Self-Defense as a Bullying Prevention Strategy: An Evaluation of the Gracie Bullyproof Program

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

with a Major in Educational Leadership

in the Department of Graduate Education

Northwest Nazarene University

by

Jared S. Emfield

April, 2015

Major Professor: Russell Joki, EdD

AUTHORIZATION TO SUBMIT DISSERTATION

This dissertation of Jared Scott Emfield, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education with a major in Educational Leadership and titled "Self-Defense as a Bullying Prevention Strategy: An Evaluation of the Gracie Bullyproof Program," has been reviewed in final form. Permission, as indicated by the signatures and dates given below, is now granted to submit final copies.

Major Professor	Dr. Russell Joki	Date 4/15/15
Committee Members	Dr. James Lang	Date 4/15/15
	Dr. Christopher Loether	Date 4-27-15
Department Administrator	Dr. Heidi Curtis	Date 4-27-15
Discipline's College Dean	Dr. Paula Kellerer	Date 4/15/15

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful for my parents, who encouraged me to pursue an education and my wife and children for supporting me through it. I owe so much to those who taught me along the way. Dr. Chris Loether taught me that learning could be both rigorous and fun. Dr. John Clark challenged me in every way and took everything to a new level. Northwest Nazarene University has been an incredible experience. I am beyond appreciative of Drs. Paula Kellerer, Lori Werth, and Heidi Curtis who refused to accept anything but my best and Drs. Russ Joki and James Lang, who guided this study every step along the way.

DEDICATION

For those who live in fear while dreaming of safety

ABSTRACT

Bullying in schools has received a great deal of attention in the United States over the last 15 years. Despite this increase in attention and the resulting increases in funding and programs, bullying continues to be a significant issue of concern today. Researchers have often suggested two fundamental approaches to reducing violent behavior. These include seeking social change and empowering victims through self-defense training. When it comes to bullying in schools, however, educators have focused primarily on seeking social change. This study sought to evaluate the possible benefits of self-defense training for school-age children. The Gracie Bullyproof program, in Torrance, California, was selected for case study evaluation. Research was conducted in two overlapping phases. The first phase of the study was exploratory. This phase consisted of document and media analysis and direct observation. The primary purpose of this phase was to explore the nature of the Gracie Bullyproof program and to lay the foundation for further research. The second phase was descriptive. Six family-groups were selected for participation in the study, including nine school-age children and nine parents or guardians. Participants were administered a semi-structured interview and a follow-up questionnaire. Phase two was designed to evaluate the lived experiences of participants. Participants overwhelmingly reported that their experience in the program was positive. They found the program helpful in both preventing and responding to bullying at school. Those with past experiences with bullying also reported that the training was therapeutic and helpful in overcoming the effects of past trauma. Recommendations for further study include additional research examining self-defense as a bullying prevention strategy, the negative effects that victimization can have on the family, and the complex interactions between individual, family, and school responses to bullying.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter I

Introduction

On April 20, 1999, two students opened fire at a high school in Littleton, Colorado, in what was the deadliest school massacre in history at that time. The Columbine massacre had a ripple effect that extended into many areas of society. This tragic event led many to question what might have caused two teenagers to commit such a brutal act and whether or not anything could have been done to prevent it. Media reports and the scholarly research that followed focused largely on the perpetrators' backgrounds and experiences, particularly their history of having been bullied at school (Mears, 2007; Sanjek, 1999; Spiegel & Alpert, 2000; Thomas, 2009). The shocking nature of the Columbine massacre and the perception that the shooting may have been motivated largely by years of bullying led to a surge in awareness about bullying in schools (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008; Olweus & Limber, 2010; Turkel, 2007). Media reports began to focus on bullying, scholars began conducting research into the causes and effects of student aggression, and legislators passed a flurry of anti-bullying legislation (Limber & Small, 2003; Nansel et al., 2001; Fraire, Prino, & Sclavo, 2008).

Bullying continues to be a running theme in popular media today. Newspaper articles and media reports frequently focus on bullying in schools, and motion picture companies have produced many films and documentaries that focus on victims and the impact that bullying has on their lives. Despite this greater awareness and billions of dollars being spent on anti-bullying programs across the nation, bullying continues to be an issue of major public concern today (Ferguson, Miguel, Kilburn, & Sanchez, 2007; Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2004; Perius, Brooks-Russell, Jing, & Iannotti, 2014).

The need to reduce the number of students impacted by bullying each year is motivated by more than just high profile school shootings. Bullying is the most common form of school violence today (Baldry, 2003; Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005; Cooper & Nickerson, 2013; Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003; Juvonen & Graham, 2001). Recent studies suggest that approximately one-third of students in the United States are involved in school bullying, with half of those being involved on a regular basis (Nansel, Craig, Overpeck, Saluja, & Ruan, 2007; Olweus, 1995; Robers, Kemp , Truman, & Snyder, 2012). Unfortunately, there can be serious short-term and long-term effects for bullies and their victims. Victims are more likely to experience depression, commit suicide, and to be victimized throughout their lives (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003; Hunter & Borg, 2006). Bullies are significantly more likely to commit later acts of violence, participate in criminal activity, and spend time in prison (Farrington & Ttofi, 2011; Turkel, 2007). Even bystanders can experience increased levels of stress and guilt as a result of their involvement or their failure to intervene (Frey, Hirschstein, Edstrom, & Snell, 2009). With millions of school children affected by bullying each year, and the host of negative consequences associated with that involvement, it is no wonder that this has become an issue of major concern in the United States. The question remains, however, as to what can be done about it. If current approaches are not proving effective, then new approaches and new methods should be investigated.

Statement of the Problem

Researchers of violent behaviors have suggested a two-pronged approach to reducing victimization. Violence prevention efforts should 1) seek social change and 2) reduce the vulnerability of victims by teaching them how to avoid and resist victimization (Ball & Martin, 2012; Orchowski, Gidycyz, & Raffle, 2008; Koss, 1990; Rozee & Koss, 2001). Strategies that

seek social change generally involve those methods designed to discourage violent behavior through social pressure or enhanced consequences. Reducing victim vulnerability, on the other hand, typically involves self-defense training aimed at helping victims avoid and/or resist acts of violence. Self-defense strategies focus primarily on empowering victims and potential victims while social change strategies rely on the actions of others. A "two-pronged" approach means that violence prevention efforts focus on minimizing violence in society at large as well as on an individual basis.

Self-defense programs have been shown to be effective in preventing and responding to other forms of violence. For example, self-defense training has proven effective in reducing victimization rates among college-age women as well as improving the recovery of those who have suffered a sexual assault or other violent crime (Ball and Martin, 2012; Gidycz, Rich, Orchowski, King, & Miller, 2006; Hollander, 2014; Orchowski, Gidycyz, & Raffle, 2008). Women who receive self-defense training are more likely to avoid dangerous situations and respond better when confronted with violence (Sinclair et al., 2013). Several researchers have suggested that children who participate in self-defense training experience similar benefits, including lower levels of aggression, higher levels of self-esteem, and other positive social and psychological results (Law, 2004; Theeboom, De Knop, & Vertonghen, 2009; Watson, & Bain, 1992).

When it comes to bullying, however, educators, researchers, and policymakers have focused primarily on those strategies that promote social change while generally avoiding strategies designed to empower victims and reduce their vulnerability (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005; Frey, Hirschstein, Edstrom, & Snell, 2009; Horne, Stoddard, & Bell, 2007; Limber, 2011; Padget & Notar, 2013; Perron, 2013; Richard, Schneider, & Mallet, 2012; Sherer

& Nickerson, 2010; Smith, Pepler, & Rigby, 2004; Smith, Osborn, & Samara, 2008). As might be expected, school bullying prevention efforts are a reflection of research and public opinion. Schools typically encourage victims and bystanders to report bullying to an adult or seek peer intervention but treat both participants similarly if the victim takes any steps to physically protect themselves (Sherer & Nickerson, 2010; Smith, Pepler, & Rigby, 2004; Smith, Smith, Osborn, & Samara, 2008). The few strategies employed by educators that do focus on victim empowerment are generally limited to encouraging victims to keep a log, speak assertively, and improve their social skills (Selekman & Vessey, 2004). In short, while potential victims of sexual assault are encouraged to learn self-defense strategies to reduce their vulnerability to violence, victims of bullying are typically encouraged to appeal to others for help rather than taking steps to defend themselves.

While teachers and administrators are likely to advise students to tell an adult, turn to peers for help, or simply ignore the situation, parents are much more likely to encourage a student to fight back or "stand up for yourself," with nearly half stating that they have told their child to fight back against a bully (Cooper & Nickerson, 2013; Turkel, 2007). Boys in particular are often encouraged by parents to respond to bullying by fighting back. There are many possible explanations for this apparent disconnect between parents and schools. Victims of bullying and their parents often express a lack of confidence in their school's ability to protect them (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Kochenderfer-Ladd, & Pelletier, 2008; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). As parent confidence in their school's ability to handle bullying goes down, they become more likely to develop their own strategies to protect their children (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Duong, 2011). One of the strategies often employed by parents is to enroll their children in self-defense programs that claim to help students put an end to bullying (Strayhorn & Strayhorn, 2009). The

popularity of such programs may be an outgrowth of a growing sentiment among parents and students that schools are either incapable or unwilling to doing what is needed to protect students from bullying (Ferguson, Miguel, Kilburn, & Sanchez, 2007; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004; Waasdorp et al., 2011). As families turn to outside organizations for help, and schools discourage what they feel is an escalation of violence, students are given conflicting signals from educators and parents. Parents and self-defense instructors tell students that fighting back is an effective method of bullying prevention, while educators threaten school discipline if they do. As a result, students can be confused about how to respond to bullying (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005). More often than not, victims fail to even report victimization to parents or teachers, opting instead to talk to friends or no one at all (Kochenderfer-Ladd, & Pelletier, 2008; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004).

Background

Researchers have suggested that self-defense training can increase self-esteem and self-efficacy as well as help victims avoid situations in which they are likely to become victims again (Ball and Martin, 2012; Gidycz, Rich, Orchowski, King, & Miller, 2006). Participants in self-defense training have shown decreased rates of victimization. Those who have been victimized have been more likely to report it to authorities and have shown an improved capacity for recovery (Gidycz, et al., 2006). Despite these positive outcomes, educators (and educational researchers) appear hesitant to examine any form of bully prevention that includes self-defense training for students. The hesitancy on the part of educators to encourage any form of physical self-defense appears to come primarily from a concern that such a response will escalate the level of violence (Frey, Hirschstein, Edstrom, & Snell, 2009). Instead, research and policy have been *social change heavy*, relying primarily on anti-bullying education programs that either

focus on the aggressors or rely on students to report aggressive behavior to school officials (Hunter & Borg, 2006; Padget & Notar, 2013).

Educators' hesitancy to support self-defense training may also come largely from a particularly narrow definition of self-defense training. Banks (2010) explains that "The goal of self-defense education is to help students make good choices, recognize potentially dangerous situations, and take action to prevent a physical altercation" (p. 13). When self-defense training is viewed as a concerted educational effort to help students avoid victimization and prevent themselves from being harmed, this hesitancy on the part of educators may lessen.

As is the case with most forms of violence, bullying can only occur when there is an imbalance of power (Borg, 1998; Olweus 1995). The primary focus of self-defense training is to eliminate the imbalance of power between victims and aggressors by empowering potential victims. Other bullying prevention programs take steps to eliminate this imbalance of power by enhancing consequences for bullying, encouraging adults or peers to intervene, or modifying the school climate to discourage any tolerance of bullying. Self-defense efforts, however, focus on empowering potential victims by helping them learn how to communicate clear boundaries, avoid compromising situations, report aggression to adults, and stay safe when physically attacked. In this way, the imbalance of power is affected through the only constant factor in all bullying situations: the victim.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to understand the experience of school children, ages 6–12, and their families when they participate in a self-defense program designed to prevent bullying. The following research questions shaped this study as it progressed:

1. Why do families choose to participate in the Gracie Bullyproof program?

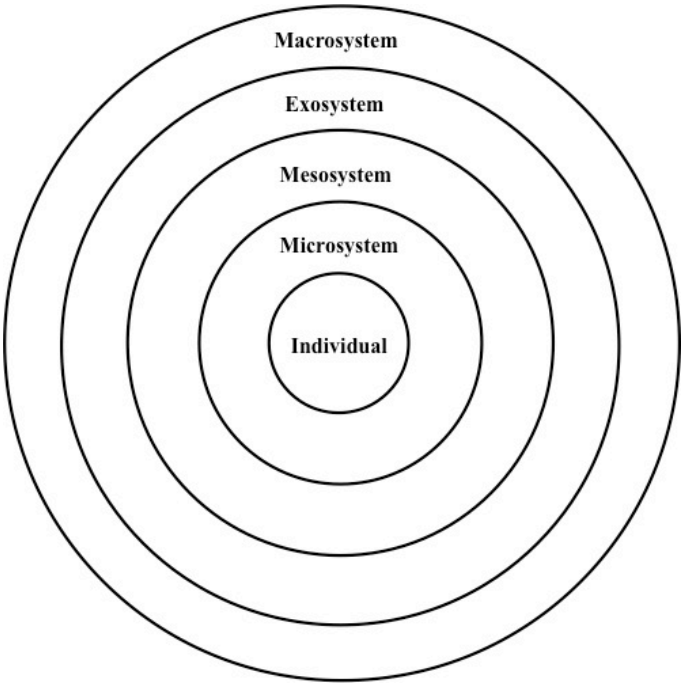
2. How do students and parents perceive their experience in the program?
3. How do students and their parents perceive the impact of the program on their ability to prevent or respond to bullying?

The social-ecological model (SEM), commonly used by bullying and educational researchers, served as the theoretical framework for this study. The SEM is a systems based approach that breaks social factors into several domains. Each domain differs from the others based on its proximity from and influence on the individual.

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1977), who is typically credited with the development of the SEM, described this model as a "nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next" (p. 514). A visual representation of this model is included in Figure 1. Each structure or circle represents one of the original domains. The microsystem includes those factors present in the immediate environment when a behavior occurs. The mesosystem includes those factors that are not present in the environment as a behavior occurs but that are present in the lives of the individual at other times. The exosystem includes more distant structures and institutions that can impact behavior, but that the individual never directly participates

Figure 1

The Early Social-Ecological Model



Source: Adapted from "Toward an Experimental Ecology of Human Development," by U. Bronfenbrenner, 1977, *American Psychologist, 32*(7), 514-515. Copyright © 2015 by the American Psychological Association. Adapted with permission.

in. The macrosystem includes broad, all-encompassing institutions and structures like the economy, national policy, and overall culture. The individual lies at the center of the model. The individual interacts with the surrounding domains, and they interact with one another through reciprocal relationships.

The SEM framework was combined with a case study approach to conduct what might be considered a social-ecological case study. The family domain was chosen as the primary unit of analysis for this case study. The other domains in the system were evaluated, but primarily from the perspective of family members.

Definition of Terms

Precision in terminology is important, particularly when conducting research that involves the lived experiences of participants. Ambiguity in what does and does not constitute bullying, for example, can have a significant impact on how participants report their behaviors as well as how researchers interpret those behaviors. While there are terms that will be dealt with more thoroughly later on, there are several that are important enough to merit clarification before beginning any discussion on bullying and bullying research.

Aggression. It is important to differentiate between *bullying* and the more general term *aggression*. Aggression typically involves any type of behavior intended to commit harm (Archer & Coyne, 2005). This behavior may be physical, emotional, or relational. While aggression and bullying both involve ill-intentioned behavior, aggression does not necessarily need to be repeated, and an imbalance of power does not need to exist. A single, ill-intentioned act or a dispute between two relatively balanced peers may qualify as aggression but may not be bullying. Simply stated, all bullying is aggression, but not all aggression is bullying (Selekman & Vessey, 2004).

Bullying. Bullying is a complex behavior. Scholars have generally elected not to use a one-line definition for bullying. Instead, most have chosen to rely on the three qualifying characteristics originally given by Olweus (1993). In order to qualify as bullying, a behavior must be repeated, intended to cause harm, and the result of an imbalance of power (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Baldry, 2003; Olweus 1978; Olweus, 1995). In order to be considered bullying, a behavior must fulfill all three requirements. A single act of aggression, while harmful, does not constitute an act of bullying, nor does an unintentional but harmful act. Imbalance of power is especially key in understanding this behavior. Without an imbalance of power, a victim has the ability to stop the behavior. It is this imbalance of power that makes it possible for bullying to become repeated and even more harmful.

Physical acts. *Physical acts* include only those methods that involve direct, bodily contact between individuals. Such methods may include striking, pushing, blocking, tackling, or other physical methods. Setting in motion events that have an immediate physical effect can also be classified as physical acts. Using a physical object or weapon to cause harm, for example, is a physical act even though there may be no direct touch between two individuals.

Nonphysical acts. Behaviors that do not involve any direct, bodily contact. These methods may include verbal and non-verbal communication, avoidance, isolation, and any other act that does not require physical contact between individuals.

Participants, trainees, and students. For clarity, it was important to differentiate between study participants, Gracie Bullyproof trainees, and public school students. For the purposes of this study, *participant* was used to refer to those who participated in the study – including children and family members. *Trainee* was used to refer to children as they

participated in the Gracie Bullyproof program. *Student* was used to refer to school age children as they attend school. The terms respondent and participant were used interchangeably.

Self-defense. As previously discussed, *self-defense* is often defined quite narrowly. For the purposes of this study, self-defense will be treated as a broad set of strategies intended to empower students so that they can avoid victimization or eliminate the imbalance of power that must exist in order for bullying to occur. These strategies may include assertiveness, avoidance, speech, body language, reporting, and physical defense tactics.

As is the case with many behaviors, self-defense strategies may be categorized as aggressive or non-aggressive, violent or non-violent, *and* physical or nonphysical. For the most part, these categorizations are not mutually exclusive. For example, physical self-defense strategies may include both violent and non-violent methods. Even a nonphysical act such as yelling at someone can be considered a very aggressive act. Methods such as ducking, blocking, or restraining can be considered physical but non-violent acts.

Violence. Violence can be defined as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation" (Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002). While this definition allows for some extreme, but nonphysical, acts of aggression to be classified as violent, in this study, violence will be treated as the intentional use of physical force against another person with the intention of causing harm. This is not to minimize the possibility of nonphysical forms of violence, but for clarity, these behaviors will be dealt with under the more general term *aggression*.

Overview of Research Methods

The purpose of this case study was to understand the experience of school-age children who participate in a self-defense program designed to prevent bullying. The Gracie Bullyproof program was selected for analysis. Research was conducted before, during, and after a one-week bullying prevention camp held in Torrance, California from July 28 through August 1, 2014. Data was gathered in two overlapping phases. The first phase included document and media analysis and direct observation of Gracie Bullyproof participants. The purpose of this phase was to gather information about the program in order to shape later research and refine methods and procedures to be used in the second phase of the study.

The second phase consisted of in-depth, on-site interviews with participants and their parents and a follow-up electronic questionnaire. Six families, including nine trainees and nine parents, were chosen for participation in the second phase of the study. Program participants included children ages 6–12. Families were chosen for participation based on information provided by program directors and observations made by the researcher. The primary objective of this selection process was to include students with varying ages, backgrounds, and levels of engagement in the program. As is appropriate for a case study, participants were not primarily chosen based on their ability to represent the average participant but rather for their ability to add to the overall picture (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 1990).

Trainees and their parents were interviewed together. The primary purposes of these interviews was to identify participant perspectives regarding the research questions already discussed. Participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview process, and each interview was audio recorded, transcribed, and analyzed. Themes were identified as the responses were coded.

Approximately two months after the conclusion of the Gracie Bullyproof camp, an electronic questionnaire was sent to each family. All six families responded by providing the researcher with an update on events since the conclusion of the camp. Important themes were also identified and then added to the previously coded interviews.

Significance of the Study

Parents play an essential role in the well-being of their children. Strategies employed by parents, and even parenting styles, can significantly increase or decrease the likelihood that a child will be victimized and how well they will cope if they are (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Juvonen, & Gross, 2008; Lamb, Pepler, & Craig, 2009; Olweus, 1993; Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001). Strategies employed by parents cannot be separated from educational efforts to prevent bullying. Researchers have suggested exploring new avenues and new strategies for bullying prevention, particularly those areas that examine which strategies encouraged by parents are most effective (Espelage & Swearer, 2004 Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Duong, 2011). This study has the potential of improving our understanding of bullying prevention methods. It can also provide additional suggestions for research and practice, as well as which practices may be best to avoid.

Students and parents often share a common concern that schools may not be able to prevent bullying (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Kochenderfer-Ladd, & Pelletier, 2008; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). Students rarely report acts of bullying to teachers. Parents are more likely to encourage victims to fight back, whereas teachers typically encourage students to report bullying to staff (Kochenderfer-Ladd, & Pelletier, 2008; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). One recent study has suggested that the bullying situation may not be as bad as other scholars have suggested, and may actually be improving (Perius, Brooks-Russell, Jing, & Iannotti, 2014).

Others, however, suggest that bullying prevention programs have shown only limited success and the overall picture of bullying in the United States has yet to show signs of improvement and may actually be worsening (Bauman, 2008; Ferguson, Miguel, Kilburn, & Sanchez, 2007; Horne, Stoddard, & Bell, 2007). In either case, millions of students experience bullying each year (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003; Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2007).

Families and parents often seek self-defense training outside of schools as their "fallback" when they feel that schools have been unable to protect their children. Parents may be especially interested in the results of this study. If self-defense training is an effective bullying prevention strategy, parents may find that their efforts are justified and effective. Additionally, educators may find that there are ways that they can support, or perhaps even provide, self-defense training that does not, in fact, escalate the level of violence in their schools. On the other hand, if self-defense training is a relatively ineffective way of preventing bullying, parents may need to search for alternative strategies and educators may need to discourage such methods.

As little or no research has been conducted in this area, the greatest contribution that may be made by this study may be suggestions for further study. Researchers have not adequately dealt with bullying-victim empowerment to the degree that they have regarding other forms of violence. This study represents one attempt to address this need.

Chapter II

The Literature Review

Introduction

Behavioral researchers have long been aware that bullying exists, but it was not until the early 1970s that scholars began to conduct and disseminate systematic research aimed at understanding and preventing bullying in schools (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008; Olweus & Limber, 2010; Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). Bullying research was spawned largely by the work of Dan Olweus (1978), who began his work in Scandinavia examining the nature, prevalence, and commonalities of bullying among students in Sweden. He later expanded his research, conducting similar studies in Europe, Asia, Australia, and North America (Berger, 2007). The framework provided by Olweus has provided the foundation on which most subsequent research was developed. Even today, most research relies heavily on the definitions, methods, and prevention strategies originally pioneered by him, leading many scholars to consider him the world's leading pioneer of bullying research (Hawker & Bolton, 2000; Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008; Vreeman & Carroll, 2007).

The 1980s and 1990s saw an era of expansion in bullying research. During this time, more and more scholars began conducting studies about bullying in many different areas of the world, including Britain, Japan, Australia, Canada, and the United States (Berger, 2007; Olweus 1995; Olweus & Limber, 2010). Like the work of the 1970s, these studies focused primarily on identifying the nature and prevalence of bullying and presenting plans to reduce its occurrence (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, Isava, 2008). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, a series of high-profile acts of violence brought bullying to the forefront, particularly in the United States (Merrell, Gueldner, Ross, & Isava, 2008; Olweus & Limber, 2010; Turkel, 2007). In several of these

cases, perpetrators committed very brutal acts that were apparently motivated by a desire for retribution, having been teased or taunted for months or years before the incidents. One study, for example, conducted in 2002 by the State Department of Education and United States Secret Service found that as many as 71% of school shooters had previously been victims of school bullying (Fein et al., 2002). As policymakers and society at large struggled to make sense of tragedies like the Columbine High School shooting and the Virginia Tech massacre, and as the negative consequences of bullying became more apparent and publicized, interest in bullying spiked. The result was a second era of expansion in bullying research. Studies became more numerous and increasingly diverse. Scholars began to explore not only prevalence and prevention, but contributing factors, long-term consequences, and the impact of school climate (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Cooper & Nickerson, 2013; Perron, 2013). New technologies also resulted in new issues such as cyberbullying, harassment-by-text, and other technology-related aggression. In short, the investigation of bullying during the late 1990s and 2000s saw a dramatic explosion in nearly every aspect of bullying research.

