is picking out a student to victimize, but in fact there are groups of kids that are engaging in this behavior to the point that it becomes almost part of socialization through middle school.

And for many, many years, we just tell students, okay, middle school is tough. It's the time when lots of things are changing. You go from a chaotic elementary school into middle school. And what we find is that those kids are – in the work of Bill Rodkin and Pellegrini – those kids that bully the most, they are actually some of the most popular; not always. They're very effective in how they use their bullying; they pick out victims very carefully. In some ways, we've in the past thought that they lacked social skills, but we are saying, well, some of them actually have heightened social skills that they will pick out perhaps a victim, a child with a disability, where they know that no one is going to take up for this child. So, there's a deliberate, almost very socially skilled decision that kids make to adjust to the transition to middle school.

And for many years we thought, well, middle school is just too late to intervene and I propose that it's not, that actually we're seeing a peak and we need to address why it is that these types of teasing and name-calling allows someone to dominate a group, allows them to be

popular. And so, what are those dynamics, and how can we actually talk to the kids about why it is that it's difficult to go against the group? I think there are some serious fears there, so we can't necessarily discount that. In addition to that, I think that we need to recognize, and this is certainly going to be important when we think about kids with disabilities, that there are lots of different types of victims the more we do research in middle school. I talk to sixth graders who are victimized and I ask them how they are dealing with their victimization on a daily basis. Or perhaps they're just in survival mode every day in middle school. And one common response from sixth graders – who are in kind of a sixth, seventh, and eighth kind of middle school thing – is that, it will be my turn next year. This is what we do here. The seventh and eighth graders kind of run the halls. Eventually you just kind of do your time and then they become what we call the bully victim.

So, they've experienced the victimization themselves and the way in which they cope is to become then the aggressor. And I think that we need to recognize that it's not simply that you're a bully or you're a victim, but in fact we have kids that bully to deal with their own victimization and the bully victim group (look at Dr. Susan Swear's work) and others are really at risk for serious mental health problems. And it's not a surprise, if in fact you've dealt with the victimization, what it feels like, and then you then turn and become the aggressor yourself. I think it's certainly something that we need to pay attention to. It's just not – these kids that are aggressive themselves in middle school and high school have experienced some level of victimization and certainly will have different ways of dealing with that and have the highest rates of depression and anxiety when we compare them to even passive victims that don't choose to be aggressive themselves. How are we doing?

**MS. STENHJEM:** We're doing fine. We can go for about five more minutes, and then we should probably open it up for some questions.

**DR. ESPELAGE:** Okay. The other thing that I just would like to add is, one, if we think about the role and how it is that kids with disabilities are at risk. The bottom line is they're in late elementary school and early middle school. What we hear from kids over and over again is if you're different in any way, then you're at risk for victimization. And that can include a lot of different things, but I think that there's this tendency, in the last eight years that I've been interviewing kids – late elementary school and early middle school – is that there's – you just don't want to be different. You want to fit in. You want to blend in. You want to just not make

yourself any different in any way and I think that that is why some of the kids with disabilities are at risk for victimization. It's because they are different. And sometimes, because difference is not tolerated (conformity is certainly tolerated) then they are at risk. I just wanted to point that out – that kids do talk about being different in some way as being a problem. John, did you want to add?

**DR. HOOVER:** If anybody is interested – Dorothy's comments about the larger social structure, very well taken – and also the sort of little youth culture that goes on in schools where the kids are being socialized into becoming aggressive where the victimization transforms into aggression. If anybody is interested, there's a criminologist from the University of Illinois, Lonnie Athens, who has taken that model and applied it to more aggressive crimes, murder and rape, and he finds exactly the same thing in studying dangerous, violent criminals. That's his terminology. He could not find one single instance of one of these folks who hadn't at some point been victimized themselves.

So, it seems like when they turn that around, they see the world as a dangerous place. They're taught by somebody – he calls them the 'violence coaches,' which I think is a great term – that they're suddenly – that the way to respond to attacks is with more violence. I think we see there also bullying potentially fitting into our tendency for larger types of violence.

**MS. STENHJEM:** Excellent. Well, this is fascinating and I'm really so excited that you guys are on this call. I'd like to open it up to the callers. I know we have a lot of people listening in on this teleconference call. You probably have a lot of questions. So, what I would ask is that if you have a question, just speak up. And if there's more than one person, try to take turns. And we'll go until right before 2:00. So, does anyone listening have a question?