As more and more research was conducted regarding bullying in schools, most took one of two fundamental approaches. Researchers in the mental health fields such as psychology, psychiatry, and medicine typically treated bullying as an internal mental process, often evaluating the mental health and personal characteristics of the individuals involved (Craig & Pepler, 2007; Fanti & Kimonis, 2013; Hampel, Manhal, & Hayer, 2009; Hawker & Boulton, 2000). Psychologists, for example, would be more likely to evaluate what personal characteristics might lead an individual to victimize another or what mental conditions might increase the likelihood that a student would be victimized. They might also examine the negative consequences that bullying could have on that individual in later years.

Social and cultural scientists, such as anthropologists and sociologists, typically treat bullying more as an external, social process (Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Farmer et al., 2010; Olweus, 1993). They focus primarily on the impact that external factors may have on an individual. These researchers typically take an external-systemic approach, taking into account the roles and impact of teachers, parents, and classmates. An anthropologist, for example, will be much more likely to evaluate the influence that parents may have on victimization rates or how teacher viewpoints can influence student behavior, whereas a psychologist may be more likely to evaluate the mental conditions that might contribute to aggression or victimization.

There is clearly a lot of overlap between these two approaches, but there are also general tendencies that can lead to different methods of research and areas of interest. While both seek to understand personal aggressive behaviors, one looks primarily from the inside out, while the other looks from the outside in. Regardless of their background, most scholars recognize that bullying, like any behavior, is influenced by both internal and external processes (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). As researchers work to increase their understanding of bullying, it is essential that their research methods and theoretical framework account for both internal and external processes.

Theoretical Framework: The Social-Ecological Model

According to Ravitch and Riggan (2012), “Theory attempts to explain why things work the way that they do, and . . . does so by way of identifying and examining relationships among things” (p. 16). A theoretical framework is a conceptual and theoretical foundation that can be used to help explain how things work by analyzing relationships and interrelationships between the various factors or elements within a system (Maxwell, 2005; Ravitch & Riggan, 2012;

Strauss, 1995). A theoretical framework allows researchers to penetrate beyond simple observations to better understand how to analyze and influence complex systems.

The social-ecological model (SEM) is a holistic and effective theoretical framework that has found favor among bullying researchers and educational leaders (Espelage & Swearer, 2004; Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002). The popularity of the SEM among bullying researchers comes largely from a recognition that behaviors can be influenced by many factors. "Bullying does not occur in isolation. This phenomenon is encouraged and/or inhibited as a result of the complex relationships between the individual, family, peer group, school, community, and culture" (Espelage & Swearer, 2004, p. 3). The SEM is commonly used by researchers to develop research methodologies and by educational leaders to produce a model for influencing behavior in schools. Organizations such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization promote the SEM as a useful approach for analyzing and preventing violence in schools (Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002; "The Social-Ecological Model," 2014). This model is especially useful because it takes into account the many external factors that influence behavior while still acknowledging internal factors.

The SEM is a systems-based framework originally developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1976; 1977; 1979). Bronfenbrenner (1976) criticized what he felt was an overemphasis on laboratory research and computer-based quantitative analysis, particularly in educational research. Bronfenbrenner (1976) stated, "Our researches cannot be restricted to the laboratory; for the most part, they must be carried out in real-life educational settings" (p. 9). He pushed for a systems-based approach and encouraged educational researchers to examine behaviors as they occur in real-life situations, while focusing heavily on external influences. Like other systems-based theories, the SEM builds on the assertion that behaviors cannot be fully understood

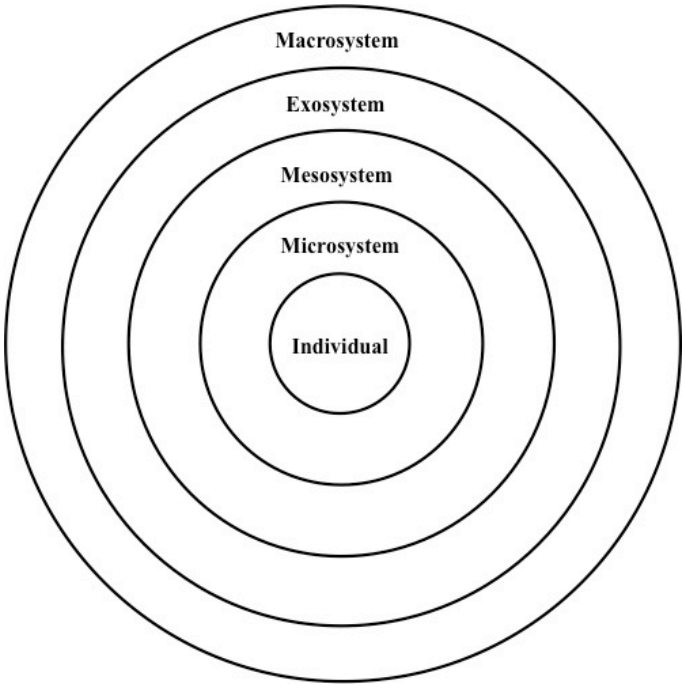
without taking external influences into account. In order to understand a behavior, one must understand the overall system and the various factors at play.

Bronfenbrenner (1977) proposed that these "settings" or systemic factors should be grouped into four domains based on their social proximity to the individual. Bronfenbrenner (1977) advanced, "The ecological environment is conceived topologically as a nested arrangement of structures, each contained within the next" (p. 514). The relationships between the individual and these domains can be depicted as a series of concentric circles, as shown in Figure 2. Factors are grouped into each domain based on their "social distance" from the individual as behaviors occur. The individual lies at the center of the model, surrounded by the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem domains.

Bronfenbrenner (1977) defined the microsystem as "the complex of relations between the developing person and environment in an immediate setting containing that person (e.g., home, school, workplace, etc.)" (p. 514). The microsystem includes those factors present in the immediate environment when a behavior occurs. Direct participants, the physical environment, bystanders, and even weather can all have an immediate and direct influence on

Figure 2

The Early Social-Ecological Model



Source: Adapted from "Toward an Experimental Ecology of Human Development," by U. Bronfenbrenner, 1977, *American Psychologist, 32*(7), 514-515. Copyright © 2015 by the American Psychological Association. Adapted with permission.

behavior and are therefore part of the microsystem. These factors are treated as the most immediate and influential factors on behavior.

The mesosystem "comprises the interrelations among major settings containing the developing person at a particular point in his or her life" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). It includes those factors that are not present in the environment as a behavior occurs, but are present in the lives of the individual at other times. For example, an eighth grade student may be bullied on the playground (microsystem), but her behavioral choices may be heavily influenced by her experiences in the classroom, by what she is taught at home, and by something she learned at church — all part of the mesosystem. While these factors may not be directly at play in the environment in which the behavior is occurring, they are present within the mind of the individual and may still strongly influence behavior.

The exosystem is the next most outward domain. Bronfenbrenner (1977) described the exosystem as:

> an extension of the mesosystem embracing other specific social structures, both formal and informal, that do not themselves contain the developing person but impinge upon or encompass the immediate settings in which that person is found, and thereby influence, delimit, or even determine what goes on there. (p. 515)

This domain includes more distant structures and institutions that can still impact behavior, but in which the individual never directly participates. For example, a school board meeting may very well impact a student, but exists only as part of her exosystem so long as she has never attended a board meeting. The influence of these behaviors is certainly present but must filter through the microsystem and mesosystem domains.

Lastly, the macrosystem "refers not to the specific contexts affecting the life of a particular person but to general prototypes existing in the culture or subculture that set the pattern for the structures and activities occurring at the concrete level" (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515). The macroystem includes broad, all-encompassing institutions and structures like the economy, national policy, and overall culture. These factors can certainly impact behavior, but their influence typically occurs from a much greater distance and has more "filtering" to go through before that influence is realized.

The SEM is not a deterministic model of behavior. Instead, it demonstrates the reciprocal influence of complex relationships in a system (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; De La Rue, Espelage, & Rao, 2013; Espelage & Swearer, 2004). The individual at the center of the model functions as the final determining factor of behavior, but both influences and is influenced by external factors. The inner circles represent those external factors that are more immediate and directly influential, while the outward circles represent more distant factors. More distant factors do influence behavior, but not without being filtered through the more inward domains. An exosystemic factor like district policy, for example, may discourage a certain behavior, but cannot directly impact student behavior until it has filtered through the mesosystem. A teacher or administrator who communicates that policy to students could serve as that mesosystemic filter by relaying that policy to students and enforcing rules.

The SEM was developed as a very general, multidisciplinary approach to behavioral inquiry (Onwuegbuzie, Collins, & Frels, 2013). Bronfenbrenner and others have routinely modified the SEM depending on the needs and subject matter of a particular study (Rosa & Tudge, 2013). Business or public policy researchers, for example, may use the domains of individual, interpersonal, organizational, community, and policy factors. These domains line up

very well with the “systemic” domains originally provided by Bronfenbrenner, but are tailored to the unique aspects of business organizations. The use of these labels is more than simply a renaming of the original systemic domains. They can be somewhat different groupings of the same factors based on their level of influence in a business setting. For example, all mesosystemic factors may still be present, but split between the interpersonal and organizational domains.

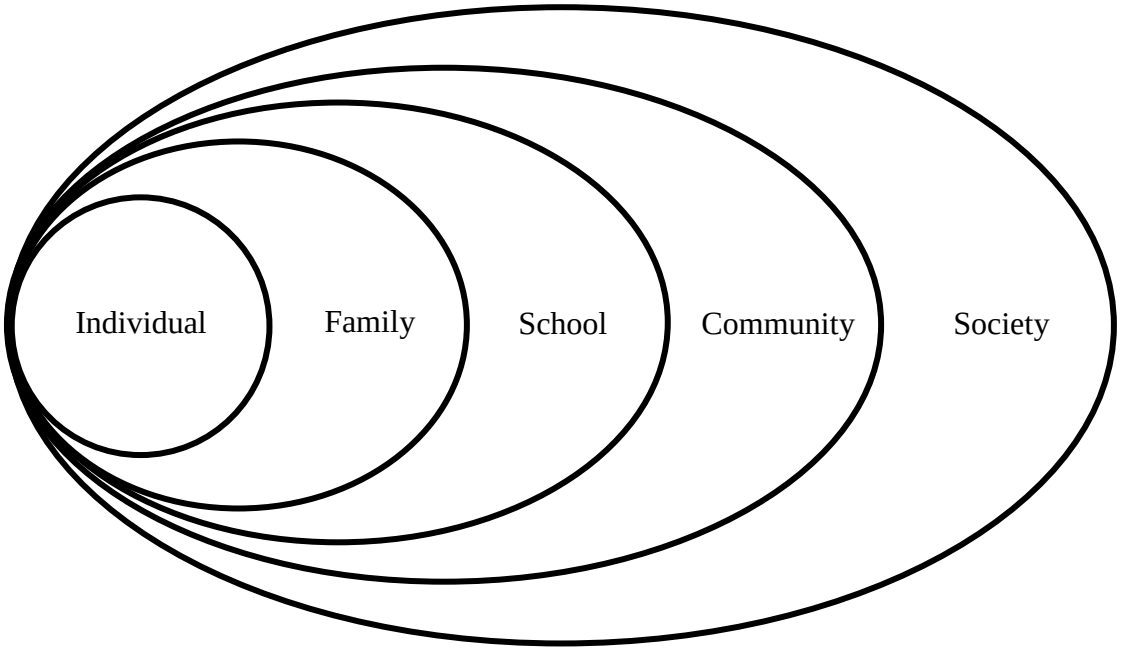
Bronfenbrenner and others continued to revise and modify the initial SEM framework throughout the following decades (Rosa & Tudge, 2013; Onwuegbuzie, Collins, & Frels, 2013). He and others recognized that adjusting the labels and boundaries between SEM domains could be beneficial to researchers. These adjustments have allowed researchers to tailor the model to the unique needs of their particular discipline and study. The result has been a relatively flexible model that can be adjusted to meet the needs of researchers in many different disciplines (Onwuegbuzie, Collins, & Frels, 2013). For example, researchers like McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler, and Glanz, (1988) and Larios et al. (2009) have used individual, interpersonal, institutional, community, and policy domains to explore health programs and risky behavior in the United States and Mexico. Cassel (2010) used a simplified model including biological, cultural, and political/socioeconomic domains to examine issues of obesity and age in Samoa. Researchers such as these recognize the key players for different behaviors can vary as much as the behaviors themselves. Educational scholars have generally opted to use domains that are more appropriate to the educational setting such as individual, relationship, school, family, community, and society (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). These domains are consistent with the original model but are more understandable and tailored to the unique needs of educational researchers.

Another adjustment commonly made by researchers is to use ellipses rather than concentric circles. This off-center representation of the domains is very important. It illustrates the concept that under certain circumstances, outer domains can have an increased or decreased level of influence (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). While the influence of outer domains must filter through the inward circles to one extent or another, the magnitude of that filtering can vary greatly. The individual will always take into account inner domains like personal beliefs, bystanders, and family relations, but these factors may vary dramatically in their level of influence.

Figure 3 represents the primary researcher's "concept map" of the SEM as it will be applied in this study. It was developed by the researcher in order to clarify "connections between the various conceptual, contextual, and theoretical influences on a research study" (Ravitch & Riggan, 2012, p. 151). It demonstrates the complex interrelationships between external factors

Figure 3

The "Bullying Social-Ecological Model"



and the individual when it comes to bullying and provides a visual reference to help guide data collection and analysis.

It is also important to recognize that the boundaries between domains are not absolute. Factors and individual players may function in more than one domain simultaneously or move between domains based on their relationship with the individual. For example, a teacher may function as part of the school when managing the classroom, as part of the community when interacting with parents, and also as part of the society when working with the school board to develop policy.

The SEM has been especially appealing to bullying researchers who recognize that bullying is both an intrapersonal and an interpersonal phenomena. Like all behaviors, it can be encouraged, discouraged, or otherwise influenced by many internal and external factors (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). Victims, bullies, teachers, parents, bystanders, and even policymakers and community leaders can all have an impact on behaviors in schools. The SEM allows researchers to evaluate these influences without disregarding individual characteristics (Onwuegbuzie, Collins, & Frels, 2013). The social-ecological framework developed by Bronfenbrenner, and subsequently modified by him and others, allows researchers to evaluate both individual behavioral patterns and their social contexts (De La Rue, Espelage, & Rao, 2013; Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, & Hymel, 2010).

According to Espelage and Swearer (2004), “bullying has to be understood across individual, family, peer, school, and community contexts” (p. 1). Those contexts are all present within the bullying SEM shown in Figure 3. It is uniquely tailored to the needs of bullying researchers and allows them to include individual, family, school and peers, community, and culture domains in their analysis. This version of the SEM recognizes that bullying is a behavior

that involves multiple players, each of which may constitute an individual at the center of the model. As the first domain, “the individual is at the center of his or her social ecology. The individual involved in bullying may be involved as a bully, bully-victim, victim, or bystander. Individual factors will influence participation in bullying” (Espelage & Swearer, 2004, p. 3). A bully, a victim, a bystander, or even a passerby might become the focus of inquiry during research and therefore take the center position in the model.

The second domain of influence in the bullying SEM framework is family. Generally speaking, family relationships exist between children and those with whom they reside and who provide physical support. Parents, guardians, and siblings are often key players in this domain. Researchers have provided a lot of justification for their placement of the family as the first SEM domain. The first relationships an individual experiences are within the family domain (Duncan, 2004). Before a child begins school, they have already developed a set of relational behaviors and expectations as a result of their family interactions (Stocker & Youngblade, 1999). Family relationships and parenting styles can have a significant impact on an assortment of behaviors including many that increase or decrease the likelihood that a child will later become a victim or a bully (Baldry, 2003; Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010; Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003; Perron, 2013; Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001). When children are bullied, they are more likely to tell a family member about the experience than to tell a teacher or principal (Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2004). Quite simply, bullying behaviors cannot be understood without taking into account the influence of family relationships.

School relationships form the third domain in the bullying SEM model. Many different kinds of relationships can exist within this domain. Peer relationships typically involve those of similar ages and backgrounds. In a bullying situation, a peer might include a bully, a victim, a

bystander, a friend, and a whole series of different relationships. School relationships might include student relationships with a teacher, an administrator, or other non-peer individuals represented in a school community.

The “society” domain is almost identical to the exosystem and macrosystem domains used by Bronfenbrenner (1977). The most important modification in the bullying SEM framework is the separation between the school and the community. While any educational organization might be treated as part of the community domain, the bullying framework separates the two, allowing researchers to evaluate actions taken by teachers and administrations separately from actions taken by community leaders, community activists, and other community members.

There is great potential of the SEM for educational research. Education is an attempt to influence personal behaviors through outside influence (Pelissier, 1991). If educators hope to improve that influence, it will be necessary for them to increase their understanding of both the individual and the factors involved (Espelage & Swearer, 2004). People can be heavily influenced by the outside world, but they are the final determining factor in their own individual choices. The SEM is not a deterministic approach to behavioral analysis. Individual choices are viewed as being influenced by, but not determined by, external factors. When evaluating external factors, the most influential are those that come from relationships with others. Friends, teachers, family members, classmates, or even casual acquaintances can all have varying levels of influence on personal choices and behaviors. A community like a school can also influence behavior, but not without filtering it through a relationship of some kind. In order for community influence to occur, there must be some level of interaction or relationship between a community and the individual. In the same way, societal influence, to one extent or another, must filter

through the community via relationships and then to the individual. The influence of "filtering" is as important to the process as anything.

The overarching implication in the SEM is that behavior is most effectively influenced through interaction with the individual through meaningful relationships (Bronfenbrenner, 1976). Research has strongly supported this concept (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010; Lamb, Pepler, & Craig, 2009; Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001). This does not mean societal and community efforts to influence behavior are useless, but rather these efforts will be most effective when conducted through the establishment of meaningful relationships with individual members of the community and society at large. Movement for change may be widespread, but must filter down to the individual to have any practical effect. Behavioral interventions are most effective when directed at the individual through relationships. In using the SEM, it is not difficult to see how school teachings and school policy do not have the same impact on behavior as does the bully, victim, bystander, and family behavioral choices.

While not all bullying-research is conducted using the social-ecological model, all research contributes to our understanding of the social-ecology of behavior. The SEM provides a powerful model for both conducting new research as well as evaluating previously conducted research, regardless of whether the research originally relied on the SEM. Since this study has used the social-ecological framework as a basis for analysis, it has also used it to review previous research and the appropriate literature. Prior to this analysis, however, it is important to gain an understanding of aggressive and bullying behaviors.

Forms of Aggression

Bullying is a type of human aggression, but aggression is a much broader term. Generally speaking, "definitions of human aggression generally involve the intention to inflict harm on

others" (Archer & Coyne, 2005). While virtually any behavior intended to cause harm may be considered aggression, aggressive behaviors can vary dramatically in form. In order to gain an understanding of bullying, it is important to have some understanding of the nature of aggression and the various forms it can take.

Aggressive behavior can take many forms, depending largely on the type of harm being done and the methods employed to cause that harm (Berger, 2007; Vandebosch & Cleemput, 2009). Physical aggression generally refers to those aggressive behaviors that are intended to cause harm to the body by inflicting pain or injury. Physical aggression usually involves direct physical contact between the aggressor and the victim. Nonphysical aggression usually involves those behaviors designed to cause mental or emotional distress (Archer & Coyne, 2005). This can involve name-calling, gossip, social isolation, and many other behaviors that typically do not involve direct physical contact between the aggressor and the victim. While aggressive events may include both physical and nonphysical acts, each act can generally be classified as either physical or nonphysical. For example, an aggressor may call names while physically assaulting a victim, but this event can be considered a combination of two simultaneous acts of aggression, one physical and one nonphysical.

While the intended harm of aggression helps us classify its form, the connection between form and harm is not absolute. For example, while physical bullying typically causes physical harm, research has clearly shown that physical bullying may also cause profound psychological harm. Conversely, psychological bullying may contribute to physical harm including health problems, substance abuse, and suicide (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Bauman, 2010; Berger, 2007; Cooper & Nickerson, 2013; Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2007; Min

Jung, Catalano, Haggerty, & Abbott, 2011; Perron, 2013; Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Duong, 2011).

Besides physical and nonphysical forms, aggression may also be classified based by how overt or covert the action is. Researchers have used slightly different terminology, but most have acknowledged a functional difference between direct and indirect methods of aggression (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Berger, 2007; Frey, Hirschstein, Edstrom & Snell, 2009; Vandebosch & Cleemput, 2009; Waasdorp, Bradshaw & Duong, 2011). Early researchers focused primarily on more direct forms of bullying, or those that involve more obvious, overt behaviors (Vandebosch & Cleemput, 2009). Usually, these behaviors are easily identifiable as bullying. They are loud, physical, or otherwise easily observable. On the other hand, indirect methods of bullying involve more covert and typically nonphysical forms of aggression. These behaviors are usually intended to inflict psychological or emotional harm and are much harder to identify. Further, proving that an individual *intended* to cause harm is much more difficult when indirect methods are involved (Archer & Coyne, 2005). This makes acts of indirect aggression much harder to recognize. More recent studies have indicated that not only is indirect aggression more common in schools, but it is just as, or perhaps even more, harmful than direct aggression (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Bauman, 2010).

While physical and nonphysical acts of aggression are relatively easy to identify as one or the other, direct and indirect aggression is more effectively treated as a spectrum ranging from more to less direct behavior. Physical and nonphysical acts also do not directly correspond to direct and indirect aggression as one might expect. A hidden poke from a pencil, for example, is quite physical but may also be very covert, while a nonphysical but verbal assault can be very direct.

Bullying Behavior Defined

The definition of bullying is essential to any bullying study. What does and does not qualify as bullying can have a significant impact on study results, which includes the prevalence of and response to bullying (Bauman, 2010; Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003). For example, there is some indication that as bullying has received increasing media and scholarly attention, students, parents, and teachers may have become more likely to describe almost any undesirable behavior as bullying (Archer, & Coyne, 2005; Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Duong, 2011). This can result in increased rates of reporting and the skewing of results. A clear, functional definition allows researchers and participants to be more precise in their analyses.

The definition originally provided by Olweus (1978) has remained the foundational definition for most scholars. Olweus (2011) was cautious not to provide an overly narrow definition of bullying, but instead chose to give three qualifying characteristics that make an act bullying. "Bullying is (1) intentional, negative behaviour that (2) typically occurs with some repetitiveness and is (3) directed against a person who has difficulty defending himself or herself" (Olweus, 2011, p. 151). These three criteria — intent, repetition, and imbalance of power— are what distinguish bullying from other forms of aggression (Baldry, 2003; Cooper & Nickerson, 2013 Olweus, 1995; Perron 2013). They also rely on one another for bullying to continue and are therefore essential in calibrating prevention and response efforts. Simply bumping into a student in the hallway does not, in and of itself, constitute bullying. However, repeatedly doing so can suggest intent. An imbalance of power or the victim's inability to put a stop to the behavior also enables the repetitive nature of the bullying. All three conditions must exist in order for bullying to occur. In summary, if an act is not repetitive, is not intended to do harm, or the victim is able to put a stop to the behavior, bullying does not exist.

By definition, an act of bullying must be aggressive in nature; it must be intended to cause harm. On the other hand, not all aggressive behaviors are considered bullying. If an aggressive behavior is not repeated or does not involve an imbalance of power, it is not bullying. This means that the distinction between physical and nonphysical, and direct and indirect aggression is essential to understanding and responding to bullying.

It is important to note here that while an imbalance of power can come as a result of differences in size and strength, it can also come about through social competence, intelligence, or even technological prowess (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Olweus, 1995; Vandebosch, Van Cleemput, 2009). Any "competitive advantage" that makes it difficult for a victim to put a stop to the behavior makes the cycle of victimization possible and can be considered an imbalance of power.

Since all bullying is aggression, bullying can also be classified as direct and indirect, physical and nonphysical. However, scholars often break down bullying behaviors into several types based primarily on the nature of the intended harm. Berger (2007) separates bullying into three types: physical, verbal, and relational. In physical bullying, the aggressor intends to cause physical harm, usually by pushing, hitting, and beating. It is the most obvious form of bullying and the most easily recognizable to victims, bullies, and bystanders. As the most obvious and easily recognizable form of bullying, it also receives the most attention (Berger, 2007; Hazler, Miller, Carney, & Green, 2001). School policies typically address physical bullying very directly and spell out clear consequences for violent behavior.

Verbal bullying refers to name-calling, insults, and other spoken forms of aggression (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Berger, 2007; Carlyle & Steinman, 2007). The intention of verbal bullying is primarily to inflict emotional or psychological harm. It is typically

more common than physical bullying and can take more direct or indirect forms. For example, a student may shout out insults on the playground or whisper something to the victim to hurt their feelings. The more indirect the verbal aggression, the more difficult it can be for others to intervene and for the victim to get help.

Relational bullying is almost always indirect and covert. The primary intention is to "disrupt the social relationships between victims and their peers" (Berger, 2007, p. 94). Often, this occurs without the direct participation of the victim or even the bully, as bullies cause harm through social exclusion, gossip, or rumors. Typically, the aggressor or aggressors reach out to other individuals to help inflict harm (Atlas & Pepler, 1998). Relational bullying is often the most difficult to identify and therefore to address (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). Because of the covert nature of this type of bullying, it can be difficult to prove what was done and even harder to prove the intent to cause harm.

It is helpful here to consider these three types of bullying as distinct methods that typically fall into the direct/indirect aggression spectrum. While an act of bullying may be more or less direct, it can usually be classified as physical, verbal, or relational. This does not mean that a bully cannot combine different types of bullying, like calling a student names while physically pushing them, but each individual method is clearly distinguishable from the others.

There is some evidence that students may choose to use more indirect methods of aggression as an alternative strategy to physical aggression when direct aggression may be too costly (Archer & Coyne, 2005). An important implication is that when direct bullying is prevented, bullies may turn to relational aggression rather than simply refraining from bullying in general. Schools may actually experience higher rates of relational aggression as a direct consequence of successful prevention of more direct forms of bullying.

New technologies have introduced new methods of bullying. Although arguably not entirely new strategies, these technology-driven bullying methods can be difficult to classify. As electronic devices have become more and more ubiquitous, so has cyberbullying (Bauman, 2010). Scholars still disagree somewhat on what constitutes cyberbullying. Is it an entirely different type of bullying or the same old bullying with new tools (Bauman, 2010; Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007)? What remains clear is cyberbullying is a serious and growing form of bullying, having many of the same consequences as other forms of traditional bullying, including increased risk of academic absenteeism, depression, and suicide (Bauman, 2010).

Texting, online harassment, and cyberbullying are recent phenomena that usually include both verbal (text) and relational aggression. In these cases, technology functions to increase both power and magnitude (Bauman, 2010; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Robers, Kemp, Truman, & Snyder, 2012; Vandebosch & Cleemput, 2009). A rumor posted on a social media site can be seen by hundreds or more people within just a few hours, greatly expanding the harm that can be caused in a short amount of time. Further, the lack of the presence of a victim and perceived anonymity can shield the aggressor from feelings of empathy or pity, making the acts even more callous. Scholars have often referred to this lack of empathy as “online disinhibition” which makes cyberbullying all the more malicious and harmful (Bauman, 2010; SulerSuler, 2004).

There have been conflicting results regarding whether or not the use of technology as a method of aggression enlists new recruits or simply provides bullies with a new tool with which to expand their aggressive behaviors. Bauman (2010) claims that technology draws in many new bullies and victims who are not typically involved in traditional bullying. On the other hand, Vandebosch and Cleemput (2009) have found that participation in traditional bullying is a strong

indicator of participation in cyberbullying. These researchers view bullying primarily as an extension of previous bullying and victimization behaviors .

The Individual

Psychologists, psychiatrists, and other mental health specialists tend to approach bullying from an internal mental process perspective. These studies seek to evaluate and understand bullying by exploring the internal factors that contribute to the process. While they may take into account historical or environmental factors, their emphasis is primarily on the forms that the behavior may take and the internal conditions present when it occurs. A mental health researcher is more likely to discuss the psychological condition of the individuals involved or even the biological makeup of the participants. Behavioral researchers are much more likely to suggest individual counseling or needs assessments as legitimate ways of addressing bullying. These approaches are essential to our understanding and provide unique insight into bullying as an internal behavioral process.

What constitutes the individual depends largely on what is being examined. A bully, a victim, or even a bystander may be the focus of research and therefore “the individual” at the center of the SEM. Their individual choices, while heavily influenced by outside factors, are ultimately their own. No external factor more immediately influences an individual’s behavior than his or her own choices. For this reason, it is essential to understand the nature of the behavior as well as typical characteristics of those involved.

“Typical” attributes among individual players. As behavioral researchers examine aggressive behavior, they often identify correlational characteristics, or what might be called “typical attributes” of the various individuals involved in that behavior (Bauman, 2010; Bernstein & Watson, 1997; Olweus, 1995). It is important to acknowledge that typical attributes

are by no means absolute. Instead, they are representations of commonalities identified among many individuals. A "typical victim attribute," for example, does not necessarily indicate that every victim will exhibit that characteristic. Instead, these attributes demonstrate tendencies and may suggest common causes and effects.

Only recently have researchers begun to establish just how widespread and detrimental bullying can be to everyone involved including victims, bullies, and even bystanders. Researchers have identified many commonalities among victims and bullies. As noted by Carlyle and Steinman (2007), it can be difficult to identify which commonalities indicate consequences, and which may point to correlating or contributing factors. Regardless, there are many negative characteristics associated with those involved in bullying.

It also is important to note that bullying often occurs as part of a behavioral cycle. Once a student adopts the role of a bully, victim, or even passive bystander, they are much more likely to continue to function in that role in the future (Horne, Stoddard, & Bell, 2007; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008; Olweus, 1994). The positive or negative consequences associated with involvement in bullying often contributes to the cycle of behavior (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003).

Understanding these typical attributes may help researchers identify what individual tendencies may contribute to bullying behaviors. It is often difficult to identify which commonalities are causes and which are effects. It is more likely that some commonalities may function as both cause and effect, further contributing to the bullying cycle. In any case, these commonalities are helpful in improving our understanding of bullying as a behavior.

Victim attributes. Victims of bullying often exhibit a set of characteristics that may contribute to them becoming a target and can also make later victimization more probable.

Victims typically have a higher level of impulsivity, which can help make them a target when their behavior differs from that of their classmates (Fanti & Kimonis, 2013). They are more likely to do well academically but struggle socially (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010). They have a relatively poor self-image and struggle to resolve problems with peers, often feeling isolated or rejected by their classmates. Their negative views of themselves combine with their negative views of their life situation to give them very little hope for change (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010; Olweus, 1995). These negative views, when combined with poor self-image, further contribute to the imbalance of power that makes bullying possible. It is not hard to see how a negative view of the world and a poor self-image can lead to feelings of helplessness and powerlessness.

Victims often react to bullying in fairly predictable ways. Some students report that they fight back, choose to tell the bully to stop, or report the incident to an adult, but in most cases, victims choose to do nothing (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005). Victims often experience feelings of vengeance, anger, and self-pity. However, when they experience negative emotions, they are more likely to internalize those feelings, directing them inward rather than at someone else (Borg, 1998; Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010). These internalized emotions often lead to feelings of helplessness and discouragement, further contributing to the victimization cycle. Victims also experience a high level of confusion, with one in three reporting that they did not know what to do about being bullied (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005).

While victims often internalize their feelings, victims may choose to respond to bullying in several different ways. Some researchers differentiate between passive victims and provocative victims. Passive victims may be targeted because of their passivity or perceived

weakness while provocative victims may themselves exhibit aggressive behaviors that cause others to target them (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Frey, Hirschstein, Edstrom, & Snell, 2009; Olweus, 1995).

Provocative victims are much less common (Olweus, 1994). These victims respond aggressively through externalizing behavior when bullied. A provocative victim is much more likely to be perceived as overreacting to other students' behaviors. As such, they are often viewed by their peers as having "asked for it" (Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001). While assertive behaviors tend to discourage further bullying, provocative responses to bullying tend to be overtly aggressive rather than simply assertive.

Passive and provocative responses to bullying differ, but both typically encourage further victimization and solidify the victim's status as a target (Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001). While it is widely recognized that certain behaviors may encourage bullying, this should not be interpreted as a suggestion that the victim is to blame, although these behaviors may be interpreted as such by their peers and by aggressors in particular.

Victims may experience a significant number of short-term and long-term negative consequences associated with repeated victimization, including everything from a negative impact on academic performance to increased risk of depression and suicide. Victims of repeated bullying experience a host of academic challenges, including higher rates of truancy, absenteeism, and school dropout rates (Cooper & Nickerson, 2013; Nansel et al., 2001). As many as one in seven students has been afraid to go to school as a result of bullying (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005). Victims typically struggle with many adjustment problems, including increased symptoms of depression, rejection, loneliness, and self-blame (Cooper & Nickerson, 2013; Erdur-Baker, 2009, Hampel, Manhal, & Hayer, 2009). These psychological impacts can

also lead to physical health problems (Nansel et al., 2001). Some of these include the inability to sleep, wetting the bed, headaches, and stomachaches (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003). While physical symptoms may eventually subside, psychological and emotions symptoms often do not, continuing to impact victims into their adult lives (Hawker & Boulton, 2000).

Bully attributes. In contrast to victims, bullies exhibit a relatively high level of social competence, but often struggle academically (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010). They are usually larger or stronger than their classmates, having a much better self image than victims do (Olweus, 1995). On the other hand, they hold very negative views of their environment and of others (Olweus, 1995; Cook et al., 2010). They have a strong need for power and often struggle to resolve differences with others (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010; Olweus, 1995). Negative energies are typically externalized, meaning they direct their anger or frustration outward — toward others (Cook et al., 2010). Their home environment is often characterized by conflict and low levels of parental monitoring (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003; Perron, 2013). Bullies usually view their community and their school as having a negative atmosphere. They typically have a higher level of narcissism, with many feeling that they benefit greatly from bullying others (Fanti & Kimonis, 2013). Borg's 1998 study on bullies and victims highlighted some of the differences between elementary and secondary bullying. Two-thirds of elementary self-identified bullies said that they felt sorry after bullying, while nearly three-fourths of secondary bullies said they felt either indifferent or satisfied.

When students were asked why other students bully, 35% of students said to make them popular, 32% to get their own way or push others around, 15% because others are not friendly to them or they were not doing well at school (Brown, Birch, Kancherla, 2005). In two different studies, one in five bullies felt good about their behavior, and less than half felt badly (Dake,

Price, Telljohann, 2003). Nearly half felt that they were provoked by the victim and 25% reported that bullying made them feel good about themselves.

In short, the "typical bully" shows significant externalizing behavior, internalizing of symptoms, and faces academic challenges (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010). They have strong negative attitudes about others. They struggle to resolve problems and see school and community in a negative light. They often have a hard time maintaining relationships and are more likely to associate with antisocial peer groups (Olweus, 2011).

While scholars often differentiate between the different methods used by bullies, long-term consequences appear to be very similar both in type and in degree, regardless of the type of bullying employed (Archer & Coyne, 2005). Bullies experience remarkably similar physical and psychological struggles as their victims do (Perron, 2013). Children who bully are more likely to experience depression or attempt suicide than their peers. They also report higher rates of headaches, neck and shoulder pain, stomachaches, fatigue, and feeling nervous or tense.

There is a strong indication that aggressive tendencies shown by childhood bullies continue into adulthood (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Cooper & Nickerson, 2013; Craig & Pepler, 2007; Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003; Farrington & Ttofi, 2011, Olweus, 1995). Adults who were bullies during their childhood years are more likely to engage in domestic violence, harassment, and other criminal behaviors (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Farrington & Ttofi, 2011). Aggressive adults are also more likely to raise children who engage in aggressive behavior, suggesting a generational cycle of violence and aggression (Baldry, 2003; Cooper & Nickerson, 2013 Farrington, 1993). Turkel (2007) views childhood bullying as the first step in a process that grows from bullying to relational aggression to sexual aggression as the bully grows into adulthood.

Bully-victim attributes. Recently, researchers have begun to examine a third category that includes those individuals who are both victimized and who victimize others (Bauman, 2010, Carlyle & Steinman, 2007; Fanti & Kimonis, 2013; Perron, 2013; Veenstra et al., 2005). Almost without exception, these individuals exhibit the most concerning behaviors and appear to suffer the most negative consequences later on. They appear to exhibit all of the psychological tendencies of victims and combine it with the violent tendencies of bullies. Bully-victims exhibit higher rates of suicide and mental health issues than victims or bullies, and exhibit higher rates of violent behavior later in life (Farmer et al., 2010; Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003; Perron, 2013).

Most bully-victims report that they were bullied before they began bullying others, which may suggest that bullying may be a strategy employed by some victims to prevent further bullying (Frisén, Jonsson, & Persson, 2007; Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003). They typically exhibit the most concerning characteristics of those directly involved in bullying. These are students who experience victimization and also victimize others. They typically internalize and externalize negative emotions, and hold profoundly negative beliefs about themselves and others (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010). They show low levels of social competence and low academic performance. They are isolated and rejected by peers and are more likely to be negatively influenced by those peer interactions that do exist (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010).

In short, bully-victims seem to experience the worst of both worlds, including the social isolation and negative mental health of victims and the violent tendencies of bullies. As scholars have recognized this additional category, they have been able to make sense of some previously

conflicting research that may have been caused by bully-victims who exhibited characteristics of both victims and bullies (Farmer et al., 2010).

Additional factors: Gender, age, ethnicity and past experience. Rates of victimization and the forms of bullying experienced vary somewhat based on participant age and gender. Although boys and girls are both involved in bullying as both victims and bullies, there are some slight variances in how they are usually involved. Boys are more frequently involved in physical bullying and direct aggression, while girls are more often involved in verbal and relational bullying (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Carlyle & Steinman, 2007 Nansel et al., 2001; Robers, Kemp, Truman, & Snyder, 2012). Boy victims are often smaller or physically weaker than their classmates, while girls do not show the same tendency (Olweus, 1995).

Responses to bullying also vary somewhat based on gender. Girls are more likely to feel self-pity while boys were more likely to feel vengeful (Borg, 1998). Boy victims are also more likely to fight back when victimized, whereas girls are more likely to report (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005). Interestingly, boys are more likely to be told by their parents to fight back, while girls are more likely to be told to avoid confrontation (Cooper & Nickerson, 2013; Turkel, 2007). As students of both genders age, they become more likely to want revenge (Borg, 1998).

Rates of victimization and perpetration appear to peak in the middle grades and then steadily decline through the high school years (Barton, 2006; Carlyle & Steinman, 2007 Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003; Eslea & Rees, 2001; Nansel et al., 2001; Robers et al., 2012). Most bullying that occurs is verbal or relational. Fekkes, Pijpers, and Verloove-Vanhorick (2005) found that 31.9% of elementary students ages 9–11 had been bullied during the previous term. Of these, 30.9% reported name-calling, 24.8% spreading rumors, 17.2% being excluded, and 14.7% being kicked, hit, or pushed.

In 2007, Carlyle and Steinman conducted a study to evaluate the possible impact that ethnicity, gender, and age may have on bullying behaviors. The authors found that Native Americans and African Americans reported much higher rates of perpetration while Asians reported lower rates. These differences lessened, however, as students aged. Based on these results, the authors conclude that being a minority does not determine where one lands on the bullying spectrum, but rather, traditions associated with specific cultures may increase or lessen bullying behaviors in individuals.

Past experience with bullying also has a significant effect on future victimization or aggression. A student who has been a victim or bully in the past is much more likely to continue to function within that same role, as either victim or bully (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005). The result can be a downward spiral in which bully and victim further solidify their respective roles, and the imbalance of power becomes solidified (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003). As the victim's self-image deteriorates, the likelihood of future victimization increases.

Family Relationships

A student's family life can have a profound impact on their behavior, particularly when it comes to violence. In many cases, a student's proclivity to be a victim or a bully can be viewed largely as an outgrowth of parent-child interaction in their childhood (Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001). For example, students who have witnessed domestic violence in the home are nearly three times more likely to be involved in physical violence themselves (Baldry, 2003; Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003). In fact, witnessing violence in the home has been shown to be a stronger indicator of bullying behavior than age, gender, or even a history of abuse (Baldry, 2003). Children who come from family settings with a lot of conflict or poor parental monitoring are more likely to bully others (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010; Perron, 2013). Harsh,

punitive or stressful home environments, as well as overprotective parents, can lead to an increase in the probability of victimization (Cooper & Nickerson, 2013. Interestingly enough, children who have grown up in homes with very close-knit families and low levels of conflict are often ill-equipped to handle conflict and may be more likely to be victimized as well (Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004).

Family history can play a significant role in contributing to or helping prevent bullying (Baldry, 2003; Cooper & Nickerson, 2013 Smith, Smith, Osborn, & Samara, 2008). Parents who were bullies in the past, and particularly in the present, are more likely to have children who bully others and are more likely to be tolerant of bullying behavior among their children (Craig & Pepler, 2007). Families with open lines of communication and positive role models decrease the likelihood of both victimization and aggression in students (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003). Parents who were victimized in the past typically have very clear memories of those experiences and have increased empathy for others who are victimized (Cooper & Nickerson, 2013).

When parents and educators are on the same page, the results can be quite positive. Intervention and response efforts are usually viewed as most effective when parents work collaboratively with educators when bullying happens (Espelage, & Swearer, 2004; Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Duong, 2011). They can also help their children cope and respond productively when victimization has occurred (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Duong, 2011). The actions parents take can have profound positive or negative effects on the behavior and emotional well-being of their children. On the other hand, educators and parents are not always on the same page. For example, parents, particularly fathers, often recommend that students use a strong physical response to bullying, such as fighting back (Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). Many scholars have

generally encouraged parents to help children develop conflict resolution skills through education and role-playing activities but discouraged any kind of physical response (Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004; Selekman, & Vessey, 2004).

There is a strong indication that parents face similar challenges to those of educators in not knowing when bullying is occurring. Victims are more likely to report victimization to a family member and to ask for help from them than they are a teacher, but not by much (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2004; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). It is not entirely clear if this tendency is motivated by parent effectiveness or based on familial relationships. Hunter, Boyle and Warden (2004) found that students gave parents about the same grade as they did their teachers, stating that parent interventions were only effective about half of the time.

School Relationships

Bystanders and peers can have a powerful effect on the escalation or de-escalation of bullying before, during, and after it occurs. (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005; Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001). The typical bystander considers bullying “uncool” and does not like to see others bullied (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). Despite this, “bystanding” is precisely what bystanders tend to do. The vast majority of bystanders do nothing to intervene, instead electing to watch in silence (Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig, 2001; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). This can be particularly harmful, as bullies and other bystanders often interpret silence and inaction as tacit support (Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). Bystanders may have some sense of this, as they report feeling badly about their failure to act.

This failure to intervene may be the result of several contributing factors. Students report being hesitant to take action for fear of becoming victims themselves (Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). Few students feel that they have the skills to intervene effectively and may fear that they will actually make the situation worse (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004).

Hawkins, Pepler, & Craig (2001) found that 88% of bullying incidents occurred with other peers present. As bullying often occurs in full view of classmates and other peers, peers have an opportunity to provide support before, during, or after the bullying occurs. Victims who receive peer support typically cope better with victimization, and peer intervention has been shown to be effective in stopping bullying as it occurs.

Educators. Research has shown that teachers can have a profound and direct influence on the level of bullying that occurs in their classrooms (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008; Olweus, 1993). Teachers who become aware of bullying are quick to try to intervene (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005). When interventions are timely and consistent, they can be effective at stopping the behavior (Olweus, 1993). Teachers can also help prevent bullying by providing highly structured classrooms. Students are less likely to bully in highly structured classrooms and environments (Atlas & Pepler, 1998).

Students, however, view teacher awareness and effectiveness very differently than do teachers. Students generally do not feel that their teachers are aware of most of the bullying that occurs and are even less confident in their ability to handle bullying when they are made aware of it (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Kochenderfer-Ladd, & Pelletier, 2008; Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). Students regularly express that teachers are

not aware of most bullying that occurs. In addition, both students and researchers have suggested that teacher interventions are largely ineffective (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Kochenderfer-Ladd, & Pelletier, 2008; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). This contrast has led many researchers to believe that teachers grossly overestimate their awareness and effectiveness in stopping bullying (Kochenderfer-Ladd, & Pelletier, 2008; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004).

Despite their potential to help, teachers are usually unaware of bullying that goes on in their schools and classrooms and are even less likely to intervene effectively (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003; Kochenderfer-Ladd & Pelletier, 2008; citations). As many as four out of five students who are victimized never report the incident to school officials, leaving victims vulnerable to continued victimization (Hunter, Boyle, and Warden, 2004). This hesitation to report victimization appears to come largely out of concern that the teacher may not be able to do anything, out of fear of retaliation, or for fear that the victim may be blamed themselves (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005). This concern may not be entirely unfounded. When students who have previously reported bullying were asked, only about one in four felt that it had been the best strategy for stopping victimization (Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2004). The more frequently a student is victimized, the more likely they are to believe that telling an adult will be ineffective (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005).

There may be some additional justification supporting student concerns about teacher effectiveness. Educators typically hold a more optimistic view of bullying than students. Atlas and Pepler (1998) found that 71 percent of teachers believe that they intervene almost all of the time, while only 25 percent of students felt the same. In the same study, teachers were only observed to intervene 18 percent of the time. When teachers do intervene, they rarely report the

situation to administrators or parents, and their interventions are usually viewed as ineffective or even harmful by students (Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005, Turkel, 2007).

All in all, teachers appear very willing to intervene but are usually not aware of most bullying incidents that occur and may lack the training and support to do much about it when they are (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003; Limber & Small, 2003). Teachers and school psychologists generally agree with this assessment, reporting that teachers want to help prevent bullying in their school but feel they lack the experience and training to do so effectively (Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003; Sherer & Nickerson, 2010). Many victims choose not to tell anyone about victimization. Despite the fact that teachers are "the professionals," those who do report are more likely to tell a friend or family member than a teacher (Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2004).

In addition to school peers, educators, administrators, and other school players, environmental factors can also have an impact on bullying in schools. As might be expected, bullying usually takes place in unsupervised areas like the playground or hallways, or unmonitored areas in the classroom (Atlas & Pepler, 1998; Fekkes, Pijpers, & Verloove-Vanhorick, 2005). This further contributes to the claim that teachers are often unaware of bullying that does occurs. Educators often try to counteract these behaviors by increasing surveillance and limiting access to unsupervised areas.

Society

By definition, for an act to qualify as bullying, it must be intended to cause harm. Our desire to prevent bullying in schools comes largely from a common sense, societal recognition that bullying is a bad thing (Craig & Pepler, 2007; Olweus & Limber, 2010). Bullying prevention efforts extend well beyond the classroom and school and into local communities and even

nationwide programs. While most bullying prevention programs are implemented at the school level, they are typically developed in the local community or even at the national scale. They are also a reflection of the societal norms of prevailing culture.

There have been some conflicting results when it comes to the prevalence of bullying in K–12 schools across the globe. As researchers have evaluated what percentage of students are victimized each year, findings have ranged anywhere from 15 to 50 percent (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003; Klomek, Marrocco, Kleinman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2007; Olweus, 1995) These differences may come largely from the different areas and cultures in which these studies were conducted, and the different ways that researchers define what does and does not constitute bullying (Bauman, 2010; Carlyle & Steinman, 2007; Dake, Price, & Telljohann, 2003; Nansel et al., 2001). In an annual report completed in 2011 by the National Center for Education Statistics, about 28 percent of secondary age students in the U.S. reported being bullied at school during the previous school year (Robers, Kemp, Truman, & Snyder, 2012). While there have been some outliers, most studies conducted in the United States have had similar results suggesting that between one-third and one-half of all K–12 students are involved in bullying as a victim, bully, or both (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005; Cooper & Nickerson, 2012; Nansel et al., 2001; Robers et al., 2012).

The breakdown of what constitutes being “involved” in bullying varies somewhat as well. Most studies indicate that around one third of students are regularly involved in bullying as victims (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005; Carlyle & Steinman, 2007; Robers et al., 2012). While most students consider bullying “uncool,” nearly 40 percent admit to bullying others at some point with one in five participating on a regular basis (Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005). There is some overlap between these numbers as some individuals participate as both victims

and bullies, although very little research has been done regarding the prevalence of these individuals and their participation.

There is a small but growing trend in research that suggest that bullying may not, in fact, be as widespread as currently thought. A couple of recent publications suggest that much of what we consider bullying may actually be normal childhood behavior and that results may be skewed by the fact that everyone in the media and in education seems to be talking about bullying (Perius, Brooks-Russell, Jing, & Iannotti, 2014; Porter, 2013; Shah, 2013). The traction this argument gets remains to be seen.