**MR. GILMORE:** Well, I'm here in Wisconsin. My name is Clyde Gilmore. I'm wondering if there's a correlation with those who are either victims or bullies with outside of the school contacts who have been abused on the – because a lot of these kids probably have things externally that are driving it. Has the research indicated that this is certainly not isolated to the school environments?

**DR. HOOVER:** The simple answer to that – it's a great question, is yes. There's all kinds of work on this and it's very parallel to other types of behavioral problems. All else being equal if you talk about a child starting out with a certain behavioral style, the technical term for that being temperament. After that, there's a lot of effect from their environment and most types of aggression frankly, I think, I'm not even worried

about being over-simplifying it here, is learned – learned behavior. And you learn it largely through social learning here. You observe. So, yes, there’s an enormous impact. And then, I think Dorothy makes the apt point that they’re learning, they – the kids – are learning from each other, too.

**DR. ESPELAGE:** Yes, I would actually add on the victimization side, too. So if a child is experiencing bullying from a sibling at home, which has been the focus of some research for Renee Duncan, they’re at risk for also that victimization at school. And what we’re learning is that is not a direct effect of course, but what we’re learning is it probably relates to their attributional style. So, if in fact – if they’re abused outside of the context or emotionally abused or whatever the victimization profile could be outside of the school, if they attribute that abuse to themselves internally versus externally. But if they actually turn it inward, blame themselves, then they are at risk for subsequent victimization, which folks like Becky Ladd have actually shown as well.

**DR. LITTLE:** I just want to jump in here, that I have a paper that’s under review right now. And one of the things that I also found in my sample is that children that were being exposed to harsh discipline at home and where stress levels were very high in mothers, they were more likely to be victimized at school.

So, I think we’re building a knowledge base of research to look at that sort of connection between victimization in other areas and then victimization in the schools and communities.

**MS. STENHJEM:** Okay. Next question?

**MS. BERG:** Yes. I was interested to see how bullying and also the targeted students how it affects instruction and learning. Because if we’re looking at the brain-based research, we show that stress does tend to shut down and kids tend to withdraw from their academics. Is there anything to support that?

**DR. HOOVER:** I’ve asked students in terms of subjective evidence whether or not bullying affects learning and pretty consistently across third all the way to 12th grade, we get somewhere in the neighborhood of 20 percent of youngsters saying they get bullied severe enough that it affects learning. But there are many objective studies out there where they’ve actually looked at the relationship between school climate and bullying and the relationship is there. All things being equal, as you put it, a student who feels safe physically and psychologically will in fact learn more.

**MS. BERG:** All right. Thank you.

**MS. McLEAR:** Hi. I’m calling from Arizona, and I wanted to ask where people would find some body of

work that might look like best practice? Just talk to examples of schools that are resolving these kinds of issues in some innovative ways.

**DR. ESPELAGE:** Well, I have a book coming out next month, which profiles three of the programs in the country that have had some success and that includes the Olweus bullying prevention program that comes out of Clemson, originally came out of Norway, but the work in the United States comes out of Clemson University, so that’s one. And you can go to the – Justice and Delinquency Prevention Web site, and it’s a blueprint and it’s called Olweus – that’s O-L-W-E-U-S Bullying Prevention Program. It’s a very expensive program.

It’s a comprehensive program, but I work with a lot of schools that are kind of struggling in the budget crisis here, so I also recommend other programs like the Bully Busters program that cost a lot less. It’s teacher driven and if the teacher is in a school which they’re not necessarily supported by the administrators to do prevention work, they can do it within their classroom. And then, the third in the book that’s highlighted is the Expect Respect program out of Texas. And, unfortunately, there are a lot of programs out there that have not been evaluated. These are three that have and have had some success. Also within that, there was just a *School Psychology Review* special issue that talks about what we’ve learned, so it’s best practice but really kind of lessons learned of things not to do within the schools. So, you may want to look at that special issue that just came out this month.

**DR. HOOVER:** I want to add a little bit to that too. Olweus’s book, it’s called “Bullying: What We Know and What We Can Do.” He writes beautifully in English and that particular book, it’s got a ’93 copyright, but I saw him present less than a year ago, and it’s still very similar – it is a very nicely structured model.

Also, there was a report sent to every school in the United States and it was something like A Report Card on School Violence Programs and I think it’s still on the Internet. I’ve got a Web site where it’s connected, has a real nice look at what the safe and drug preschool studies found in terms of what works in curriculum and what doesn’t. So, I would really look at that.