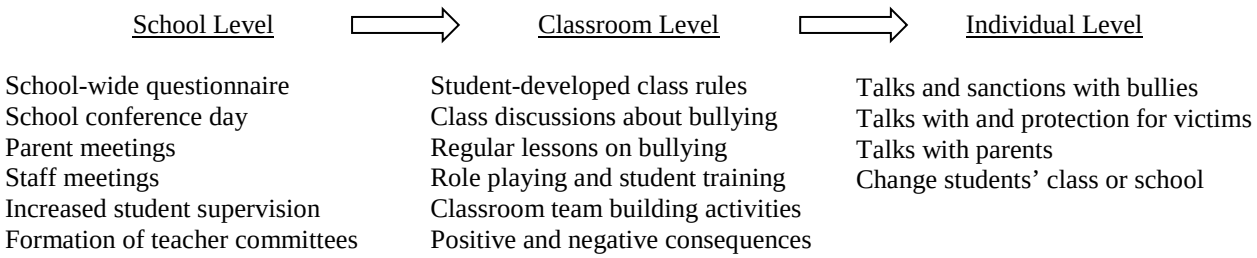
As public interest in bullying has increased, so has the scholarly research and media attention. Billions of dollars have been poured into bullying prevention programs, new legislation and policies have been introduced, and new bullying prevention programs have been developed (Ferguson, Miguel, Kilburn, & Sanchez, 2007). Most of these programs resemble one another with slight variations in emphasis or approach.

The Olweus Bully Prevention Program (OBPP) is considered by many to be the first comprehensive, school-wide bully prevention program to be widely implemented (Bauman, 2008; Ferguson, Miguel, Kilburn, & Sanchez, 2007; Olweus & Limber, 2010). The OBPP was initially developed in 1983 in response to the highly publicized deaths of three teens in Norway that were directly tied to bullying (Olweus & Limber, 2010). The stated objectives of the OBPP were to reduce existing bullying, prevent new bullying, and strengthen peer relations in schools (Olweus, 1993; Olweus & Limber, 2010). To accomplish these objectives, the OBPP promotes a transformation of the school environment through a series of targeted interventions at the school, classroom, and individual level (Bauman, 2008). A summary of these interventions is included in Figure 4. These interventions included steps such as meeting with staff and parents,

administering surveys to measure bullying activities, and the development of classroom rules (Bauman, 2008; Olweus, 1993). As these interventions are made, adults minimize opportunities and rewards for bullying by showing genuine interest in their students, setting firm limits for behaviors, using consistent and firm consequences for negative behaviors, and being positive role models for their students (Olweus & Limber, 2010).

Figure 4

Visual Summary of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP)



Source: Source: Adapted from "Bullying in school: Evaluation and Dissemination of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program," by D. Olweus and S. Limber, 2010, *American Journal Of Orthopsychiatry, 80*(1), 124-134. Copyright © 2015 by the American Psychological Association. Adapted with permission.

Following the OBPP pattern, educators begin interventions at the school level, and then work their way down to the individual. As each intervention fails, interventions become more and more targeted and tailored to the individuals involved. Interventions work their way toward the individual. The final steps include sanctions against bullies, training and protection for victims, and the involvement of parents in the sanction and protection process.

A clear connection exists between the OBPP and the social-ecological model. OBPP interventions begin in the middle domain, or the school. To Olweus (1993), this is important because it lays a foundation for classroom and individual interventions. It also serves to target those domains. OBPP interventions only progress to the individual level when earlier interventions have failed. When an individual has established a pattern of being a bully or a

victim, OBPP interventions include sanctions against the bully, protection and reassurance for the victim, and when necessary, transferring a student to another class or another school. These two conditions, protection for the victim and sanctions for the bully, are the core of interventions at the individual level. Parental involvement and even moving students to another class or school are primarily means to accomplish these two ends. When these two conditions are in place, bullying becomes less rewarding for the bully and less fearful for the victim.

It is interesting to note that Olweus (1993) treats parents as part of the *individual* level. While parents are indirectly involved in the process as committee members or consultants at the school level, when influence over the individual is most important, the OBPP immediately turns to parents and individuals. The OBPP embraces the social-ecological concept that parents are typically the most immediate and influential individuals in a student's life.

The involvement of parents in the process also suggests that there are things that the school cannot do. There are roles that family members can play that either cannot or should not be left to the school. Olweus (1993) states that, "It is not only reasonable and correct to comply with their strong wishes to be informed; it is also advisable to ask for their cooperation in bringing about change" (p. 100). The OBPP recognizes parental influence, and in an ideal situation, utilizes it to enhance protections for the victim and sanctions for the bully.

There is an additional factor in this process that Olweus (1993) does not address directly but seems to understand. In order for protective and sanctioning steps to be taken, school officials must be willing to identify a bully and a victim. This can result in confrontations with family members.

In many cases, however, it is obvious even before a meeting has taken place that there are tense and hostile relations between the families of the bullies and of the victim. In such

> cases, it is probably advantageous to meet with one family at a time, before getting them together. (Olweus, 1993, p. 101)

If school officials are unable or unwilling to clearly identify a victim and a bully, it becomes impossible to "guarantee the victim efficient protection against harassment" (Olweus, 1993, p. 99). Imposing sanctions against a victim because of misidentification or non-identification can increase the level of fear in the victim, embolden the bully, and further contribute to the bullying cycle.

The OBPP focuses primarily on overall social change, but moves to the individual level when large-scale interventions fail. Most traditional bullying prevention programs vary in scope and approach but take similar, school-wide approaches as those of the OBPP by emphasizing overall social change (Ferguson, Miguel, Kilburn, & Sanchez, 2007; Padgett & Notar, 2013). PREVnet, for example, is a Canadian government program that seeks to:

> generate social-cultural change in Canada regarding power and aggression in relationships by providing NGOs and governments with the capacity to adapt and disseminate scientific knowledge and technology to build awareness, change attitudes, assess the extent of bullying and victimization problems, implement evidenced-based strategies, and develop policies that support these activities. (Craig & Pepler, 2007, p. 87)

Some programs seek to change the school environment by improving social competence or reducing negative behaviors. The Second Step violence prevention program and the Responding in Peaceful and Positive Ways program place greater emphasis on teaching social skills and how to respond to conflict (Ferguson, Miguel, Kilburn, & Sanchez, 2007). These programs approach self-defense programs in that they emphasize assertiveness and social skills.

More recently, anti-bullying programs have emphasized restorative justice, which seeks to restore a healthy relationship between the aggressor and the victim by encouraging forgiveness and reconciliation (Ferguson, Miguel, Kilburn, & Sanchez, 2007). Some programs have even attempted to address additional factors like hormones, psychological development, and increasing the social intelligence of bullies (Ferguson, Miguel, Kilburn, & Sanchez, 2007). In virtually all cases, however, the primary emphasis is social change rather than victim empowerment.

In summary, most bully prevention programs seek social change through a series of interventions designed to lower the rewards for bullying and provide additional avenues for negative emotions. Some programs may emphasize particular elements, but the overall goals are very similar. While many studies have been conducted to evaluate the prevalence and nature of bullying in schools, very few have looked at the effectiveness of individual bullying prevention programs over time. The very little research that has been conducted to evaluate the long-term effectiveness of these programs has been relatively inconclusive (Bauman, 2008; Ferguson, Miguel, Kilburn, & Sanchez, 2007; Horne, Stoddard, & Bell, 2007).

Vreeman and Carroll (2007) conducted a systematic study in which they evaluated numerous school-based anti-bullying programs. After identifying 10 programs that had been rigorously analyzed, they found that only four had shown a decrease in bullying behaviors, and only one showed improvement in all participant groups. Ferguson, Miguel, Kilburn and Sanchez (2007) conducted an evaluation of school-based anti-bullying programs in the United States and contend that anti-bullying programs appear to have little or no effect. At best, anti-bullying programs are having mixed results. At worst, they are completely ineffective. On a national

scale, however, the prevalence of bullying victimization in schools has yet to show any significant improvement.

Several scholars have suggested that the most important protective factor for victims is how they respond to bullying (Bandura, 1989; Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004; Sharp, 1996). These researchers have suggested that victims who react actively and assertively have a better chance of preventing victimization and recovering from past victimization. Additional research has suggested that passive responses contribute to victimization (Schwartz, Dodge, & Coie, 1993). These suggestions, however, are not always reflected in school bullying prevention efforts.

Educators, researchers, policymakers, parents, and victims appear relatively united in their desire to put a stop to bullying in schools. However, their perspectives on what works appear to vary greatly. Victims are most likely to view school efforts as ineffective or even detrimental to the process. They fear that teacher efforts may even escalate the situation. As a result, they rarely report bullying to their teachers and are more likely to do nothing than they are to report the situation to school officials. Parents appear to share similar concerns and are more likely to encourage students to fight back. School officials generally prefer that students report bullying incidents and trust the school to handle the situation.

Conclusions

Anti-bullying efforts are motivated by a commonly held belief that to be free from violence and harm is a fundamental human right (Craig & Pepler, 2007; Olweus & Limber, 2010). This belief is reflected in national and international human rights laws, as well as the U.S. Declaration of Independence (Olweus & Limber, 2010). Inherent in this belief is the notion that victims have the right to take steps to prevent further victimization. Researchers have long

encouraged a two-pronged approach to stop violence: (1) seek overall social change and (2) empower victims or potential victims by reducing their vulnerabilities and helping them learn how to avoid and respond to violence (Koss, 1990; Orchowski, Gidycz, & Raffle, 2008).

Self-defense strategies have proven helpful in reducing other forms of violence. A study conducted by Gidycyz et al. (2006), showed many positive benefits for women. Some of these women had been victims of sexual assault before the program was implemented while others had not. Participants reported using avoidant behaviors that they had learned in the course to avoid later victimization. Participants who were later victimized showed less evidence of self-blame and were more likely to report the behavior. Similar studies have shown that women who participate in self-defense programs showed increased feelings of self-efficacy, self-protective behaviors, and were significantly less likely to be victimized in the future (Ball & Martin, 2012; Orchowski, Gidycyz, & Raffle, 2008). These programs were particularly effective when a holistic approach was used, addressing awareness, prevention, escape, and recovery rather than just physical self-defense techniques (Banks, 2010; Orchowski, Gidycyz, & Raffle, 2008). “The goal of self-defense education” says Banks (2010), “is to help students make good choices, recognize potentially dangerous situations, and take action to prevent a physical altercation” (p. 13).

Despite the success of self-defense programs in helping victims avoid and respond to later victimization, educators have primarily focused on those strategies that focus on seeking social change. They have not emphasized bullying prevention efforts that include strategies designed specifically to empower victims and reduce their vulnerabilities. No research has been conducted to specifically evaluate why this is the case, although there is some indication that educators are hesitant to support any initiative that could be viewed as escalating the level of

violence (Reid, Monsen, & Rivers, 2004). Perhaps educators have applied the more narrow definition of self-defense as a combination of physical self-defense techniques, rather than the more broad approach advocated by Banks (2010), including instruction in awareness, prevention, escape, and recovery:

> Self-defense has traditionally been defined as the act of defending one's person when physically attacked, by countering blows in an effort to overcome an assailant. This definition narrows the scope of the instruction to just the psychomotor learning domain. However, holistic physical education instructional units must account for the cognitive and affective learning domains as well. (p. 13)

This study represents an attempt to evaluate the lived experiences of students who participated in a self-defense program as a bullying prevention strategy. An increased understanding of this experience may provide new strategies for victims, families, and schools; may provide new avenues of research; and improve our understanding of the overall picture of bullying in schools.

Chapter III

Design and Methodology

Introduction

Thus far, bullying research has been overwhelmingly quantitative in nature (Mishna, 2004; Vandebosch & Cleemput, 2009). Quantitative research has provided a strong foundation for understanding the prevalence, impact, and overall characteristics of bullying in schools. Quantitative research methods, however, have their limitations. While quantitative research can result in broad, generalizable results, it often lacks the depth and insight that qualitative research can provide (Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The shortage of qualitative research conducted regarding bullying is evident in our current understanding of bullying in schools. Scholars have thoroughly and repeatedly evaluated the more general characteristics of bullying in schools like prevalence, location, and general behavioral tendencies. Their findings, however, generally lack the depth that additional qualitative research can provide.

Scholars have been aware of this need. For quite some time, researchers have been calling for additional qualitative research to improve our understanding of bullying (Bernstein & Watson, 1997; Brown, Birch, & Kancherla, 2005; Mishna, 2004; Vandebosch & Cleemput, 2009). Such research may be able to provide insights that cannot be obtained through surveys and traditional quantitative analysis. Qualitative research is particularly useful in understanding lived experiences and in generating new areas of interest for researchers. As Hancock and Algozzine (2006) point out,

> if little is known about an issue, a qualitative approach might be more useful. Whereas a typical quantitative research project identifies and investigates the impact of only a few

> variables, qualitative research attempts to explore a host of factors that may be influencing a situation. (p. 8)

If we are to truly understand the lived experiences of the various participants involved in bullying, more qualitative research is needed.

Strong qualitative research may help us understand some of the apparent inconsistencies in educational policies and practices. One such inconsistency is the apparent disconnect between family and school responses to bullying. Schools overwhelming encourage reporting and seeking help over individual and family responses to bullying, but parents often feel that school measures are ineffective (Waasdorp, Bradshaw, & Duong, 2011). As confidence is lost in schools' ability to protect their children, parents often turn to outside sources for help. Many such parents encourage their children to fight back or may even choose to enroll their children in self-defense programs that claim to help students stop bullying. The effectiveness of such programs has not been thoroughly evaluated.

There is some indication that victims of violence may benefit from self-defense training. Self-defense programs have been shown to be effective in prevention, response, and recovery when it comes to other forms of violence (Ball and Martin, 2012; Gidycz, Rich, Orchowski, King, & Miller, 2006; Orchowski, Gidycyz, & Raffle, 2008; Hollander, 2014). However, very little research has been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of such programs when it comes to bullying in schools. There is some indication that children who participate in self-defense training experience similar benefits, including lower levels of aggression, higher levels of self-esteem, and other positive social and psychological results (Law, 2004; Theeboom, De Knop, & Vertonghen, 2009; Watson, & Bain, 1992). Watson and Bain (1992) for example, found that "self-protective behavior training was effective overall in modifying the self-protective skills of .

. . children with moderate and severe mental retardation." Theeboom, De Knop, & Vertonghen (2009) state that "involvement in martial arts can be regarded as beneficial in relation to various domains [including] self-regulation, stress reduction, school violence prevention, [and] juvenile delinquency" (p. 21).

Other researchers, however, point to negative physical and psychological effects associated with some martial arts participation. Buse (2006), for example, suggests that adult participation in mixed martial arts has numerous physical side effects including concussions, joint trauma, and brain injury. Pearn (1998) advocates for the banning of boxing for children under 16, stating that "there is no place in contemporary society for a youth sport which has, as its primary goal, the infliction of acute brain damage on an opponent" (p. 311). The findings of these researchers may support educators' hesitancy to encourage self-defense training for students.

Vertonghen and Theeboom (2012) suggest that the positive or negative benefits of martial arts training for children appear to vary depending on the approach and style used by self-defense instructors. "Differences were found among the different martial arts styles. Results revealed that youngsters practising kick/Thai boxing show more physical aggression and behavioural problems than the judoka, aikidoka and karateka involved in this study" (p. 239). Vertonghen and Theeboom (2012) conclude their study by calling for additional research that takes into account additional factors:

> Although further research would be relevant to examine the interrelationships between these and possible other contextual factors, this study indicated that in order to formulate statements regarding outcomes of martial arts practice by young participants, the

> structural qualities of martial arts, type of guidance, participants' characteristics, and social context have to be taken into consideration. (p. 240)

These findings strongly suggest that not all self-defense training is the same. In order to understand the potential outcomes of such training for young students, it is necessary to take differences of style into account. Different programs may vary dramatically in approach as well as results.

The purpose of this study was to understand the experience of school-age children who participate in the Gracie Bullyproof program, a children's self-defense program designed specifically to prevent bullying. In order to do this, lived experiences were explored and analyzed. Qualitative research methods provide the great potential for conducting this kind of analysis. Qualitative research methods are most appropriate when examining phenomena and exploring the lived experiences of participants, especially when trying to reconstruct those experiences from the point of view of the participant (Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Qualitative research includes a broad range of research methods, each having their own advantages and limitations. It is important to choose a method of research that will provide significant insight and sufficient depth to be able to increase our understanding of the subject matter, one that is appropriate to the purpose and research questions of the study. In this case, our purpose is to better understand individual experiences of participants who enroll in the Gracie Bullyproof program. Qualitative case studies allow researchers to evaluate phenomena through in-depth examination of people, events, and programs, within their natural context and are particularly useful for evaluating the impact of training programs on participants (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006).

Research Design

A case study is a research approach in which researchers use multiple sources of information to conduct in-depth analysis of a specific "case" or bounded system (Creswell, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Yin, 2014). A case may include one or more events, programs, locations, groups, or other research focuses of study that a researcher chooses to separate out based on its unique time, place, or other characteristics (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2013). Case studies are the most complex qualitative research strategy, largely because of their reliance on multiple sources of data (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Yin, 2013). Researchers may use documents, direct observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, and any number of sources in their analysis (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2014). Case studies are labor-intensive, but the benefits of this strategy often make them well worth the effort.

The primary advantage of case study research is depth. By limiting the scope of inquiry, the researcher is able to delve more deeply into the case, when a broader study might be more shallow because of limited time and resources (Creswell, 2007; Yin, 2013). Case studies are somewhat narrow, but also quite thorough. As a result, case studies may dramatically improve our understanding of a particular situation, even if they are less likely to generate broad, generalizable results.

Case study research is particularly useful for helping researchers explore and understand social phenomena (Yin, 2013). It is also very useful in opening the door to previously unexamined areas of research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The depth allowed by case study research can provide a powerful first look into new research areas and provide strong suggestions for further inquiry. Case study research is also one of the most effective ways to evaluate the

lived experiences of groups and organizations, making a case study analysis particularly appropriate for this study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Not all case study research is the same. Case studies include a broad range of research methods that can be classified based largely on their scope and objectives (Creswell, 2007, 2012; Yin, 2013). Stake (1995) breaks case study research into intrinsic, instrumental, and collective categories based primarily on the objectives of the researcher. In intrinsic case studies, researchers generally choose a case for analysis based on some unique characteristics of the case itself (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006**)**. The main goal of intrinsic studies is to gain a better understanding of the case. Results are often more descriptive than comparative. Conclusions from intrinsic cases are rarely generalizable. Instrumental case studies use the case as an instrument to illuminate a larger issue (Creswell, 2012). While the case may present a unique situation, this uniqueness lies in its potential to help researchers better understand other cases or the world at large. Instrumental case study research is often used to improve our understanding of a problem or a larger theoretical dilemma (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). In collective case studies, researchers typically examine multiple cases and focus on making comparisons between them (Creswell, 2012). Much like instrumental case studies, collective case studies are used primarily to provide insights into larger issues, but the emphasis is on comparison rather than description.

Yin (2013) separates case study research into three categories in a similar but noteworthy way. In an exploratory case study, the primary purpose of the study is to lay a foundation for later research. The researcher looks for patterns in data and begins to build a conceptual framework from which later research can be conducted. The researcher seeks to identify or refine research questions, develop procedures, and identify a theoretical model for later research. This

later research may or may not be case study research. Exploratory case studies can be very helpful in laying a strong foundation for other research methodologies as well.

Descriptive case studies are designed to explore a particular phenomenon or issue related to the case (Yin, 2013). In order to do this effectively, a theoretical framework is necessary in order to guide data collection and interpretation. While exploratory research is intended to help researchers develop research questions, descriptive case studies are designed to answer them. Specifically, descriptive studies help researchers answer *what* and *how* questions such as, "What are the effects of bullying on middle school students?" or "How do respondents portray their past experiences?"

Explanatory case studies take research a step further by focusing largely on *why* something occurs in addition to *what* and *how* (Yin, 2013). As the name implies, their primary purpose is to explain. Rather than focusing on the examination and description of a phenomenon, explanatory studies seek to explore the causes behind it. Explanatory studies are particularly useful for evaluating causal relationships and building on previous exploratory and descriptive research.

Stake's (1995) and Yin's (2013) classifications of case study research are both important in designing an effective study. While their classifications share many similarities, differences between the two are also important. Stake (1995) classifies studies based primarily on the intended use of the case by the researcher. This makes his distinctions particularly useful in the earlier stages of research. Understanding the difference between an intrinsic, instrumental, or collective case study can aid the researcher in the selection of the case for analysis and development of the initial conceptual framework. Yin (2013), on the other hand, bases his classifications primarily on the end goals of the researcher and the order of events involved in

conducting research. As such, recognizing the difference between exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory studies can serve as a procedural and theoretical guide throughout the research process.

It is important to recognize that the boundaries between these research classifications, and between the individual categories, are by no means absolute. They are most useful when treated as overlapping continuums. A study may be primarily instrumental, but the case may have strong inherent value as well. That same study may be explanatory in nature, but will almost certainly have some descriptive and exploratory characteristics. That being said, the overall direction and nature of a study will usually make it possible to classify it as generally intrinsic, instrumental, or collective *and* exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory.

As previously stated, the purpose of this study was to understand the experience of school age children who participated in the Gracie Bullyproof program. In other words, it was primarily a descriptive case study. The social-ecological model provided the theoretical framework that shaped data collection and analysis. While the generalizability of results from case studies is always tenuous, it was important to choose a case that had intrinsic value but also allowed for some generalization. The case selected was selected for both intrinsic and instrumental reasons. The program selected for analysis had enough similarities with other programs to allow for the possibility of some generalization of results but also had sufficient uniqueness to provide insight and allow for some comparisons to be made as well.

The Gracie Bullyproof case. Case study researchers typically select a program or system for analysis based on some unique characteristics or research potential that make the case stand out from others (Yin, 2014). The Gracie Bullyproof program is a children's self-defense course designed especially for children ages 5–13 (Gracie BullyProof, 2014). The Gracie

Bullyproof program has received widespread attention from media in the United States, including being featured on ABC, CNN, NBC, and Oprah. Much of this attention has come from the fact that program founders Rener Gracie and Ryron Gracie market the program as a "non-violent" self-defense system for kids (Gracie Bullyproof, 2014). The program is noteworthy in that it takes a holistic approach to bullying prevention and also appears to align well with previous bullying research that shows that effective programs must involve behavioral training designed to help students develop social and interpersonal relationship skills (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010). Bullying prevention programs must also help students make good choices, avoid dangerous situations, and teach them how to respond when they are physically attacked (Banks, 2010). Gracie Bullyproof program directors claim to fulfill these requirements. Victims are taught how to respond to verbal and physical aggression, and if they are physically attacked, emphasis is placed on "non-violent self-defense techniques" ("Bullyproofing the world, one child at a time," n.d.). In addition to training for victims, the program website also emphasizes the importance of reeducating bullies, training parents, and making schools more victim-safe.

At first glance, the Gracie Bullyproof program appears to address numerous aspects and multiple players involved in the bullying experience. As discussed earlier, educators and researchers have been especially hesitant to deal with self-defense programs out of concern that such training may actually escalate the level of violence in schools. The non-violent nature of the program makes it especially appealing. In addition, Gracie Bullyproof conducts an annual camp that draws participants from across the United States and many other nations, providing a unique opportunity to conduct such a study.

Family: The primary unit of analysis. Before beginning data collection, it is necessary for researchers to decide from whom data will be collected. Researchers may decide to collect data from students, teachers, parents, or any number of other options. They may also decide to use combinations of different kinds of participants. The level at which data is collected constitutes the primary unit of analysis (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2013). Based on the literature review and the emphasis that previous researchers have placed on students and school personnel as the focus of their research, the family was chosen as the primary unit of analysis for this study. The social-ecological model, and additional research, suggests that family relationships can be the most influential in a bully or victim's life, and yet the family domain may be the least understood of the domains in the SEM framework (Perry, Hodges, & Egan, 2001; Richard, Schneider, & Mallet, 2012; Vernberg & Jacobs, 1999).

It is important to note that choosing the family domain as the primary unit of analysis does not mean that results and conclusions will be limited to this domain. As previously explained, relationships within the SEM are reciprocal. Any adjustment in one domain can have a ripple effect that extends across the other domains (Bronfenbrenner, 1977; Espelage & Swearer, 2004). The same is true of research. The individual— in this case the child— functions as a member of the family. The family also functions as a part of the overall school, community, and culture system. Choosing the family does not limit the exploration of other domains. Instead, the other domains are explored primarily from the perspective of the family. The family perspective may be the most neglected of the SEM domains when it comes to bullying, and perhaps education in general, making it an important area of inquiry.

Procedure

Based on its stated purpose, this study was descriptive in nature. However, since almost no research had been done that has dealt with self-defense training as a bullying prevention method, it was necessary to conduct exploratory research as well. The result was two distinct but overlapping phases. In phase one, data was collected through text and media analysis as well as direct observation. While this study was a descriptive case study, phase one was mainly exploratory. The purpose of this phase was to gain sufficient information about the program to be able to shape later research and refine both procedures and research questions. At the same time, data collected during this phase aided the researcher in the second descriptive phase of the study. In phase two, in-depth interviews were conducted, followed by an electronic questionnaire. This phase built on the first and served as the bridge from the exploratory to the descriptive.

As is appropriate for a case study, great emphasis was placed on the inclusion of multiple viewpoints and multiple methods of data collection. While the two phases began at different times, phase one did not conclude with the commencement of phase two. The result was an overlap that allowed the researcher to return to earlier methods of data collection in order to explore themes that had become apparent in the second phase. This overlap allowed the researcher to stay true to the iterative nature of case study research. Thus, data collection methods used during the exploratory phase were also used to aid in the descriptive phase of the study.

Reflexivity and the Role of the Researcher

According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), a qualitative research design “should include reflection on one’s identity and one’s sense of voice and perspectives, assumptions, and sensitivities” (p. 96). It is important for researchers to “position themselves within their report

and identify their standpoint or point of view" (Creswell, 2012, p. 474). Rather than removing themselves from research, qualitative researchers acknowledge and continually reflect on their own identity as well as the impact they have on the study. Ravitch and Riggan (2012) refer to this process as "*reflexive engagement*—thinking iteratively about the connections between our own interests and values, what we are learning in the field and from our data, and what that tells us about the topic or phenomenon we are trying to understand" (p. 143).

This process of reflexive engagement can reasonably be broken into two main efforts: an acknowledgement of researcher background, values, and experiences, and the employment of strategies designed to minimize bias (Greenbank, 2003; Ravitch & Riggan, 2012). Engaging in this process does not remove all bias from a study, but it can help the researcher and others account for it (Greenbank, 2003).

The researcher's credibility. My interest in bullying might be described as the result of a history of victimization and a search for answers. Throughout junior high and well into high school, I experienced verbal and physical bullying on a regular basis. As I reflect back on that experience, I would consider that bullying quite severe. At the time, I don't think I realized how serious it was. I assumed that victimization, and the negative effects associated with it, were because something was wrong with me. I believed that the depression, social isolation, and anxiety would go away if I could only find the right thing to change in my life.

As a young teenager, I was continually trying to find a way to make it all stop. I tried changing my appearance, fighting back, refusing to fight back, and appealing to others for help. None of these seemed to make a difference. I had been training in martial arts since I was eight years old. As the bullying intensified, I poured myself into that training. I hoped that just like in

the movies, if I won enough trophies or beat up enough bullies at school, I could finally put a stop to the bullying. None of these things worked; most made the situation worse.

During my junior year, I found that sticking up for others who were being picked on was therapeutic. While it sometimes meant getting into more trouble, at least it had some rewards. “If I’m going to get beat up, it might as well be for someone else,” I thought. I found comfort in being part of a cause. Bullying eased somewhat during high school but never really went away. The effects from those experiences continued for many years.

After high school, my career choices and interests centered on helping others avoid victimization. I began teaching martial arts. I became a school teacher, principal, and superintendent. I chose to make bullying research a large part of my education. As a martial arts instructor, educator, and researcher, I continued to search for answers that might help me understand what I had experienced and how to help others avoid victimization.

As is the case with all researchers, my past experiences have shaped my values and passions. They have influenced my interests and provided me with unique skills as well as individual biases. As I began this process as a qualitative researcher, it became important for me to minimize bias while maximizing the advantages that came from past experiences and personal background. An important part of doing this was to acknowledge both strengths and liabilities.

I entered this study with a background as an educator, a martial arts instructor, a parent, and a previous victim of bullying. This background provided me with skills that were essential to the study. My experience with martial arts was particularly noteworthy. The style of martial arts I trained in as a youth was primarily a striking art. Most techniques focused on punching or kicking. While kicking and punching bags was a lot of fun, I found it very difficult to punch or kick another person in a self-defense situation. As a result, rather than preventing victimization,

my training in martial arts often contributed to further bullying. Despite this, I was convinced that if I could improve my skills enough it would still help, and the physical activity was a great outlet, so I continued to train.

Years later, I began training in jiu-jitsu. As an adult, the nonviolent approach appealed to me. As I learned more about the art, I found myself wishing I had been given nonviolent options when I was a child. I wondered if such options might have given me the ability to help myself without resorting to violence. This spurred my interest in conducting research into nonviolent self-defense training for children. After over 30 years of training, my understanding of martial arts provided me with increased access to these programs. Understanding the jargon and traditions also facilitated dialogue. My grasp of the details of jiu-jitsu techniques allowed me to evaluate techniques being taught at a depth that might be difficult for untrained researchers to do. I also hold a masters degree in anthropology with an emphasis in the biomechanical analysis of combat styles. This further contributed to my ability and desire to analyze both culture and body movement.

My experiences as an educator and parent were also advantageous. Having conversations with young people and parents is something I do everyday. My experience as an educator helped me design questions that were clear to children as well as their parents. I found that opening a dialogue with families was made significantly easier because of my experience in the classroom and in the administrator's office.

At the same time, accounting for bias was a constant effort. My positive experiences with jiu-jitsu could contribute to "pro-jiu-jitsu" bias. My past experiences with bullying made it easy for me to empathize with victims or have little tolerance for aggression. At times, I found myself experiencing memories and emotions of my own as children and parents shared their stories.

Throughout the process, it was necessary to continually reflect on my own role as the researcher and work to establish appropriate boundaries and approaches. I chose to follow the advice of Hancock and Algozzine (2006) who recommended that researchers compose an "articulation of personal biases brought to the situation and how he or she attempted to mitigate the potential effects of those biases" (p. 66). This resulted in three artifacts: a personal reflection, a guide to dealing with bias in the interview process, and the interview protocol. I kept these nearby throughout the interview and coding process and reviewed them often. Interview questions were revised, peer reviewed, and re-revised to allow participants to speak for themselves and further minimize researcher bias.

Accounting for bias. Scholars have long debated how to best deal with research bias, or whether it can be dealt with at all, but qualitative researchers have been relatively consistent, arguing for unbiased sampling methods, triangulation, a strong theoretical framework, and member checking (Berg & Lune, 2012, Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Greenbank, 2003; Lather, 1986; Walsh, 1999). I identify with Greenbank (2003) who says:

> whilst I accept that value-neutrality is an unrealizable ideal, I nevertheless have sympathy with the notion of at least attempting to be value-neutral by trying to bracket values, by adopting a grounded approach, using rigorous methods, such as triangulation and feeding back results to research participants. (p. 798)

This statement, and similar statements from researchers previously discussed, largely guided the pursuit of trustworthiness and validity in this study. The use of these three strategies: recognizing and bracketing values, adopting a strong theoretical framework to guide data collection and analysis, and the use of triangulation and member checking to preserve validity, allowed me to continually evaluate and reevaluate my own role in the research. Based on the

recommendations of Ravitch and Riggan (2012) and Marshall and Rossman (2011), this effort began with the composition of a personal reflection conducted before the study began. This continued throughout the study with the inclusion of reflective note-taking and journal entries and concluded with a final reflexive engagement summary written at the end of the research process. These notes and reflections allowed me to continually recognize and account for personal values and biases, as well as take advantage of personal strengths.

The social-ecological model provided the theoretical framework that guided data collection and analysis in this study. Ravitch and Riggan (2012) recommend composing a concept map that visually illustrates the "various components of your conceptual framework as a means to clarifying connections between the various conceptual, contextual, and theoretical influences on a research study" (p. 151). Maxwell (2005) recommends that these concept maps include two things: concepts and relationships. The visual diagram of the SEM, adopted for this study and included in Figure 3, allowed me to continually and reflexively engage the theoretical model. It also served as a constant reminder to allow the theory, rather than passions, to guide data collection and analysis.

Triangulation and member checking were also utilized to account for bias in the study. Triangulation is "the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals . . . types of data . . . or methods of data collection" (Creswell, 2012, p. 259). This study employed all three strategies. As previously discussed, multiple data collection methods were used, including document and media analysis, direct observation, participant interviews, and electronic questionnaires. Member checking was also used. All interview participants were provided with initial results and asked for feedback. Their feedback resulted in some revisions and adaptations, particularly to the composition of portraits.

The employment of these three main strategies: bracketing values, relying on a strong theoretical framework for data collection and analysis, and strengthening validity through triangulation and member checking, helped me account for the human side of qualitative research.

Exploratory Phase: Document and Media Analysis, and Direct Observation.

In order to conduct a descriptive case study effectively, it is important that the researcher has a certain amount of knowledge about the topic and the case. Such background information helps the researcher shape data collection and analysis throughout the study (Yin, 2014). Ordinarily, the literature review can provide such a foundation (Cooper, 1984; Yin, 2014). However, because self-defense as a bullying prevention strategy is a relatively unexplored area of research, it was necessary to gain additional information to serve as a foundation for the rest of the study. To that end, this case study began with an exploratory phase consisting of document and media analysis and direct observation. The primary purpose of this phase was to gain an understanding of the program, its curriculum, and its claims. It was also important to evaluate how well the program aligned with those claims, with current research, and to better understand what aspects of the program differentiated it from others. This stage of the study not only provided essential information to be used in later analysis, but also served as a guide for later stages of research. Information that was collected during this stage helped shape the later observational and interview approaches.

Data collected for document and media analysis included marketing and instructional materials produced by Gracie program directors and media reports produced by outside news organizations. These sources included printed materials, electronic documents, and video. The approach to data collection at this stage was relatively simple. The researcher read or viewed

every readily available document or video produced about the Gracie Bullyproof program. Some of these sources were produced by Gracie Bullyproof while others were produced by outside organizations. A detailed list of data sources collected in this stage is available in Appendix A. A few of these sources are sufficiently noteworthy to merit some discussion here.

Figure 5 includes an initial summary and analysis of the Gracie Bullyproof curriculum. The Gracie Bullyproof program includes a multimedia component that allows parents and students to participate in the program from almost anywhere in the world through DVD or online

Figure 5

Researcher Summary of the Gracie Bullyproof Program

Multi-Media Instruction

Unit Title	Overview
1) Parent Preparation Course	Provides parents with an overview of the curriculum, program philosophy, safety procedures, teaching methods, and dietary advice.
2-3) Gracie Games 1-10	Includes ten "Gracie Games" including how to take someone down, avoid being taken down, hold someone down when you are on their chest, back or side, escape when someone else holds you down, and remain safe when you are on your back.
4) Rules of Engagement	Includes a discussion on school policies followed by the "Three Ts" that explain what to do when verbally bullied. The "5 Rules of Engagement" are taught. These explain when to fight and when and how it is okay to use physical self-defense and what to do if your child breaks those rules.
5-9) Jr. Combatives 1-33	Designed for more advanced students, the "Combatives" teach individual self-defense moves that build off of the previous "Gracie Games." These include takedowns, pins and control holds, escapes, transitions, and submission holds.
10) Belt Testing Process	This unit teaches parents how to evaluate their children's progress and award them "stripes" which are put on their belt. After earning four stripes, children can upload a video to the Gracie Academy website and test for a belt promotion.
11) KidSAFE	This volume focuses on dangers posed by adults including kidnapping, abuse, internet and drug safety.
Jiu-Jitsu Journal	A small journal is included in the DVD package that allows students and parents to track their progress toward earning belts, takes notes, etc.

Source: Gracie, R., (Producer). (2009). *Gracie Bullyproof: Prepare your child for life* [DVD]. Torrance: The Gracie Academy.

media. This multi-media package is a relatively comprehensive assembly of the Gracie Bullyproof curriculum. This component made it possible to review the program, in its entirety, very early in the research process.

Parents or other individuals who wish to purchase the program may do so by ordering the 11-volume DVD set or paying for access to the online instructional videos. The DVD and online content are virtually identical and include instruction for parents, instruction for children, and self-defense instruction including physical and verbal strategies. A recent addition to the DVDs also includes a "Gracie KidSAFE" DVD that discusses drug use, kidnapping, internet safety, and other issues.

Gracie Bullyproof program directors also utilize two websites to promote the program and deliver content. The Gracie Academy website is designed primarily to promote all aspects of the Gracie Jiu-Jitsu program including instruction for men, women, and children. The Gracie Kids website, however, is designed specifically around the Gracie Bullyproof program. Both websites provide a lot of information and routinely refer to the other site and the DVDs.

Document and media data collection and analysis. Documents and media were evaluated using the social-ecological model as a framework for analysis. The purpose of this stage was to provide an initial insight into the program and to shape later research based on the SEM. The sheer volume of data collected at this stage made a selective coding approach most appropriate. First, themes were identified. Then each document and video was reviewed and important "chunks" of data were transcribed and coded using spreadsheet software. Important statements or phrases were copied verbatim and placed in their respective column. General observations were also documented and placed in the appropriate column. For analysis, each chunk was color-coded based on the type of media the data were taken from. The completed

chart of statements and quotes provided a strong initial foundation to direct later observational approaches and interview questions. With that purpose in mind, 11 themes were identified for data coding based on the information needed to shape phase two of the study and based on the SEM. These themes are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Phase 1 - Data Coding Themes

Overall purposes and objectives of the program
Philosophy
Approach
Claims
Individual – relational preparation
Individual – verbal preparation
Individual – physical preparation
Family
School
Community
Culture

Direct observation. During the summer of 2014, the principal researcher traveled to Torrance, California, to continue phase one and begin phase two of the study during a one-week, bullying prevention training camp held at the Gracie Academy. From beginning to end, the researcher observed the bully prevention camp as it was carried out. He attended all sessions of the camp and functioned as a non-participant observer.

The purpose of the observation portion of phase one was to continue to build a foundation for later research by (1) verifying previous findings and gaining a better understanding of the program by observing instruction as it actually occurred (2) searching for additional insights not apparent in document and audiovisual media analysis, and (3) strengthening the validity of the study through triangulation. According to Creswell (2012), triangulation is “the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals (e.g., a principal and a student), types of data (e.g., observational fieldnotes and interviews), or methods

of data collection (e.g., documents and interviews)" (p. 259). The use of various types of data and multiple methods of data collection are particularly important in case study research and help the researcher corroborate findings (Creswell, 2012; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Yin, 2014).

Because the purposes of this phase of research were primarily exploratory, the researcher used what Marshall and Rossman (2011) describe as an informal-observational approach. The approach was relatively unstructured as there were no "predetermined categories or strict observational checklists" (Marshall and Rossman, 2011, p. 139). Instead, the researcher used the open frame Observation Protocol found in Appendix B to document observations and personal reflections while keeping in mind the purpose previously discussed. Field notes were taken as observations were made without following timed patterns or specific guidelines. This "open-ended entry" approach allowed the researcher to more easily "discover recurring patterns of behaviors and relationships" as well as take note of unique situations and insights (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 139).

The Gracie Academy mat space includes a spectator area that is very close to, but separate from, the training area. Parents and other guests are allowed to view class from that area. Typically, 30-50 spectators were present throughout the Gracie Bullyproof camp, making observation minimally intrusive. The researcher moved freely within the spectator area, but did not enter the training area during classes. Observations began each day before the class began and concluded each day after the class ended.

Direct observation data analysis. Context plays an important role in direct observation. Individual field notes, while important, can lose some of their value if they are removed from their context. With that in mind, it was decided that field notes should be coded without removing them from their context. Observations resulted in 31 pages of field notes taken in

slightly over 15 hours of program instruction. Data was analyzed by highlighting and color-coding observations and reflections as they became important to the study.

Phase one overview. Phase one helped set the foundation for fulfilling the central purpose of this study. Document and audiovisual analysis provided an initial glimpse into the program and a foundation from which later research could be developed. Direct observations included observations of program instructors, student participants, and their parents involved in the Gracie Bullyproof camp. These observations provided additional information and also aided in the selection of some participants for phase two of the study. The direct observation portion of the study added to the exploratory analysis started earlier but also functioned as the transition into the descriptive portion of the study. The themes identified during the document and media analysis served as a guide for direct observation, while new emerging themes were also documented.

Descriptive Phase: Participant Interviews and Questionnaires

Based on the principles of the Social Ecological Model and the case study method, this phase utilized a small group interview format and follow-up questionnaires. Children and their parents were interviewed together, allowing study participants to converse not only with the researcher, but with other family members as well. Participants often provided insight into each other's statements and completed each other's statements. This format not only provided a unique look at the inner two SEM domains but at interaction between the two domains as well as joint perspectives about outer domains.

Participant selection. As Creswell (2012) states, "In qualitative inquiry, the intent is not to generalize to a population, but to develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon. Thus, to best understand this phenomenon, the qualitative researcher purposefully or

intentionally selects individuals and sites" (p. 206). The use of "purposeful sampling" is essential to the qualitative process. The goal is not necessarily to select the most representative individuals, but to select "information rich" participants (Patton, 1990, p. 169). Table 2 provides a breakdown of family group composition.

Table 2

Family Group Composition

Interview	Participants	Demographics	Hometown	Notes
Day 2	Lee Candace Samuel Renee	Boy age 12 Girl age 9 Father Mother	Minnesota, U.S.	Recommended by program instructors
Day 3	Kimberly Joseph Alan	Girl age 9 Boy age 9 Father	Washington, U.S.	Recommended by program instructors Twins
Day 3	Gavin Ellen Troy	Boy age 11 Mother Father	Ontario, Canada	Volunteered for participation Diagnosed with Asperger's Featured in an audition video
Day 4	Danny Thomas	Boy age 6 Father	California, U.S.	Volunteered for participation
Day 4	Shawn Edward	Boy age 7 Father	Texas, U.S.	Volunteered for participation
Day 5	Elaine Michael Lewis Dorothy	Girl age 10 Boy age 8 Father Mother	British Columbia, Canada	Invited to participate by researcher

Note. All names were changed to protect the anonymity of participants.

In this study, the use of purposeful sampling meant that participants were not selected based on their ability to be the most representative or most engaged program trainees, but rather to include a broad range of viewpoints as well as a reasonable cross section of the approximately 100 Gracie Bullyproof participants. They were selected based largely on their ability to add to

the overall picture. This is what Creswell (2012) refers to as “maximal variation sampling” or “a purposeful sampling strategy in which the researcher samples cases or individuals that differ on some characteristic or trait” (p. 208). The traits used in participant selection are included in the Participant Selection Criteria are included as Appendix C and includes candidate age, gender, origin, level of engagement in learning, instructor recommendation, skill level or proficiency, and parent/guardian availability.

Six family groups, including nine program trainees and nine parents were selected for participation in the interview phase of the study. Group interviews began on day two of the Gracie Bullyproof camp. Family groups ranged from four participants (two parents and two children) to two participants (one child and one parent). Child participants ranged in age from 6–12 years old and included six boys and three girls.

By design, participant selection changed over the course of the study. Different emphasis was given to different categories as the study progressed. Early participants were selected largely to provide a “mainstream” view of the program. Later participants were selected largely on their ability to provide unique viewpoints and additional information. For example, some participants were chosen in part because of their high level of engagement in the program, while others were selected partly because of their hesitance to participate in some activities.

The first two family groups were selected with help from program directors. Program founder Rener Gracie was asked what families might be able to provide helpful information about the program. Mr. Gracie introduced the researcher to two families with previous experience in the program. Both families agreed to participate.

At the researcher’s request, at the beginning of day three, Rener Gracie introduced the researcher to all participants and parents who were present. He briefly described the nature of the

study and asked them to contact the researcher if they would be willing to participate. Seven additional family groups volunteered for participation. From that list, three families were chosen for participation based on observations made by the researcher, information provided by program instructors, level of engagement in the program, and demographic information. The final family chosen for participation was approached by the researcher and asked to participate based on observations made during instruction. This family agreed to participate and was interviewed on day five. Since participants were interviewed with their parents, parent availability was always a factor, and the researcher accommodated parent schedules.

Interview procedure. Refining interview procedures and approach was a continual process that stayed true to the iterative nature of case studies and qualitative research. This process began with a field test of an open-interview with a parent about his own bullying experiences. This field test resulted in the construction of the initial interview protocol and the decision to include multiple participants, including children, in the interview process. This initial interview protocol was again field tested with a mother and son who trained at my martial arts academy and then reviewed by peers and advisors. This feedback from these individuals resulted in additional revisions. Questions were simplified to make them more appropriate for children and adults, and the interview was shortened significantly to allow for more open-ended discussion.

The interview protocol was purposely designed to be flexible and open. It was a semi-structured interview format. This was done with the knowledge that the first phase of research would likely influence the interview process. In addition, it was important to give participants broad leeway to share their experiences and control much of the direction of the interviews.

Once a trainee was selected for participation, the researcher was introduced to the student(s) and their parent(s). The researcher explained the purposes behind the study and invited the family group to participate. If the participants agreed to participate, they were taken to a private location at the same location for interviewing. Program directors provided the researcher with a private office to conduct interviews in.

Interviews followed semi-structured, phenomenological interview approach as described by Marshall and Rossman (2011), and outlined in Appendix D. The purpose of such interviews is to "describe the meaning of a concept or phenomenon that several individuals share" (p. 148). As students and their parents were interviewed together, much of the strength of this phase came from allowing the student and their parents to add to the responses and conversations of the others. Interaction between participants was as essential to the study as the responses themselves. Audio of the interviews was recorded, and notes were taken.

It is important to note that like individuals, families often have their own "voice." Some family members may be more outspoken, while others are more reserved. At times, parents took the lead in the interviews, while during others, the children did. It was important throughout the interview process to allow the family to speak in their own voice, while still working to include various viewpoints.

As a follow-up to the interview process, parent-participants were sent an electronic questionnaire approximately two months after the completion of the initial interview. This brief email asked them to share a little information about their child's school experiences in the months following the Gracie Bullyproof camp as well as the overall impact the camp has had on their child. This questionnaire is included as Appendix E. All families responded to the follow-up questionnaire.

Member checking was used to strengthen the validity of study findings and conclusions. After data was analyzed, participants were contacted via email and sent an overview of analysis related to their participation. They were asked if the analysis was an accurate representation of their thoughts and invited to make suggestions or request any modifications. The text of this email is included as Appendix F.

Analysis. Qualitative data analysis, particularly in case study research, is an iterative process (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Hancock & Algozzine, 2006; Yin, 2013). The case study researcher's ability to continuously evaluate data even while that data are being collected is what gives case study research its strength. Not only is the data collection and analysis cycle possible, it is essential. In this study, each phase built upon the data collection and analysis of previous phases.

A case study database was maintained as encouraged by Yin (2013). This database included all data collected and reflections made during the course of the study. The database is typically too big to include in the final report, but is important to maintain throughout the study as well as afterward. From the database, a researcher can code and then summarize materials until they are manageable enough to include in the final study.

Data collected in phase one included document and media information produced by and about the Gracie Bullyproof program as well as direct observations of the program. The primary purpose of this phase of the study was to examine what and how the Gracie Bullyproof program teaches, so themes were chosen with that guiding objective in mind. Different data collection methods required different analysis techniques. These data-appropriate analysis methods for phase one have been discussed previously.

Initial analysis of data from phase one laid the foundation for data collection in phase two. Interviews were analyzed with the primary purpose of phase two in mind: to reconstruct participants' lived experiences during the Gracie Bullyproof program. The objective of these interviews was to identify participant perspectives regarding the research questions already discussed. This phase was the culminating and descriptive portion of the study. While earlier analysis did help inform this phase of the study, interview responses were coded separately from the data of the previous phases. All interviews were recorded and transcribed. Responses were then color-coded based on which respondent spoke. For example, mothers were given one color, while sons were given another. All interviews were scanned for more obvious, recurring themes. Unique or remarkable responses were also identified. All transcription text was then "chunked" and categorized. Emerging themes were added throughout the process.