And the last thing, and I don’t know if I can stress this enough, I would urge everybody to at least have a look at the positive behavioral support model of George Sugai and Horner at the University of Oregon. They have a fantastic Web site: <http://www.pbis.org>. And it is, again, a model that is quite similar to the Olweus plan, the Norwegian Ministry of Education program. But what I find particularly interesting about the positive be-

havioral supports, first of all, it's just got a nice research database behind it. But secondly, it's been shown to be the model that best supports students with disabilities in general education classroom environments. So, it's a really neat thought about double dipping.

**MS. STENHJEM:** This is Pam Stenhjem, the moderator, and I'll just let you know that all of the research that's being mentioned and recommended, I'll make sure that we have those listed. And if we can find, the information on where to get those, either on the Internet or through wherever we can order those through, I'll make sure those are attached to the transcript that will be on our Web site. So, you don't have to worry about knowing how to spell the researcher's names or the writers' names, we'll just take care of that for you guys. Next question?

**MS. RYAN:** Yes. I'm calling from Los Angeles. And I just would like to find out, in your research, what have you determined is the best way for teasing victims to respond, if any?

**DR. HOOVER:** I actually wrote a book about that called "Teasing and Harassment: The Frames and Scripts Approach", because – I hadn't gone into that. One of the things I pick up all the time in my work is how central kids' perspective is on teasing and harassment, and they really seem to want the guidance of adults to decipher those social codes because it's complex. I always use the metaphor that social interaction, especially and including humor, is as complicated as calculus in my view. So, it shouldn't surprise us as youngsters struggle with ideas about when it's okay to tease and when it's not, when am I hurting someone, when am I not? But that's someplace where they really deserve the attention of adults and I've got a couple of thoughts about that that I put in that book.

But the first is, I don't think we can sort of outlaw teasing in a way, because it's kind of central to our culture and it has some positive aspects. Plus I just don't think we could make it stick. So, that being said, I have kind of a two-prong approach and that's starting from a very early age teaching youngsters that the ball is in the court of the teaser. In other words, that the ethic that we teach is that if somebody says I don't want you to tease me about that, or they show signs of distress, that it's the teaser's responsibility to stop and that that ethic repeated gently with consequences for violating it can be taught very effectively to kids.

And the second thing is a kind of a language-based system. I'm sort of a disciple of the notion that most of the complicated things that human beings do, the interesting things, are a function of language. I think it was Luryea who said that thought is language gone un-

derground. So, that's the scripts part of the book where we talk about parents using developmentally appropriate language to model out loud problem-solving behaviors and then we've also offered some strategies for that. And then there's a couple of things I would say not to do. One is don't end the conversation with a child by saying, oh, it's just teasing. How can it hurt? We found that that's very ineffective because it just tends to shut down communication. Dorothy, you want to add anything to that?

**DR. ESPELAGE:** Yes. I would just add to that point when we interview kids that have been victimized for years, and we talk about how do they cope with it, do they share this with anyone and they always reflect upon the fact that they used to share with their parents. But their parents are kind of stressed out and they don't want to worry their parents anymore, and so they pretend like the teasing has gone away.

So, I just want to add to that, that thousands of victims have said this they really kind of take it on themselves and oftentimes, parents suggest strategies that just don't work in the youth culture. Just walk away just doesn't work. What works really kind of depends on the interaction between the individual child and also the climate of the school.

**DR. HOOVER:** Well, that just couldn't be truer. In a school where nobody is discouraging kids from hurting each other, even the best strategies are not going to work.

**DR. LITTLE:** Well, I just wanted to say one thing, too, which is that I think we often place a lot of responsibility on children. And then if you think children with disabilities can learn how to cope with these different forms of victimization, I feel very strongly that children with disabilities really do need adults in there to help, particularly the younger they are. I think we start programs so early for the general population about learning how to say no and learning how to do this and learning how to do that, and this is much more complicated and difficult in many cases and particularly if a child is struggling with a disability.

**DR. ESPELAGE:** I agree. And I would actually also add that I feel strongly that you can teach individual children, skills if you will, but if they're going back to a school every day in which it's tolerated, those skills, they're not helpful and I think that we need our interventions need to be at a number of levels.

**MS. STENHJEM:** Next question?

**UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT:** I'm calling from Colorado. On the note of parents, a few minutes ago, you were discussing bullying is learned from the home and an example comes from siblings and a cousin or somebody like that. But what about parents them-



selves who are the bullies? How would you recommend getting those parents who some of them might say, I'm not part of the problem or I look at it as being a sort of plus, not aggressive? Those kinds of parents involved in this intervention program?

**DR. LITTLE:** Well, I would say one thing that you have to do is a careful assessment to see what is going on at home, that victimization has to be assessed by what's going on at school and what's going on in the home. And if you could do that in a way that's non-judgmental to find out what's sort of culturally normal for that family, then you have a beginning place to start to bring parents in.

**DR. HOOVER:** All of the effective programs in the Scandinavian countries include, at basically two levels, one parent's involvement. One is just making sure the parents understand the program and are given the information. That's not a bad starting point. The second is for youngsters who chronically victimize and youngsters who get picked on frequently, that there are social services made available. And again, sometimes I despair a little bit of whether we're willing to dedicate those kinds of resources. That question, by the way, is really apt in another sense. I just wanted to reiterate this for the educators out there that in talking about teasing, again, if a person has a very sharp tongue – a teacher I'm thinking of here or a peer or even a school administrator – I want you to give some thought to modifying the type of behaviors that you're modeling for your students. I know that's something I've given a lot of thought to lately that I sort of, as an educator, I have a bit of responsibility to not let it all hang out all the time, that to model a kind of problem-solving tone and a warm tone, even though I might want to make a joke at a kid's expense. I don't think we should be surprised when sharp-tongued parents and sharp-tongued teachers produce kids who tease in a kind of a nasty way, especially if they can't pick up the nuance of a humorous exchange or irony.

**MS. STENHJEM:** Okay. Next question?

**MS. JOHNSON:** Yes. We wanted to know if there's any videos out that are really good on prevention.

**DR. ESPELAGE:** Pam, didn't you identify one that's coming out with the anti-bullying campaign?

**MS. STENHJEM:** I did. And I'm looking to see if I have it with me right here. I wasn't sure I was going to get a chance to bring it up, so let me just shuffle through here real quickly. I just received some information on a new anti-bullying film that's being released and it's called "Let's Get Real." And I won't go into a lot of that, but I will make sure that the information is attached to the transcript so that you can check into it.

**DR. HOOVER:** I heard that's really great. I'm dying to see it. We've ordered that here – also, the one that National Educational Service puts out. Tom Brown, and I – gosh, for the life of me, I can't remember where he is now, but he has two videos. One is called "The Broken Toy" – the production values are rather crude, but they're great conversation starters. Also, "Set Straight on Bullying" I think is one that would make a good one for like a school board meeting or a church group or to get the conversation going. It's pretty well done.

**DR. ESPELAGE:** Yes. I've also used the MTV documentary on bullying.

**DR. HOOVER:** Yes, that is good. I've seen that, too.

**DR. ESPELAGE:** Yes, I've used it. I mean, it kind of depends. You have to have a group that's okay with rock and roll and tattooed people. But for middle school students and high school students, I've used that. There's also the video called "The Bully Dance" that is more abstract, but really is helpful to engage both kids at all levels and parents and teachers in the conversation.

**MS. STENHJEM:** I was just going to say, there's also Peter Yarrow's materials that are free, which are called "Don't Laugh At Me." He has a Web site that we can include as well, so we'll make sure that all of these resources are included on the transcript.

**DR. HOOVER:** By the way, he does a great job if you ever want to bring somebody in to get kids fired up.

**MS. STENHJEM:** Yes.

**DR. HOOVER:** About how they treat each other. He's super.

**MS. STENHJEM:** Yes. He's excellent. I've seen him several times and he's wonderful. This curriculum that he's produced is specifically geared toward creating a climate of respect for all young adults, so again, it's free. Go ahead John.

**DR. HOOVER:** ... school bullying, or – excuse me, "School Violence, Draw the Line", that's put out by Coastal Video Productions. And I like it because it kind of equates bullying with violence, that it's part of the total violence picture and it's oriented around middle school.

**MS. STENHJEM:** Excellent. Well, I hate to do this. I'm sure there are a lot of other questions out there, and an hour for a topic like this just isn't enough time. We may have to do another call and extend the time of question and answers for everybody. We're going to wrap up this call because it's almost 2:00. But in closing, I would like to thank Dr. Hoover, Dr. Espelage and Dr. Little for their time and expertise. I think this call is one of the best that I've been on. It's just wonderful. And again, the National Center will have a transcript of the call on our Web site at <http://www.ncset.org>. Again, I'll

make sure that all of the resources that were mentioned today are included and if we can provide where you can find those, we'll also put that on there as well.

I'd like to also say that we at the National Center are currently in the process of having a publication produced that should be out shortly and will be on our Web site as well on this issue that was the focus of our call today. So, just keep checking our Web site under publications, and that should be out very shortly.