At the conclusion of this coding process, 21 themes had been identified for coding based on participant responses. These included demographics, personal characteristics, previous methods attempted, past victimization, fear/apprehension, physiological effects, administration concerns, teacher concerns, policy/philosophy concerns, school situation, society/culture concerns, preemption, social/fun, outside responses to Gracie Bullyproof, previous experience with Gracie Bullyproof, using Gracie Bullyproof techniques, overall impact, plan from here, effects of bullying, society, miscellaneous, and family philosophy. The volume of interview data was sufficient to necessitate a second coding. In this second stage, themes were refined and important chunks were separated from the bulk of coded transcriptions. The refining of themes was based on the SEM framework. Themes were grouped into categories that reflected family and individual perspectives on all five SEM domains. The categories and themes used in this

final stage of coding are summarized in Table 3. This second coding resulted in refined tables that included chunks deemed particularly relevant to the study. These resulting tables are included as Appendices G-L.

Table 3

Group Interview Coding Categories and Themes

Factors	Bullying	Gracie Bullyproof
Family	Effects of bullying on the individual	Reasons for participation
Individual	Effects of Bullying on the family	Program experience
School	Previous attempts to stop bullying	Use of Bullyproof techniques
Community/Culture	Insights	Program results

Data from participant updates, given approximately two months after the Gracie Bullyproof camp was conducted, was coded separately from previous data. While these updates included some similar themes, the reflective nature of these updates made a separate coding beneficial. Each update was highlighted and chunks were extracted based on the unique nature of each update.

All coding was conducted using Microsoft Excel. This allowed for the manipulation of rows and columns in order to compare categorized data from the same interview or multiple interviews. Color-coding also allowed for a visual analysis of how much specific family members spoke about certain themes as well as throughout the whole interview. Examples of coded data will be provided later on.

Security of data. Data security is important for both the protection of participants and archiving of research data. Throughout the research process, a two-part research database was constructed. Print data, including observation notes, researcher reflections, notes taken during interviews, and all other written records were kept in a file folder that remained with the

researcher or in a secure and locked location. Electronic data, including interview recordings, coded interview transcripts, and electronic questionnaire responses, were encrypted on a secure computer and password protected. In addition, participant identities were protected by assigning computer-generated aliases. These aliases were associated with the identities of participants by serial number. The key to this association was also encrypted and protected on a secure computer. Only the researcher, with access to both the print and the electronic archives, could match the two together. In compliance with the Federalwide Assurance Code, data from this study will be kept for three years, after which all data from the study will be destroyed (45 CFR 46.117).

Limitations

Choosing a research methodology always involves trade-offs between strengths and limitations (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002). Case studies are no exception. Results taken from qualitative studies, and case studies in particular, are not strictly generalizable. They may, however, be transferrable (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). It is always a challenge to determine how well the results of a case study can be applied to other settings. The Gracie Bullyproof program is sufficiently unique as to make this study primarily an intrinsic case study. therefore, it may be difficult to extend generalizations taken from this study to other self-defense programs. However, the insights gained into the participants themselves may be quite transferrable.

In addition to the general limitations of case study research, each study has unique limitations of its own. Such is the case with this study. The use of “family interviews” meant sacrificing a certain level of intimacy in the interview process. This had the potential to cause individual respondents to hold back information that they may have otherwise shared in a more

intimate setting. The trade-off to this limitation was the benefit of family interactive responses that often provided insights into family and other dynamics that might not have otherwise been apparent.

Individuals who take classes of any kind, and particularly those who take self-defense classes, may feel strong loyalty toward their teacher and may feel the need to express that loyalty by demonstrating the success of the program. It was necessary, throughout the course of this study, to ask for specific details and anecdotes to validate the effects provided by respondents.

It should also be acknowledged that participants in the Gracie Bullyproof program had sought out and chosen to enroll in the program, which suggests a certain level of optimism and hope that the program will have a positive effect. Most have invested both money and time in order to participate in the program. Some of this optimism may result in a "placebo effect." However, since well-being and self-efficacy are part of the goal of bullying prevention, the placebo effect may be a positive outcome in and of itself.

As in all qualitative research, it is important to acknowledge potential biases on the part of the researcher. The primary researcher has previous experience as a student, victim of bullying, parent, educator, administrator, and self-defense instructor. This past experience could result in additional insight and research skills, as well as bias. Several steps were taken in order to mitigate researcher bias and preserve the validity of this study. Member checking was very important in this process. As is often the case with case studies, family interview and electronic questionnaire results were presented in narrative form. These narratives were provided to study participants for additional feedback or rebuttal. Triangulation was also essential to the validity of this study. Data was collected from various sources, with correlation and disconfirming evidence in mind.

Because of the sensitive nature of bullying and victimization, and the age of minor participants, anonymity was an essential part of this study. As results were reported, identifying information was protected and names were changed to protect the identity of all participants.

Chapter IV

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand the experience of six families with school age children who participated in a self-defense program designed to prevent bullying. Several research questions shaped this study as it progressed. Why do families participate in the Gracie Bullyproof program? How do students and their parents perceive their experience in the program? How do students and their parents perceive the impact of the program on their ability to prevent or respond to bullying?

The social-ecological model (SEM) served as a framework for both data collection and analysis in all phases of the study. Following Bronfenbrenner's (1976) advice, research was not restricted to the laboratory but primarily took place in real-life settings. Further, research strategies were aimed at understanding relationships between the individual and their surrounding domains as well as the relationships between those domains themselves. While all SEM domains were taken into account, this study focused primarily on the family as the primary unit of analysis. Data and analysis regarding the other domains came primarily from family groups and therefore from the family perspective.

Data was collected in two overlapping phases. Phase one provided an initial look at the Gracie Bullyproof program and laid the foundation on which later research was conducted. In this phase, documents, media, and online materials produced by, and written about the Gracie Bullyproof program were collected and analyzed. Recurring and noteworthy themes were identified and considered for later follow up. This was followed by the direct observation of a

one-week Gracie Bullyproof course held in Torrance, California. The camp was observed from beginning to end.

Phase two included a continuation of all previous data collection methods, as well as six in-depth, family-group interviews conducted during the Gracie Bullyproof camp, and a follow-up electronic questionnaire that was emailed to parents approximately two months later. All six families responded to the questionnaire providing an update on their experiences after their children had returned to school.

Phase One: Exploratory Results

The exploratory phase of this study began with a review of documents and media produced by and about the Gracie Bullyproof program. Printed materials included flyers, class schedules, curriculum descriptions, posters, and the printed portion of the Gracie Bullyproof DVD set. Printed materials generally fell into one of two categories: marketing materials used to recruit students and educational materials used to aid in the training process. Media materials reviewed in this study included the Gracie Bullyproof DVD set, online instructional and marketing videos hosted on the Gracie Bullyproof website and YouTube, and news stories produced by news organizations about the Gracie Bullyproof program. The combination of these materials provided a strong background and an outline of what is taught in the program, as well as an initial look at how instruction is delivered. This data was then supplemented with data collected during the direct observation portion of the exploratory phase as the 2014 Gracie Bullyproof camp was conducted.

Background. The history of the Gracie Bullyproof program is readily available online and in printed materials. The program was founded by Rener and Ryron Gracie who come from a long line of jiu-jitsu practitioners who immigrated to the United States from Brazil. Their

grandfather, Helio Gracie, began teaching jiu-jitsu in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil in the 1920s. His son, Rorion, immigrated to the United States in 1978 and began teaching classes in Southern California. Rorion eventually went from teaching jiu-jitsu out of his garage, to helping choreograph fight scenes in movies, to founding the Ultimate Fighting Championships (UFC). In the fight world, and in traditional martial arts, the Gracie name is very well known in jiu-jitsu and mixed martial arts (MMA) alike. Ryron and Rener were raised in the United States, and have been training in jiu-jitsu almost since birth.

As Ryron and Rener explained the thought process that led to their creation of the Gracie Bullyproof program, they described a desire to share the benefits of their family's self-defense methods with children. "The Gracie Bullyproof objective is to give your child the physical, psychological, and verbal tools to overcome bullies" (Gracie Bullyproof – Training Programs, 2014, p. 1). They explained that they saw many benefits to training that went well beyond simple self-defense. As they examined the needs of children in the United States, they felt that help against bullying was the most common and most immediate need that children had today. This need, they said, and a desire to share the positive benefits of Gracie Jiu-Jitsu with children, led to the development of the Gracie Bullyproof program.

As one enter the mat area where instruction takes place, a large photograph of Rener and Ryron's grandfather, Helio Gracie, adorns the wall above the mats. Family history is important to the Gracie Family. The Gracie family background and history play an important role in the program as well. Media and printed materials frequently mention this background. As one enters the Gracie Academy in Torrance, California, the first feature in the academy is the Gracie Museum, which features photographs and historical artifacts detailing the Gracie family history. The cover of the DVD Gracie Bullyproof set reads, "Following family tradition, Rorion Gracie

introduced his sons, Ryron and Rener, to Gracie Jiu-Jitsu before they could walk. Remembering how his father, Grand Master Helio Gracie, taught him as a child, Rorion developed fun, yet challenging children's exercises that he called Gracie Games" (Gracie, 2009).

What is taught. An overview of the Gracie Bullyproof curriculum was previously provided in Figure 5. In addition, a review of Gracie Bullyproof printed materials, online and DVD curricula, advertising, media reports about the program, and direct observations revealed several recurring themes that aided in the development of a detailed description of the program. The program brochure handed out at the Gracie Academy repeats the objective of the Gracie Bullyproof program which is "to give your child the physical, psychological, and verbal tools to overcome bullies" (Gracie Academy, 2014, p. 1). The brochure continues, "Our aim is not to encourage confrontation, but rather, to reduce fear and build confidence in order to reduce your child's risk of being targeted" (Gracie Academy, 2014, p. 1). This concept—that individual empowerment through self-defense training can actually *lower* the chance of physical confrontation—may seem counterintuitive, but it is arguably the central tenet in the Gracie Bullyproof program.

The Gracie Bullyproof curriculum can reasonably be broken into three main parts: character development, verbal skills, and non-violent physical self-defense. However, instruction cannot really be separated based on these three categories, as all three were often taught concurrently with instructors talking about what to say or how to behave while executing a physical exercise. There are several overarching themes around which the instructional program is designed that are noteworthy. These themes are not exclusive and often overlap.

Confidence. The first, and perhaps most central, theme is increasing a child's confidence is key to stopping bullying. "A confident child is a bullyproof child" is a common phrase used in

the program (Gracie Bullyproof, 2014). Instructors emphasize to children and parents that having confidence is essential in stopping bullying from occurring in the first place, and for stopping it when it does occur. The first step that instructors take to improve confidence is to remove students' fear of physical contact. From the very beginning of the curriculum, children are taught to engage in physical contact *as a game*, rather than as a fight for survival. This playful approach puts children at ease and makes teaching more effective.

The overriding concept in the Gracie Bullyproof program is that "confidence" is only real if you can back it up. True confidence, Gracie Bullyproof instructors maintain, comes from being able to defend yourself:

> And, therein lies the challenge—how do you instill in a victim of bullying the confidence to face the tormentor, look them in the eye, and back them down? The answer is simple—teach the victims to defend themselves against physical attack, and the rest will follow. (Gracie Academy, 2014, p.1)

The Gracie Bullyproof website and curricula reference several factors that they believe stop children from having the confidence to assertively stand up for themselves. The first is a fear of physical or emotional harm. The second is a fear of school or family consequences. Students who fear that they will be harmed, or punished by their parents or school, are less likely to take a stand that they fear may escalate the situation. As a result, program directors place huge emphasis on parental involvement and support in the program. Parents are encouraged to express their support for their child's response to bullying. For example, students and parents are taught what is called the "Crucial Conversation" (Gracie, 2009). This role-play outlines the approach that parents and students should take when they are taken to the principal's office after being involved in a physical altercation. Students are taught to recite to the principal all of the steps

that were taken before the fight occurred, including how they reported the problems to teachers and staff. They are taught to emphasize the fact that they chose not to hurt the bully, and only wanted to be left alone. But, if the principal decides to suspend the student anyway, the student is told to respect that decision. Parents are then told "not to be mad" because the student followed all of the prerequisites for protecting themselves.

Communication skills. Gracie Bullyproof students are taught that confidence alone is not enough. They must know how to communicate that confidence with others. Great emphasis is placed on body language, eye contact, and tone of voice. Students are taught to be assertive and project strength, particularly when they feel that they are being bullied.

Students are taught to make it clear to others that they are not afraid. They are taught to stand up straight, speak clearly, and make eye contact. When someone does something that they feel approaches bullying, students are taught to clearly and powerfully tell the person to stop. This emphasis on communicating with confidence is also placed on physical responses to violent bullying, which will be discussed later on.

Self-defense. The next fundamental theme, and perhaps the one that differentiates the Gracie Bullyproof program the most, is the concept that self-defense is an acceptable response to bullying. When verbal bullying occurs, students are taught to use "verbal jiu-jitsu," which includes a series of steps designed to stop a bully from continuing in their behavior. They ask the bully to stop what they are doing, and explain that they don't like it. If this fails, they are taught to tell others. They may tell a teacher, a parent, an adult, or any person of authority. In fact, they are encouraged to tell as many people as possible. If this fails, they are then taught to ask the person if they are trying to pick a fight and express to the person that they are not afraid.

Students participate over and over in role-plays that rehearse the “Three Ts.” On the third T, students are told to say, “Are you challenging me to a fight, because if you are, I’m not afraid.” If the student says that they are not challenging them to a fight, the student says, “then stop wasting my time.” If the student says, “yes” that they are challenging them to a fight, or physically attacks the victim, then the student is allowed to tackle and control the bully. These role-plays are first performed with an instructor, and then typically with another student.

When it comes to physical bullying, students are given five “Rules of Engagement” that help them determine if a physical response is acceptable. These five rules include:

1. Avoid the fight at all costs.
2. If physically attacked, defend yourself.
3. If verbally attacked, use the Three T-steps.
4. Never punch or kick the bully, establish control and negotiate.
5. When applying submissions, use minimal force and negotiate. (Gracie, 2009)

Students are taught a series of “non-violent” but physical responses. As stated in role four, these self-defense techniques never involve any punching or kicking of any kind. Each involves takedown and control methods designed to keep the bully from throwing any punches or kicks of their own. For example, students are taught a technique called “Tackle the Giant” to use against a bully who tries to punch them in the face. In this move, the student drops under the punch and grabs onto both of the bully’s legs. She then drives forward with her own legs, driving the bully to the ground. This is followed by “Spider Kid,” a technique in which the student takes “mount position” —sitting on the bully’s stomach with hands spread out wide— pinning the bully to the ground.

As physical self-defense techniques are being executed, students are taught to continue to try and talk their way out of the situation. Instructors ". . . teach children to 'control and negotiate' with the bullies, rather than resort to violent strikes" (Gracie Academy, 2014). After gaining a position of control, students are taught to ask the bully if they are done and ask for a commitment to leave them alone. If they say no, they apply additional pressure, or hold their position and wait for help. They describe this philosophy as “fighting fire with water,” emphasizing methods that smother aggression rather than meeting it with their own.

This concept of “fighting fire with water” and meeting aggression with control is central to the Gracie Bullyproof program. In fact, the term “jiu-jitsu” means “art of gentleness.” While it may seem counterintuitive that an art that focuses on joint locks and choke holds is “gentle,” the philosophy behind the art is that choke holds and arm locks can be done softly enough to cause no damage. Students learn to use “minimal force and negotiate” (Gracie, 2009).

Intervention and peer pressure. Not only are students taught to defend themselves verbally and physically, but also to help others who are being victimized. Students are encouraged to intervene, physically if necessary, to stop someone else from being harmed. At one point during the camp, Rener Gracie taught students how to tackle someone from behind if they were physically beating another victim. As usual, the move involved non-violent technique. Trainees were taught to grab the bully’s arm, wrap it behind their back, and pull them to the ground. They followed this with “Spider Kid” which was somewhat of a “go to” move for the students.

Program instructors emphasize that being willing to verbally and physically defend yourself lessens the chances of being bullied in the future. They routinely encourage the students to see standing up for themselves as an opportunity to escape a lifetime of bullying by taking a

stand once. In fact, they insist that winning or losing isn't even that important, as long as it is made clear to the bully that a victim is willing to stand up for themselves. More importantly, they claim that simply knowing how to defend oneself causes one to walk and talk differently and makes bullying less likely. "Bullies seek 'easy targets'—those who will tolerate their abuse. We arm your child with the tools needed to overcome physical, verbal, and psychological harassment, so they are so confident in themselves that no bully will try to harass them," (Gracie Academy, 2014).

Rener taught this many times in his class. He explained that standing up to a bully once would save you a lifetime of bullying. "Would you rather fight once, or fight for the rest of your life," he asked the kids.

Empathy is encouraged in the program. Students are often asked how something feels, or how they would feel in a certain situation. They are often taught that if they respond to a bully by hitting or kicking, they are becoming bullies themselves. After using physical self-defense techniques to stop a physical attack, they are encouraged to help the bully back to their feet and try to establish a positive relationship with them. This is done by helping the bully to their feet—but only after they have promised not to attack the victim again. After helping the bully to their feet, the students brush the dirt from their back and pat them on the back.

Many times throughout the program, instructors ask, "Do we ever hit or kick the bully?" The students answer "no." The instructor asks why and the students shout out, "because then we would be the bully!" This emphasis on empathy and non-violence runs thoughout the program.

Family. The Gracie Bullyproof program, while directed at individuals, schools, and communities, is first and foremost a family focused program and parents play a fundamental role in its implementation. Program instructors place a huge emphasis on the family and what they

can do to put a stop to bullying. The first DVD in the set and the first video viewed online is the "Parent Preparation Course" that helps parents actively participate in the program. Parents who attend Gracie Bullyproof classes or camps often receive additional information as well. Guidance for parents includes an overview of the curriculum, how to talk to administrators and teachers, the Golden Rule, safety considerations, teaching methods, and building confidence in children (Gracie, 2009).

At one point during the Parent Preparation Course, parents are taught how to properly correct children. Rather than criticizing, parents are encouraged to physically move the child into the right position, and then say "perfect!" Over and over, parents are encouraged not to criticize the student but to encourage and compliment. Parents are also encouraged to go through the program with their children, particularly the multi-media version. Parents are told that doing the program with the kids is essential to their success.

Personal responsibility. One important aspect of the program is that students are taught about the difference between playing and bullying. From the beginning of the program, students are taught that not all behavior that bothers them is bullying. Students are taught to recognize bullying in others and in themselves. They are also encouraged to take responsibility for their actions. Trainees are frequently taught what bullying is and how to avoid being a bully. This is done primarily through role-playing. Rener and Ryron begin a role-play conversation in which Rener teases his brother Ryron. He then asks the students, "is this playing or teasing." As he gets more and more aggressive, more and more of the students start to say "teasing." Rener then explains that each person gets to decide whether what others do to them is teasing and playing, but once someone asks you to stop, it isn't playing any more.

Character development. In addition to the goal of increasing confidence, Gracie Bullyproof instructors spend a fair amount of time emphasizing the importance of making good life choices. Instructors talk about work ethic, honesty, empathy, and respect. On one occasion during the Gracie Bullyproof camp, the head instructor was observed encouraging the students to try foods that they don't like and to eat healthily. Each child was given a homework assignment to try a food that they hated, and try to learn to like it. Students returned the next day and reported on their experiences.

Students are also taught several phrases to use when confronted with negative peer pressure. During the camp, students participated in role-plays in which they were offered drugs or alcohol and responded with "thanks, I'm good," or other one-liners. Empathy and sympathy are emphasized as students are often asked, "How would you feel if someone did this to you?" and similar questions.

Somewhat surprisingly, the episodes of "War Ball" were also used to teach character development. First, Rener emphasized that the game was a "game of honor." He said that the students should not need judges to decide who was out. When a student was clearly out but didn't move to the assigned location, Rener would say, "honor . . . honor." Students would sheepishly move to the side of the room. Students were also encouraged to look out for others during the games. Older students were frequently reminded to watch out for younger students, and asked, "How would you feel if you got run over by someone twice your size?" etc.

How it is taught. The Gracie Bullyproof DVD and online programs rely on parents to guide the learning process. Parents purchase DVD or online access materials and review the parent preparation course. This course teaches parents how to take their children through the remainder of the course. Once parents have completed the parent course, they are encouraged to

begin teaching their children the rest of the curriculum. They take their children through a series of lessons and games designed to prepare children for bullying. They learn several steps they can take to deal with verbal bullying. They learn the five “rules of engagement” that spell out when verbal and physical responses to bullying are and are not allowed. They then learn a series of games through which parents teach children physical self-defense techniques that can be used to control a bully.

Trainees can also participate in the Gracie Bullyproof program in-person. Classes are regularly conducted at the Gracie Academy, and a few certified training centers around the nation. The Gracie Bullyproof summer camp is another way that students can travel and participate in the course in-person. There are several overriding themes that characterized how instruction was delivered.

The children’s portion of the Gracie Bullyproof program begins with ten “Gracie Games.” These are very non-threatening and safe games that teach fundamental principles of base, balance, and self-defense. Each has a kid-friendly name like “Guard Monster” or “Crazy Legs.” These games are not taught through memorization, but through play. This keeps the students engaged and having fun.

After students have passed off the ten Gracie Games, they move on to the Combatives program. This program includes 33 techniques that are more advanced and taught with more detail. The assumption is that by this point, the students can be trusted with more information and more serious techniques.

Importance of routine. The entire Gracie Bullyproof program is a series of games and drills designed to provide trainees with a sequence of specific and progressive steps to deal with bullying. These steps begin with how to respond to verbal or nonphysical behaviors and then

steadily progress to include responses to violent, physical attacks. Great emphasis is placed on automatic responses to aggressive behaviors. The main objective of instruction seems to be to eliminate victim confusion and doubt by giving students a set of steps to take in bullying situations and encourage them to have confidence that those steps will work. Over and over, students drill verbal and physical responses to bullying until their reactions are almost automatic.

The emphasis for students is habit rather than memorization. When "Spider Kid" was taught, for example, kids were first shown how to get in mount position. They sat on their partner's stomach with their knees in tight but straddling their partner's torso. They then put their hands out wide and laid lightly on their partner's face. The bottom partner was then prompted to struggle, pushing and pulling to try and get out. The top partner used his or her hands and base to stay on top and not let the bottom person out. The name "Spider Kid" comes from the way that the top partner looks somewhat like Spider Man.

After playing this game over and over, with slight corrections and encouragement here and there, many of the students develop very good habits. This works well, particularly with children.

Fun. The Gracie Bullyproof program is designed to be fun. "We don't teach jiu-jitsu, we play jiu-jitsu" is a running theme in the program (Gracie Academy, 2014). The first course is called the "Gracie Games" and includes a series of self-defense drills designed as games with fun names that include animals like "Crazy Horse" and "Crocodile Control." Instructors place a lot of emphasis on making the program playful and safe.

After completing the Gracie Games course, students enter the Gracie Combatives course which includes less playing and drills and more focus on individual self-defense techniques. As students move forward in the program, they can receive belt promotions. Some promotions were

observed at the Gracie Bullyproof camp. Trainees generally seemed to enjoy the Gracie Bullyproof instruction and to be highly motivated by belt promotions. Even those who were initially hesitant to participate in class activities became more and more comfortable as the first day and week progressed.

On the last day of the camp, approximately ten students were called to the front of the class to receive belt promotions. Most of them had a small strip of athletic tape wrapped around one side of their belt. Two of them received new yellow belts.

Safety. As might be expected, strong emphasis is placed on personal safety. In the media materials, parents and students are taught how to avoid injury during training and how to avoid injuring a partner or even a bully. In addition to minimizing injury during instruction, this emphasis on safety and fun seemed to take away much of the hesitancy that some students initially showed when it came to personal contact. Many students initially appeared hesitant to tackle, pin, or control other children. As they became more and more comfortable with physical contact, they seemed less caught off guard when they were, in turn, taken down and pinned. This seemed to lower the level of fear they had of being touched by other students.

Comfort with physical contact. One of the emerging themes that was never stated outright by program directors, but seemed to be ever-present, was increasing students' comfort level with physical contact. Several times, instructors alluded to the fact that decreasing student fear of physical contact leads to less rash decisions and more calculated responses to physical bullying. Instructors used many strategies aimed at helping students become more comfortable with physical contact. Students appeared to start the camp with varying comfort levels, but by the end of the camp, all students appeared very comfortable with their training.

Phase One Summary. A detailed list of data sources for this phase, including documents and media reviewed, is included as Appendix A. From these sources, data was coded into an Excel spreadsheet including 22 pages of coded data. In addition, direct observation resulted in 33 pages of observation notes and reflections. These coded data and observation notes were then used to complete the exploratory phase of the study.