The next teleconference call is going to be on November 18th from 3:00 to 4:00 for those of you who would like to be on that call. The topic will be "A Review of the National Leadership Summit on Improving Results for Youth with Disabilities" that was held in Washington, DC in September. The presenters will be David Johnson, who is the Director of the National Center here, and Kelli Crane, who is a Senior Policy Analyst at TransCen, and the Chair of the National Leadership Summit. So, that's all we have for you today. And I want to thank all the participants and, again, thank our presenters. And everybody have a great weekend.

END

Many resources that were mentioned during the teleconference call are included here for your reference.

### Web Sites

Positive Behavioral Support Model

<http://www.pbis.org>

Bully Busters

<http://www.researchpress.com/product/item/5192/>

Expect Respect

<http://www.austin-safeplace.org/programs/school/docs/Executive%20Summary%20Handout%20CDC.doc>

### Books

*Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*  
by Dan Olweus

*Teasing and Harassment – The Frames and Scripts Approach*  
by John Hoover

*The Bully Prevention Handbook* by John Hoover

A Report Card on School Violence Programs

<http://tcla.gseis.ucla.edu/reportcard/features/5-6/astor.html>  
[http://tcla.gseis.ucla.edu/reportcard/features/5-6/astor\\_resources.html](http://tcla.gseis.ucla.edu/reportcard/features/5-6/astor_resources.html)

### Research

Ladd, G.W., Kochenderfer, B.J. & Coleman, C.C. (1997). Classroom peer acceptance, friendship, and victimization: Distinct relational systems that contribute uniquely to children's school adjustment? *Child Development*, 68(6), 1181-1197.

#### Dr. John Hoover

Hoover's Bully Blog

<http://www.hoovbully.blogspot.com/>

#### Dr. Dorothy Espelage

Bullying in Early Adolescence: The role of the peer group

[http://www.ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC\\_Digests/ed471912.html](http://www.ericfacility.net/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed471912.html)

Bullying is Not Limited to Unpopular Loners, Say Researchers; Many Children Bully Each Other Especially in Middle School

<http://www.apa.org/releases/bullying.html>

Ganging Up on Bullying

[http://www.e-provider.org/articles/2002Dec\\_Bullying.htm](http://www.e-provider.org/articles/2002Dec_Bullying.htm)

Most School Children Take Part in Bullying

[http://www.scienceagogo.com/news/19990614024251data\\_trunc\\_sys.shtml](http://www.scienceagogo.com/news/19990614024251data_trunc_sys.shtml)

Bullying Among Illinois Youth

<http://www.aauw-il.org/wfjg/archive/71/bullying.htm>

If you could see the anger: Bullying disrupts education and may sow violence

<http://www.nyssba.org/adnews/issues/issues011000.1.html>

#### Dr. Liza Little

For a complete listing of articles by Dr. Little, see

<http://www.shhs.unh.edu/nursing/facultynursing.html>

Differences in Stress and Coping for Mothers and Fathers of children with Aspergers Syndrome and Non-verbal Learning Disability

<http://www.ajj.com/services/pblshng/pnj/onlinece/2002/decl28565570.pdf>

Little, L. (2001). Peer victimization of children with Asperger-spectrum disorders. *The Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 40(9) 995-996.

Little, L. (2002). Middle-class mothers' perceptions of peer and sibling victimization among children with

Asperger's syndrome and nonverbal learning disorders.  
*Issues in Comprehensive Pediatric Nursing*, 25, 43–57.

Book Chapter in Press — Little, L. (2002). “The victimization of children with disabilities.” Chapter 7, in *Health consequences of abuse in the family: A clinical guide for evidence-based practice*.

### Videos

Let's Get Real

<http://womedia.org/letsgetreal.htm>

The Broken Toy

<http://www.marcoproducts.com/brokentoyvideo.html>

Set Straight on Bullies

<http://www.nssc1.org/videos/video03.htm> (video)

<http://www.nssc1.org/books/book03.htm> (book)

MTV documentary on Walt Whitman Community School

<http://www.geocities.com/mhsgsa/MTVbullying.html>

The Bully Dance

<http://www.nfb.ca/showpeace/bully/film.html>

Don't Laugh at Me

<http://www.dontlaugh.org>

School Violence – Draw the Line

[http://www.coastal.com/coastalACB/webpage.cfm?&DID=7&WebPage\\_ID=5](http://www.coastal.com/coastalACB/webpage.cfm?&DID=7&WebPage_ID=5)

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