Phase Two: Descriptive Results

Phase two included a continuation of previous document and media analysis and direct observations, as well as the initiation of six in-depth, family interviews and a follow-up electronic questionnaire. This questionnaire was given to participants at the conclusion of phase two. All six families completed the questionnaire and provided the researcher with an update about two months after the initial interviews were conducted. These two data collection methods, the interview and questionnaire, constituted the core of the descriptive portion of this study, but data collection methods employed in phase one continued to provide data throughout the study.

The semi-structured interview process used in this study allowed participants to largely dictate how the interview process progressed. While the interviewer at times solicited responses from specific participants, families were largely allowed to determine which family members provided the most information. During some interviews, parents were very vocal and provided the bulk of the information. During others, children did most of the talking. Participants were also given broad leeway in determining the length of the interview process. Interviews ranged from 17 to 44 minutes, depending on the nature and progress of the interview.

The site. The main Gracie Academy is located in Torrance, California. As you enter the front doors, you immediately see the reception desk, a waiting area with displays of apparel and equipment bearing the Gracie logo, and the entrance to the Gracie Museum—a several hundred

square foot room full of historical photographs, stories, and artifacts from the family's history. These displays focus largely on Rener and Ryron's grandfather Helio Gracie, and their father Rorion Gracie. The museum celebrates the family's history in Brazil and immigration to the United States. It illustrates the transition from very humble beginnings to the success they experience today. Many photographs and artifacts deal with the family's founding of the Ultimate Fighting Championships (UFC).

In the corner of the waiting area is a hallway leading to the mat area. This hallway opens up into a very large room measuring approximately 4000 square feet. This room is covered almost entirely with green mats. These mats cover the floor and six feet high on the walls. It looks like a very child-safe area. On one side of the room is a carpeted area with large steps where parents and spectators can sit and observe class.

The camp. As I entered the academy before the first session of the camp, there was a sense of excitement in the air. Well before starting time, parents and students were lined up at the front desk, while others were making their way to the mat area. It was not hard to spot the young trainees who were each dressed in thin white jiu-jitsu uniforms complete with top, bottom, and belt. Most belts were white, but a few young trainees were wearing yellow, gray, orange, or some combination, suggesting that these students had previous experience.

Walking down the hall, hundreds of shoes could be observed on the floor along the hallway. Jiu-jitsu students don't wear shoes on the mats. In the mat area, students were barefoot and parents were either barefoot or wearing socks. A few students were sitting against the matted wall while seven or eight older "teachers" wearing blue and purple belts were standing around. Students and young teachers remained in the mat area while parents gathered in the observation

area. Nothing separated these two areas other than the carpet on the floor. Parents and students talked freely in what appeared to be a very relaxed atmosphere.

The first day of instruction served as a model for most of the rest of the camp. One minute before the class was scheduled to start, Ryron Gracie entered the room wearing a jiu-jitsu uniform, followed by his brother Rener. By this time, approximately 80–100 parents were sitting in the observation area, and close to 100 students lined the walls of the matted room. Ryron and Rener went down the line giving high-fives to every student. Some trainees were distracted, but most seemed to know who Ryron and Rener were and appeared excited to see them. After high fiving each student, Rener and Ryron gathered in a small circle with the rest of the instructors in the middle of the mats. Besides Ryron and Rener, there were 17 other teachers. Rener did most of the talking, appearing to give directions to the others.

By this point, there were approximately 100 trainees on the mats. There appeared to be approximately a 2:1 ratio of boys to girls, ranging in age from about 4 to about 14. Most were sitting on the mats, but a few young trainees appeared hesitant and hovered near their parents in the observation area. Both Rener and Ryron were very keen to this, coming over several times to encourage them to come onto the mats. Their methods were impressive. Both got down to be able to look the young trainees in the eye, and several times gave the kids rides on their backs to help them come out onto the mats. By the time they were done, only one trainee was still unwilling to come out with the rest. He stayed very close to his father.

Rener began class by asking the kids to play some games. When he spoke, trainees paid attention with surprising uniformity. Each game was named after an animal. Rener would either demonstrate or have one of his students (usually wearing a colored belt) demonstrate how to imitate that animal. These games included warm-up drills like “Cheetah,” “Ostrich,” and

"Gorilla." Each time an animal was named, all 100 kids raced across the mats imitating that animal. Sometimes the drill would be repeated two or more times. Throughout these warm-ups, Rener taught students concepts like "be careful," "watch out for other people," and how to avoid getting hurt.

After about 15 minutes of these games, Rener gathered the children around him in a circle to play "Simon says." While fun, this game was clearly designed to teach the students to follow directions and listen to the teacher. One of his first directions was, "Don't talk unless Simon tells you to." Rener maintained a constant connection with the students. They appeared to be hanging on his every word and wondering what fun game would come next. His humor made the students and parents laugh. Ryron, on the other hand, took a more reserved approach to teaching. As Rener would give directions, Ryron would look for students who did not understand or who may be nervous or uncomfortable. His teaching was largely done one-on-one. This pattern continued throughout most of the camp. Ryron did teach the group from time to time, but stayed focused largely on the smaller interactions.

After Simon-says, Rener gathered the students again to the circle in the middle of the room. He explained several rules including raising your hand to speak, not leaving the mats without talking to a teacher, looking out for the safety of others, and having fun. For someone without a public teaching degree, Rener seemed to have surprisingly strong class management skills.

One half hour after the class began, Rener started talking about bullies. He asked students to describe bullies. He asked "Why do bullies bully?" and "Who do bullies look for?" Students provided answers and Rener expounded on those answers. This discussion culminated with the phrase, "Stand up for yourself." He explained that standing up for yourself makes you less of an

easy target. He then started teaching the students to stand strong, make eye contact, and speak clearly. The students practiced role-play drills with the teachers and with partners.

As Rener taught the communication skills outlined above, students were given a word or phrase—something to say to their partner, that resembled bullying but was not hurtful in and of itself. This allowed students to practice bullying without actually hurting each other's feelings. At one point, for example, students were told to make fun of their partner's backpack by calling it "funny." Since no students were wearing backpacks, this was unlikely to make anyone feel badly. Rener and Ryron would stand in the center of the room and act out a role-play that went something like this:

RENER: "Look at that funny backpack. I hate that backpack."

RYRON: [Stands strong and looks Rener in the eyes.] "Hey, my mother gave me this backpack. Don't say bad things about my backpack. I don't like that. Thank you."

RENER: "I don't care if your mother gave you that backpack. I think it's funny looking."

RYRON: [Walks to another person] "Hey, Mrs. Jones? I've asked Rener to stop making fun of my backpack and he won't stop."

Students were then directed to act-it-out with their partner. This pattern continued for the remainder of the camp, with Rener and Ryron demonstrating role-plays and self-defense techniques and then having students practice with their partners.

After about a half-hour of training and practicing "verbal jiu-jitsu," the students were taught their first physical self-defense technique. They were taught the "clap and tackle" technique. Rener explained to students that this was only to be used when they are physically

attacked, and after they have tried to tell the teacher, their parents, and anyone else who will listen (including their jiu-jitsu instructor).

Rener had students demonstrate the “clap and tackle” technique. These students stood with their feet apart, one behind the other. They clapped a couple feet in front of a partner’s face and then dropped down, hugging their partner’s legs. After hugging the legs, they began pushing with their feet until their partner fell to the ground. They then climbed onto their partner’s stomach, laid flat, and put their hands out widely to the sides in what jiu-jitsu practitioners call “the mount position.”

For another hour and a half, students continue to learn these physical self-defense techniques. First they were demonstrated by an instructor or experienced student, and then students were told to practice the technique on a partner. From time to time, Rener stopped to explain a “rule of engagement” or talk about bullies, victims, or life. None of these self-defense techniques involved kicking or punching. Students were taught to “manage the distance to manage the damage” and “neutralize the bully until the teacher comes.”

About fifteen minutes before the end of class, and almost three hours into the session, the students began to look tired. They were still smiling, but physically worn out. Rener gathered the kids together for a group picture. He then ended the class by inviting the students to shake hands with everyone else on the mats. The class did this by walking down the line of students, with the entire line wrapping back on itself.

The pattern followed on this first session continued throughout the camp with only minor modifications. A few techniques were reviewed each day with new techniques and concepts introduced for the bulk of the session. Techniques and concepts taught followed very closely with the previously discussed curriculum. Techniques included how to takedown, how to avoid

being taken down, how to pin someone down, how to escape when someone else is pinning you down, how to pull someone off of another victim, and several ways to get an opponent to "give up" or submit. These included shoulder and arm locks designed to cause discomfort.

From the second day on, students were much more comfortable, but also less focused. Rener dealt with this by adding a "War Ball" game for the last half hour of class each day. This game was treated as a reward for good behavior and involved different variations of dodgeball. Sometimes students broke into teams and threw balls at each other. At other times, the instructors threw balls at the kids. These were very light balls and everything seemed very light hearted.

As the week progressed, there were fewer "teachers" to help Rener and Ryron teach. Where there were originally 17 assistants, there were typically 10-12 on the other days. The number of warm-up games also decreased and instruction took up more and more of the time.

The last day of the camp began with an intensive review of what had been taught that week. As a surprise, Rener brought out a student of his who won a UFC fight on pay-per-view television a few nights before. They talked about his training and background. They then gathered the students together to film a video about him and about the camp.

After an intense game of War Ball, Rener and Ryron called up several students to give and put stripes on their belts. Several more were given colored belts. One of the students who received a stripe was "Elaine," who had previously participated in the study. Students who were promoted appeared very excited.

At the conclusion of the camp, each student was given a certificate of completion and a patch for their uniform. They were also invited to a "slumber party" to be held later in the week. Rener and Ryron stayed long after the class to talk to parents and students.

Family portraits. Throughout the camp, family-group interviews were conducted. These interviews began on Day 2 and concluded on Day 5. The bulk of the data used to compose family portraits came from the group interview process and the follow-up questionnaire. Coded data taken from the second coding of interviews was at the core of this process, however, data from the first coding, from earlier document and media analysis, and direct observations all served to inform the compilation of family portraits.

Family portraits were composed with the intention of sharing the experiences of each family with the following research questions in mind. Why do families participate in the Gracie Bullyproof program? How do students and their parents perceive their experience in the program? How do students and their parents perceive the impact of the program on their ability to prevent or respond to bullying? In order to answer these questions, it is essential to examine each family's experiences before, during, and after the program. As part of the development of each portrait, especially relevant statements were taken from the second coding charts and placed into tables that illustrate highlights of how each family described their situation before, during, and after participation in the Gracie Bullyproof program. These tables have been included at the end of each portrait as Tables 6–11. Each table includes relevant selections. For a complete look at the second coding, please see Appendices G–L.

Portrait #1: "Lee and Candice."

On the second day of the camp, the first family interview was conducted. With the help of program directors, a family that had previous experience with the Gracie Bullyproof program was selected for participation. Lee and Candice are a brother and sister from Minnesota. Both demonstrated high levels of engagement in the program, although Lee's level of engagement was much more obvious. Lee is clearly a strong and athletic young man with some previous experience in jiu-jitsu. He was called on to demonstrate several techniques in front of the class. Candice was much more quiet and reserved, but also very engaged in the training.

Lee and Candice's parents, Samuel and Renee, brought them to Torrance, California to participate in the Gracie Bullyproof program. Both children have attended public schools in the past, but they have recently begun home schooling. Their father and mother both participated in the interview process.

Lee is a 12-year-old boy whose parents describe as a good kid who was caught off-guard by bullying at first because he had never experienced it before. He is a mixed race child with white parents; something that his parents feel has contributed to him being targeted for bullying at school. While Lee was attending public school, the bullying became quite severe. Lee was physically attacked several times. At one point he had to be taken to the hospital to be treated for his injuries.

Lee's sister, Candice, is a nine-year-old girl. Her parents describe her as a "very intelligent and perceptive girl." They report that she has not experienced much in the way of bullying, but that enrolling her in the Gracie Bullyproof program was a good way to prepare her ahead of time in case she experiences anything like her brother has.

Lee's past experiences with bullying were the primary reason that his parents chose to involve him in the Gracie Bullyproof program. Lee and his parents expressed significant concerns about schools' ability to handle bullying. They report that administrators either denied that bullying ever occurred in their schools or assured parents that it was not a big deal and they had it under control. When serious incidents did occur, Samuel felt that the general approach was to "sweep it under the rug." "I don't think they saw . . . bullying that was really happening and the physicality of it," said Renee.

The family also expressed serious concerns about the school's response to Lee's victimization. During one incident, after Lee had been physically assaulted, he and his attacker were sent to the office without supervision, exposing Lee to the possibility of further trauma. Even though Lee had experienced facial injuries at the hands of his attacker, his parents stated that both he and his attacker were dealt with almost identically. The administrator's initial response was to scold them both. Once the investigation began, Lee was interviewed in the presence of his attacker. He was "[asked] what happened as he's standing shoulder to shoulder with the kid that accosted him," said Renee.

The result of this process, his parents stated, was that Lee became even more afraid to take steps to protect himself. "As we are in the hospital, his main concern was, 'Am I in trouble? Am I suspended?'" Lee and his parents all expressed that this further contributed to the victimization cycle by making him afraid to do anything to stop his victimization. "With the constraints that a lot of the schools have, the overriding response is, 'walk away, ignore it, just leave them alone,' and the [bullies] know that," said Renee. "When you have kids like Lee who are very respectful of rules and are afraid to be in trouble, they don't want to stand out as kids who are troublemakers or cause trouble, and there becomes a concern."

Samuel and Renee also expressed a strong dissatisfaction with actions taken by the school once the investigation was completed. “It’s one thing to say, ‘it’s our policy.’ It’s another thing for how you implement it,” said Renee. Both parents suggested that Lee’s school promised to take action, but either failed to follow through or only took ineffective measures. The school often promised to deal with bullies, but “they’d be out for a day and they’d be right back doing the same thing.”

Lee’s parents reported that after becoming frustrated with his school’s inability to protect him, they began looking for outside sources of help. After several bullying incidents at school, Lee was experiencing migraines, difficulty eating and sleeping, nightmares, and a host of other physiological side effects. His pediatrician attributed these symptoms to the fear and anxiety that he was having as a result of being victimized at school. Samuel and Renee took him to see a therapist who told them that the victimization had become so severe that it could pose a threat to Lee’s survival and well being. He encouraged them to take strong, immediate steps to make a change.

Samuel and Renee took several steps including transferring him to another school, and contacting law enforcement. They were hesitant to take these steps out of concern that they might teach Lee to run from his problems, but they felt that his situation was becoming dangerous enough to merit strong actions. They were particularly hesitant to contact the police. “Kids don't want to get the police involved. You don't want to be known as the kid who . . . had to call the police because you got beat up,” but they felt they had little option.

As Samuel and Renee turned to outside resources for help, they were exposed to differing viewpoints about how to best handle the situation. The school encouraged Lee to report his problems to school personnel. Lee’s pediatrician and therapist encouraged his family to take their

own actions to protect him and expressed their own doubts about his school's ability to keep him safe. As the family met with law enforcement, the officer pointed out that Lee had the right to protect himself, something that differed dramatically from the school's advice. These differing viewpoints triggered what Renee described as a "shift" away from reliance on the school and toward allowing Lee "to use physicality as a means of protection."

Bullying and frustrations with school personnel continued to be an issue, and Lee's parents became more and more concerned about his health. "I watched my athletic, funny, smart kid just turn inward and crawl into a ball with anxiety and fear," said Renee. They continued to worry about whether or not he would be safe at school, and the stress impacted the entire family. Around this time, Renee read an article about Gracie Bullyproof online. She was impressed by what she read and decided to contact Rener Gracie. She made arrangements to meet him in Texas while he was teaching a law enforcement training seminar there. "It was a significant investment, but I honestly believe his future was on the line," she said.

While talking with Rener, Renee was encouraged. She felt reassured that if Lee was given the tools to know how to handle bullying, he could put a stop to victimization, even if others could not. Lee spent about 15 hours of one-on-one time with Rener during that week. Rener took him through the Gracie Bullyproof program and also gave Lee a lot of instruction that was uniquely tailored to his situation. Rener also shared stories about his own experiences with bullying, which Samuel felt was essential to the experience. "A big part of what we took away is . . . him sharing his experiences . . . because it was, 'Wow, even Rener Gracie got bullied,'" he said. Samuel and Renee believed that recognizing that bullying is a common occurrence, and not unique to him, was essential for Lee.

Lee's parents state that the one-on-one training with Rener was very helpful. After talking with each other and their children, the family decided to make the trip to California to attend the Gracie Bullyproof Camp. They felt that attending the camp would help solidify what Lee had learned from Rener, and help Candice prepare in case she ever faced a similar situation. While Candice had not experienced the same level of bullying that her brother had, her parents stated that they find that she is more confident and has learned a lot from watching what her brother has gone through. They hope to prepare her in case she ever does face something similar.

Lee and his parents all reported that the Gracie Bullyproof experience has had a significant effect on him, even from the beginning. The most significant impact may have been on his level of confidence. "He carried himself differently," said Renee. "He played different in hockey . . . he broke up fights in the game . . . he walked different when we walked through the mall." They pointed to differences in body language and the ability to look people in the face when talking.

Lee and his parents report that he was still confronted with several potential bullying situations, but that his ability to handle those situations prevented them from happening again. "I don't have to be scared to do anything . . . just fight back with words or jiu-jitsu," said Lee. When asked if he has ever used any of the Gracie Bullyproof techniques, Lee shared several instances in which he used what he was taught to diffuse the situation. In one situation, Lee was the targeted victim of the "knockout game." While waiting for class to begin, Lee got punched in the back of the head. As Lee turned to see where the punch had come from, he saw a second punch coming. "I turned around and he tried to throw another punch and I blocked it with my arm," he said. "I was kind of scared but not really because he . . . hit me hard, but not enough to knock me out, so I just turned around and took him out of the classroom." When the police

arrived, they complimented Lee for handling the incident using control holds rather than violence, and commended him for reacting appropriately.

In another incident, a young man began shoving Lee during a game at his home. Lee asked the young man several times to stop. After several failed attempts to diffuse the situation verbally, Lee placed the young man in a control hold and held him until he promised to stop. Renee heard the confrontation and began heading toward the commotion. “I was ready to go down the stairs, [but] I heard him take control so I just stopped.” In both cases, these confrontations took place in front of peers. As a result, Lee began to develop a reputation as someone who was not a good target for bullying. “The other kids were like ‘damn!,’” said Renee. Lee and his parents report that in every situation, Lee’s handling of the aggression prevented any further bullying from that individual. In each case, “Nothing really happened after that,” said Lee.

When asked to summarize the overall impact of the Gracie Bullyproof program, Lee says that he is no longer afraid of bullies or of getting in trouble for trying to handle bullying situations. His parents stated that the benefits of the program reach far beyond just physical self-defense. Lee’s confidence has improved and he has not experienced the same fear and anxiety he experienced before. When asked if they have any concerns about Lee escalating the level of violence in a bullying situation, they stated that “Lee isn't walking around as a fire. He's not spreading fire. But he knows how to put it out, and that’s the difference. . . . That shifts who you are.”

Follow-up survey: “The win for us.” About two months after the interview with Lee and Candice’s family, they were given an opportunity to provide additional feedback on their experience during and after the Gracie Bullyproof camp. Samuel and Renee explained that Lee is

still being homeschooled, so he has not had many opportunities to be physically bullied since the camp, but he has had several opportunities to apply what he has learned. They continue to see a different young man than the one they saw before. “He carries himself differently. His shoulders are back. He looks people in the face. He doesn't seem scared to be himself.” His parents report that he has used this newfound confidence to resist negative peer pressure, standing up to peers that have pressured him to participate in behaviors he is uncomfortable with. As he has done this, he has used the phrases he was taught to use during his Gracie Bullyproof training, and they feel this has been effective.

When Samuel and Renee ask him how he is able to handle these situations better, they stated that,

> He said he believed that confidence came from knowing he could use BJJ [Brazilian jiu-jitsu] to tackle and subdue another boy if needed. He said he wasn't really worried about it coming to that. He felt strong enough to not be pressured and that if they would've continued to give him a hard time he just would have called us and left. The ‘win’ for us as his parents was seeing he valued his beliefs more that[sic] their approval or company and was willing to leave if needed and felt physically strong enough to handle sticking up for himself. We know it was that confidence that kept it from getting physical.

Samuel and Renee stated that rather than escalating the level of violence in these situations, they believe that Lee’s training has actually lessened the likelihood that he will be harmed or will harm anyone else. They like what they have seen, and attribute these positive outcomes to several factors. “Being in a large group of kids and seeing them day after day made . . . training fun and made the discussion and practice of defending against bullying a ‘normal’ and ‘acceptable’ topic versus one that comes from having been/being a victim and seeming weak and

shameful." "Overall, what we as parents feel was most important was the confidence they built from seeing and learning the Gracie . . . methods in action, [and] having an 'intense' immersive experience."

Samuel and Renee were quick to point out that they had not seen the same positive results from all martial arts training that they had participated in. They had seen some evidence of anger and "dominance" in other programs including other styles and in other jiu-jitsu classes. They particularly appreciated the discussions that their children participated in during the Gracie Bullyproof camp that dealt with the psychological side of bullying.

When asked if they had any concerns or reservations about the training, Samuel and Renee share that accepting that physical self-defense might be an acceptable response to bullying took a "a shift" in the family from "the way my generation is taught." For them, a physical response was associated with a higher level of violence. Lee's parents were also somewhat concerned about the trainer to student ratio at the camp, but explained that they understood that time and space requirements made this necessary.

Researcher observations. Lee and Candice might be described as lambs in the interview room, but lions on the mats. Both were relatively soft spoken throughout the interview process. Their parents did most of the talking during the interview. Both were very active and engaged during their training. Lee was on a first name basis with Rener Gracie, likely as a result of their previous time training together. Several times Rener called on Lee to demonstrate techniques in front of the 100-plus trainees. When asked to demonstrate, Lee was unshaken and confident, executing those techniques precisely and aggressively. He clearly had a grasp of the details of those techniques even before they were taught. Candice was also called on to demonstrate one technique for the rest of the class. She seemed slightly more hesitant to step in

front of the class, but also executed her technique very well. Both were completely comfortable training with other students, even those they had not met before.

I could see no evidence of the previous fear and anxiety that Lee's parents described. Lee's previous experience with the program clearly made a difference before Lee ever set foot at the Gracie Academy. Lee's mannerisms off of the mats could be described as being filled with quiet confidence. He walked with good posture and without any indication of fear or anxiety. Lee spoke with clarity and had no trouble looking me in the eye. On the mats, Lee's swagger was even stronger. When wearing his uniform and training, Lee took on an almost invincible demeanor. He clearly felt that when in uniform and in the academy, he was safe.

Lee's parents provided a powerful look into the complex relationships and interrelationships illustrated by the social-ecological model. Samuel and Renee began with a high degree of trust in their school. Renee described a personal friendship with the school administrator that made her want to give him her complete confidence. That confidence, however, didn't last. Renee passionately described a situation in which family and school values were in conflict with each other. Several times during the interview, Renee became quite emotional, particularly when talking about their relationship with school authorities. It seemed clear to me that Renee and Samuel's trust in school officials was irreparably damaged. Their decision to keep Lee and Candice homeschooled even after the difference they had seen in their son further supports this.

Portrait #2: "Kimberly and Joseph."

Kimberly and Joseph are nine-year-old twins from Washington state. Both were very open to talking about their experiences at the Gracie Bullyproof camp and very engaged in the program. They were chosen for participation with help from program directors. I was particularly interested in interviewing these two after observing the two of them training together. Kimberly and Joseph usually chose to pair off with each other. In my experience, siblings often struggle to train together, but these two trained well together and were often observed smiling and laughing. Since Kimberly and Joseph were twins, I was also interested in how their experiences might be similar and how they might be different.

Kimberly and Joseph attended the 2014 camp and participated in the interview process along with their father, Alan. Their mother did not come with them to the camp. It was important to Alan that Kimberly and Joseph be the focus of the interview. His responses were very limited. Kimberly and Joseph, however, were very engaged in the interview, often finishing each other's sentences. This made transcription of the interview particularly challenging, but also quite rewarding.

Kimberly and Joseph have attended public schools but recently decided to transfer to a private school where they would be attending fourth grade beginning in the fall of 2014. When asked why they chose to participate in the Gracie Bullyproof program, Kimberly and Joseph said that their motivation did not come from a history of being bullied. "I don't know," said Joseph, "our dad just bought these discs one day. . . . We just started playing the games and we loved them." Before Kimberly and Joseph attended the camp, Alan purchased the Gracie Bullyproof DVDs and they began training in the program at home. Alan said that he purchased the DVDs almost a year before attending the camp.

When specifically asked if they had ever experienced bullying, Kimberly and Joseph were a little unsure. “No . . . unless it counts by being basically bullied by a teacher,” said Kimberly. Kimberly, Joseph, and Alan shared that negative experiences with a teacher had led them to transfer both children to a private school. “That’s why we had to move from a public school to a private school,” said Alan. Kimberly and Joseph were concerned with how the teacher handled discipline and interacted with the kids. “Do you know how some teachers are really strict and the kids say they are really mean? I know the difference between mean teachers and strict teachers, and this teacher did not like teaching,” Kimberly added.

As Kimberly and Joseph continued to talk, they explained that they had experienced aggression that may or may not have been actual bullying. “There was this kid, a younger kid than me named ‘Darrel’ who attacked me a lot,” said Joseph. He said those attacks were physical and occurred about two years before the interview. Joseph seemed unsure, though, whether or not those “attacks” were intended to cause harm.

As Joseph was sharing his story, Kimberly was sharing pieces of her own. “Wait! Maybe I was bullied once, both me and Joseph, a little bit, a while ago. We were in a camp called the ‘Whitestone’ survival camp,” she said. “We would go out into the woods and play in the woods for a day and there was this really little girl named ‘Ericka.’” According to Kimberly, ‘Ericka’ “kept walking up to people, me and Joseph, and pushing them for no reason and hitting them and . . . it was really weird because she was like this tall,” as she held her hand a little above her waist.

When asked how she handled that aggression, before having participated in the Gracie Bullyproof program, Kimberly was uncertain. “Before that [Gracie Bullyproof] . . . I'd mix all

the steps up, like first I'd tell the teacher, then I'd tell the kid, then I'd all be mixed up but after I went to this camp it really started to take place and it made me a lot more comfortable," she said.

As Joseph and Kimberly shared their experiences, they smiled and laughed. While I'm sure these experiences were troubling at the time, both of them seemed to view them more as amusing past experiences than traumatic victimization. Their characterization of those experiences, and the way they shared them, seemed to indicate that they had in fact experienced acts of aggression, but did not have an extensive history of bullying and victimization. Joseph and Kimberly agreed with this characterization. "Since we don't get bullied," said Kimberly, "it's basically just about having fun and learning for if we ever do get bullied . . . and exercising."

When asked about specific teachings in the Gracie Bullyproof program, Joseph was able to provide a detailed breakdown of the verbal strategies taught in the program. "The three Ts are talk, tell, tackle. So first you talk to the kid and then you tell the teacher and tell a bunch of people," he said. When that doesn't work, "you don't tackle them physically you tackle them mentally and you use the critical question. You know, 'now are you challenging me to a fight?' and that kind of stuff. If they attack you . . . physically tackle." Joseph demonstrated a strong grasp of the guidelines provided in the DVDs and at the camp including knowing when to use verbal strategies and when to use physical techniques.

Joseph's biggest concern was what to do if he was bullied by a smaller person. "It's kind of hard to use my techniques on kids that are a lot smaller and younger because . . . then everyone will think that I'm the bully because I am beating up this kid that is so much littler than me," he said while laughing.

When asked what his favorite technique is, Joseph said "for some reason, the Americana. It's a submission," he explained. His answer reflected a deeper knowledge of jiu-jitsu than just

what had been taught at the camp. The Americana is a shoulder lock that is applied from a top position. Jiu-jitsu students are taught to apply the lock slowly until it gets tight and then ask the student if they are going to stop. It is very effective, but not included in the first part of the Gracie Bullyproof program. Joseph's father, Alan, said that was one of his favorites as well. "I like that one," said Alan, which made his son laugh.

Both Kimberly and Joseph stated that the program has benefited them. "It makes me feel energetic and happy and it makes me feel like I have accomplished something," said Kimberly. When asked if they feel more prepared in case they are bullied in the future, both Kimberly and Joseph said yes. "A lot more," said Joseph. "I feel very, very prepared," said Kimberly. When asked what makes them feel this way, Kimberly said, "One of the things that makes me confident is knowing what to say to the bully, because if I didn't know what to say to the bully I'd be just like 'stop' and they'd be like, 'stop, eh?'"

Kimberly and Joseph were very open about their experience. They clearly enjoyed participating in the program and felt they had learned some important things. While their father, Alan, was somewhat reserved during the interview process, he was watchful and observant, spending much of the time nodding in support of their responses and laughing at their stories.

Follow-up survey: A word from dad. During the interview, Kimberly and Joseph provided most of the responses. The electronic questionnaire update was especially helpful because it was completed by their father. Alan did include input from his children as well. "Both my kids said that they felt more confident as a result of Gracie Bullyproof. Confident was a word they both used." Their father said that neither of them had needed to use any of the physical techniques they learned from the Gracie Bullyproof program but the verbal skills they developed had helped them resolve at least one minor conflict with another child. "There was a time late in

the summer where a younger kid at another camp was being mean and bossy with them. I reminded them about what they learned at Bullyproof camp in terms of verbal jiu jitsu and that they had the skills to stand up for themselves if need be." He said that reminding them seemed to be enough and the situation quickly improved.

Kimberly and Joseph's father said that he wishes that his children could train with Rener and Ryron Gracie all the time. While his children train at a jiu-jitsu academy in Washington, they each felt that there is something special and "inspirational" about the way the Gracies teach:

> I think it has motivated them to continue on their journey in jiu jitsu. We took a formal class with my instructor yesterday and they both did really well and want to continue. I often refer to Rener at home when I try to get them to eat new healthy foods. . . . It is hard to quantify all they got out of the program. I wish we trained with Ryron and Rener all the time. They are two guys who are seriously inspirational."

Researcher observations. Kimberly and Joseph were eager to participate in the interview process. Their father, Alan, wanted them to provide most of the responses to the interview. They were enthusiastic and talkative throughout the interview. While both expressed their concerns that teachers and school officials may not be best equipped to deal with bullying, and both felt that their training would help them deal with bullying if they ever confronted it, I found it unlikely that either of them would ever experience severe bullying. Both were very assertive and outspoken. I am sure their training may prove beneficial at some point, but neither exhibited the kinds of behavior that would make them likely targets for bullying. If they did experience aggression, both seemed quite likely to deal effectively with the aggression.

On the mats, Kimberly and Joseph usually chose to train with each other, although they did work with others at times. Both seemed to take Kimberly's description of the Gracie

Bullyproof program as “basically just about having fun” to heart. They clearly enjoyed themselves during training. They also were technically sound, executing techniques very well. It was clear they had spent time working on the techniques before coming to the camp. After observing their execution of the techniques, I was doubtful that there was a physical bullying situation that they could not handle.

When viewed from the perspective of the social-ecological model, Kimberly, Joseph, and Alan did not share traumatic past experiences with bullying or severe disagreements with school officials, they did seem to have an overarching skepticism when it came to school officials. This skepticism came primarily from experiences with the school. They did not appear overly angry or emotional about these concerns, but were very frank and direct. It was very important to them, particularly Kimberly and Joseph, that I understand that they tried to give their teachers the benefit of the doubt, but they had some concerns about teachers they had interacted with in the past. They did not express any concerns about administrators. They appeared quite comfortable in their interactions with their father and had no trouble talking with me as an adult.

Portrait #3: "Gavin."

Gavin is an 11-year-old boy from Ontario, Canada. Gavin's mother, Ellen, volunteered their family to participate in the study after Rener Gracie made an announcement inviting students and parents to participate. I had observed Gavin several times during the camp. He seemed fairly engaged in the program, but rarely smiled. He would come and double check with his mother, Ellen, from time to time. She would converse with him and encourage him to get back on the mats. At times he would express some frustration with other students, but after encouragement from his mother he would go back and participate. Before talking with him, I was not entirely sure if he wanted to be there or if it was more important to his parents that he be there. It was clear that Ellen was very passionate about his participation, but his level of enthusiasm was unclear.

I was particularly interested in Gavin and his family after his mother shared a little bit about their past experience. It wasn't until later that I found out that they had been flown out to the Gracie Academy for the camp after being chosen by Gracie Bullyproof directors based on an audition video they submitted to Gracie Bullyproof directors. Gavin had a significant history of being bullied. Gavin's past experiences had motivated program directors to pay for the flight and the family's expenses so that they could come to the camp.

Shortly before the camp, Gavin had been diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome (AS), a form of autism. This diagnosis, combined with several other characteristics that make him "different," contributed to him becoming what his mother referred to as a "bully magnet" and an "easy target." Gavin has a heightened sensitivity to the actions of others. This sensitivity, his reactions, and even his food choices have made him a target for ridicule. Students made fun of his homemade lunch. In the classroom, children would whisper to Gavin or leave anonymous

notes calling Gavin “stupid,” “retarded,” or “gay.” They would steal Gavin’s property. Gavin’s hyper-sensitivity often led him to react very dramatically to these actions, which further contributed to the bullying. Some students seemed to be motivated by a desire to try and get a reaction out of him.

On the playground, bullying became even more overt and physical. “He had been jumped and tackled and pushed face first onto the ice,” said Ellen. “I couldn't even go to the washroom without being picked on. I was beat up in the washroom,” Gavin added. The further these things happened from the teacher, the more overt the aggression became.

As Gavin and his parents shared their experiences, the depth of the emotions involved became clear. While Gavin expressed frustration at the situation, his parents showed a combination of anger, frustration, and sadness. Ellen’s emotions were most apparent as she shared what her son had experienced and the toll it had taken on her family. Gavin’s father, Troy, expressed great frustration when he talked about public schools.

As Gavin’s parents called and met with teachers and administrators, they felt dismissed. “It doesn't matter how many times you call the school or go into the school, you're not getting any help; you're not getting any support. “They seem to brush you off," said Ellen. "Rather than make sure that these kids weren't bothering him . . .” she said, “they put him somewhere else to eat so that he wasn't around the other kids.” Gavin was kept in from recess and at lunch. This only made things worse. “Then the kids started picking on him because he was going into the computer lab at recess,” said Ellen.

In at least one case, Gavin’s parents felt that teachers contributed to, or even participated in the bullying. “Teachers . . . have been bullies,” said Ellen. One teacher ridiculed Gavin in front of other students saying it was “his nature to be rude,” something that his parents found

very disconcerting. His father expressed feeling very betrayed. “I trusted adults. I trusted certificates on the wall, and I trusted that they told me they were going to do,” said his father. “I'll listen to children, but I'll believe an adult. Unfortunately I did.”

By the end of third grade, Gavin was already experiencing what his parents describe as “meltdowns.” They would receive calls from the school stating that Gavin was crying or screaming uncontrollably and they were unable to calm him down. They asked his parents to come and get him. By the fifth grade, Gavin didn’t want to go to school any more. “He would be crying before he left," said his mother, and when "he would come home at the end of the day, he would cry the minute he walked in the door." He started saying things like, “I wish I was dead,” and “I shouldn’t have been born.” At one point, he asked for an operation. "He asked me to get him an operation for his face so he would look better, and he said 'if I look better then maybe the kids will like me,’” said Ellen.

As Gavin’s parents shared his story, I couldn’t help but think of my own experiences and my search for “deliverance.” Gavin had reached a point where an operation or suicide seemed preferential to continuing to be victimized. Gavin’s inability to control the situation at school led to him considering those options that he could control, in this case the possibility of ending his life.

After a while, Gavin’s parents started to get some indication that bullying was at the root of his symptoms. “We had never seen anything like this at home, said his mother. “So we'd go get him and bring him home. 'What's going on?' 'Well, I'm being picked on. I'm being bullied.’” One day, “He came in the door from school he sat on the floor and he just cried and cried and cried . . .,” saying “'I'm being bullied and I can't take it anymore.'”

As Gavin's anxiety and symptoms increased, so did the stress level in his family. "No one has any idea how it affects a family unless they are actually going through it themselves," said Ellen, "It can tear a family apart." Gavin's parents described feelings of helplessness, of being overwhelmed, and high levels of stress and anxiety. "I cried every morning sending Gavin to school. It broke my heart to know that he was so unhappy and that I was sending him somewhere where I felt he was not safe," she said.

Gavin's mother also shared how family stress further contributed to the cycle of bullying. Bullying can be "very difficult on a family because then the mother and father start having disagreements," she said. "So then this would cause more stress for him… Then he felt, 'well, you know what, I'm causing problems with mom and dad.'" By the end of Gavin's fifth grade year, his mother had begun taking medication for depression and anxiety.

As Gavin's parents searched for answers, they tried several different things. They took Gavin to a medical doctor, who then referred them to someone else. The specialist they were referred to recommended a series of tests. However, two years later, they were still on the waiting list for those tests.

Academically Gavin was doing just fine. He was getting excellent grades in all of his subjects at school. With the bullying situation still getting worse, Gavin's parents decided to withdraw him from the public school and homeschool him. They soon found that while this helped reduce Gavin's anxiety and he was happier, it was difficult for the family. His parents struggled to provide a good education for Gavin and found their former school less than helpful. With Ellen trying to work and homeschool at the same time, it seemed nearly impossible. They soon discovered that paying for tutors and teachers to help Gavin at home was very expensive and they were having difficulty affording the extra expense.

Gavin's parents had previously enrolled him in a Gracie Jiu-Jitsu program near their home. One day their instructor approached them about a contest being held by the Gracie Bullyproof program directors. He asked them if they would be interested in submitting a video. The family agreed, and Gavin won the contest. The Gracie Academy paid for the family's airfare and tuition so that he could attend the 2014 Gracie Bullyproof camp.

Gavin's mother and father were pretty clear about their main motivation for attending the Gracie Bullyproof camp. "We wanted him to be able to defend himself. We wanted him to be able to stick up for himself," said Ellen. "Mostly we wanted him to find friends," said Troy. Both felt that the experience was a good one. They were impressed with the teaching methods used at the Gracie Academy, particularly the management of so many children in one area. "Close to one hundred kids in there, and when someone says 'silent' what happens?" said his father. "The way he gets the respect and everything from the kids. They all look up to him," said his mother. When asked why he chose to attend the camp, Gavin replied, "it's fun."

Gavin's parents appreciated the discipline, respect, and health habits taught at the camp. They also expressed their opinion that the camp helped him socially. Gavin met quite a few friends, and collected phone numbers from several children during his time at the camp. What Gavin's parents were not sure of, however, was whether or not Gavin's training would help him at school. "It hasn't really done anything yet because Gavin hasn't learned to be assertive," said his mother. When asked if they think it will help, Gavin's parents expressed some doubt that the schools would tolerate any form of physical self-defense. "The trouble is that our school has a hands off policy. If Gavin needed to use a technique that he was taught in order to defend himself from an attack, they would consider it unacceptable at our schools," said Troy. "He has been afraid that he was going to get in trouble so rather than use what he's been learning . . . he

would react and he would cry or he would scream at the kids," said his mother, referring to the previous training he had received in jiu-jitsu class.

On the last day of the camp, Rener Gracie called Gavin in front of the class to demonstrate a role play. Rener yelled at Gavin and pushed him. Gavin pushed back telling Rener not to talk to him that way and to "stop it." After the role play, Rener gave Gavin a high-five, and Gavin smiled.

Follow-up survey: Gavin returns to public school. The fall after the Gracie Bullyproof camp, Gavin returned to public school. Gavin's parents felt that the combination of his Gracie Bullyproof training, and his acceptance into a special educational program, made a return to public school the best decision for their family. At the time of their two-month update, Gavin's experience had been very positive. The school he enrolled in was designed for special needs children. His parents believed that Gavin has received much more support and supervision. Their experience has been that this school has a much lower tolerance for bullying and aggressive behavior.

Gavin did have one experience with physical aggression since his return to public school. A friend of Gavin's was punched in the face and Gavin decided to intervene. When Gavin verbally confronted the boy, "the boy took a swing at him," said Ellen. Gavin used one of the Gracie Bullyproof techniques taught to him at the camp, pushing the boy away from him before he could be hit. When the teacher first found out what happened, "he was told that what he had done was wrong and that he was not allowed to put his hands on anyone." He was upset when he got home, but his mother met with the principal the next day and explained the situation. The principal explained to Gavin that he did the right thing. Gavin was not disciplined, while the boy who tried to hit him was.

His mother describes his overall experience as “the best thing we ever could have done for him.” Gavin’s parents, who wondered initially if the training would help Gavin at school, were very pleased with what they saw. “Gavin has never been able to stand up for himself,” said his mother. “In the past he would have just gotten very upset, crying and yelling and just basically having a meltdown.” What they saw in him after his training was very different. He stands up for himself, and also seems to have done better socially:

> Since the bullyproof camp we have seen many changes in his self-esteem and confidence. He is happier and feels better about himself. He has several friends this year which he has never had before at school. He is no longer afraid to go to school and he feels that he can handle the ‘bullies’ now because he just has so much more confidence in himself. His whole mood/outlook has changed. Last year we were quite concerned about his depressive moods and him being sad every day. The remarks he was making about not wanting to live anymore was really worrying us. He is not the same little boy he was last year at this time. He is always happy! Every day!

Gavin’s parents plan on enrolling him in the Gracie Bullyproof program in the future and state that he is already asking about when he gets to go back.

Researcher observations. Gavin was initially very uninterested in the interview. He preferred to let his parents answer the questions and play a video game that he brought with him. With some encouragement, he put the game away and decided to join in the discussion. He made it clear that he wanted his parents to tell his story. As the conversation progressed, he became more willing to share his perspectives.

It was clear that Gavin was still disturbed by the experiences he had with bullying, and was not entirely confident that those experiences were going to end. On the mats, Gavin was

quite proficient with the physical techniques he was taught. He continued to struggle somewhat socially. At one point, he felt mistreated by one of his partners, but felt comfortable telling his parents about the disagreement. They advised him to talk to Rener Gracie about the disagreement. I never observed Gavin talking with Rener, but he did continue to train without incident.

Gavin's parents, Ellen and Troy, were at times very emotional. Sometimes this emotion was sadness, but for the most part could be described as anger and determination. Ellen and Troy felt betrayed by the educational system and wanted things to change. They sought for ways to change things for their son, but also wanted to see change at a larger scale. Their decision, at the time of the interview, had been to remove Gavin—and their family—from the educational system as much as possible. It was during my interview with Gavin and his parents that one of the limitations of the social-ecological model became apparent. Gavin's parents, Ellen and Troy, expressed a profound lack of confidence in teachers, administrators, and schools overall. They made a conscious decision to try and separate their decision making process from the school. They removed Gavin from the school and taught him at home. This removed the school relationship from the SEM used to evaluate Gavin and his family's experiences.

The bullying model, as previously discussed and portrayed in Figure 3, treats each inner domain as if it is always part of the outer domains. The individual is treated as always part of the family, and the family as always part of the school. While in some ways this is true, Ellen and Troy's decision to remove Gavin from the school, and their perception that the school abandoned them completely after this point, illustrated the point that individuals and families can become quite separate from the outer domains. If they could not entirely separate themselves, they could

at least minimize that relationship and function largely independent of the school. This would need to be taken into account later on.

Portrait #4: "Danny."

Danny was a six-year-old boy from the state of California. He attended the camp with his father, Thomas. He was the youngest participant interviewed and perhaps the smallest trainee at the camp. On the first day of the camp, Danny was the only child that Rener and Ryron were not able to get to participate at the very beginning. After some reassurance from his father, Danny did get on the mats and start to train.

Danny was very quiet on the mats and throughout the interview process. When asked questions, he looked toward his father for reassurance. Most of his answers were single words or short phrases. When asked why he came to the camp, he said, "so we could come wrestle," giving his longest response of the interview. Much of our conversation focused on Thomas and his role as Danny's father.

Danny and Thomas liked to wrestle at home and Danny really seemed to look forward to having another opportunity to wrestle at the camp. As one of the youngest participants, Danny was a little intimidated at first. "You were a little curled up the first day, a little intimidated, and then you got out there and started playing and having fun with it," his father said to him. By the third day of camp, Danny could be observed wrestling with many other trainees, several of which were much bigger or older than him. Thomas encouraged his son. "It was a scary situation and I was letting Danny know there is plenty of time when daddy and mommy had been afraid before and that's okay."

When asked if he had ever been bullied, Danny replied, "I don't remember." Thomas was cautious not to apply the term "bullying" loosely and was quick to differentiate between normal childhood experiences and bullying. "I think part of it is growing up. It's going to happen, but

then we see how terrible it is these days." When asked if Danny had been bullied before, his father said, “maybe verbally a little bit . . .(but) nothing more than what . . . kids do."

Thomas was also very clear that he chose to enroll Danny in the program as a preemptive step. “If we can give him tools right now . . . that'd be better later on . . . We are trying to attack a slippery slope before it ever happens,” he said. Thomas believed that Danny would experience bullying at some point and expressed some doubts about schools’ ability to handle the bullying that would occur. “We can see the writing on the wall a little bit with the way the public schools are . . . We don't see the school systems making the right decisions for the kids necessarily, because there's so many of them." When asked where his perception of public schools came from, he said it came “through some of our friends who have older kids and just some of the stuff that we've seen . . . on the playground.” While Danny had not experienced any serious physical bullying, Thomas clearly felt that he would experience it later, and was not confident that the schools would handle it well. Thomas’s limited experience with public schools and what he was told by friends had clearly lowered his level of trust in his school.

Some of Thomas’s certainty about the inevitability of bullying and lack of confidence in schools may have come from his own childhood experiences. When asked if he had ever experienced bullying, he replied, “Of course! Of course I have. You know I grew up upstate New York . . . I was a skateboarder which was not necessarily the most popular thing back then before the X-games.” He openly wished that he had been given similar training when he was young. “There wasn't a time where I didn't really stick up for myself but . . . I can. I can definitely see where it was that mob mentality against you… Having something like this would have been extremely, extremely great.”

When asked what attracted them to the Gracie Bullyproof program, Thomas talked about the curriculum and the emphasis on confidence. “The curriculum . . . at least we could see through the marketing, was something we were really, really liking with the building of confidence,” he said. He also liked the format and intensity of the one-week camp. “Specifically the reason we decided on his program was . . . we liked the way that it's compact—a one week camp. So you can come here and kind of get in and get out at the same time.”

Danny had previously participated a little bit in some jiu-jitsu classes in his hometown, but had not participated in the Gracie Bullyproof program before. Thomas felt that Danny’s experiences with jiu-jitsu had been very positive, but that the Bullyproof camp was more tailored to Danny’s needs. “We really like what we've seen here with the verbal preparation, the mental mindset, and scenarios,” he said.

Thomas had his own experiences with bullying as a child, and hoped to give his son the tools to handle aggression if confronted with it. Thomas also trained in jiu-jitsu, but wanted to be careful not to pressure Danny into participating. “I don't always know how to handle it, and I'm like uber-sensitive with jiu-jitsu because I love it so I don't want to force it on anybody,” he said.

Thomas felt that the training would most likely help his son respond to bullying by helping him know “what you are supposed to say,” but “you don't know until it really happens,” he added. “Children need reinforcement.” Thomas explained that he felt that reviewing the concepts taught in the course would be essential. "I think that the course has definitely helped, I mean we intend on coming back in the future. . . . Danny’s brother really wants to come back."

Follow-up survey: Improvements at school. Danny’s parents described his school experience after the camp in a very positive light:

> This school year Danny's experience with school has been an improvement. My wife and I feel the camp was a catalyst to improve Danny's confidence in the classroom and interacting with other children. His teacher, whom he had contact with last year, has already stated there is great improvements in his attention in class as well. I am sure there are other factors that lead to his improvement; however, the camp is without a doubt a major contributor.

At the time of the update, Danny had not used the physical self-defense training he was given and had not really been bullied. "Last year at the YMCA my son was called several names that he did not like, 'trash can,' 'trash truck,' etc. So far this year to my knowledge he has not come across any specific confrontations." Thomas also stated that this was "possibly due to an increased awareness or he doesn't present himself as a victim, not totally sure but we are so far very pleased." When asked to summarize the family's overall experience, Thomas stated:

> The overall experience as a result of the course seems extremely positive. Danny is my oldest son and we continue to play the games he learned in the camp. He has also recruited his little brother to "play GJJ," he is less passive and more assertive due to increased confidence. He is already excited to go back next year or the following if we are unable to attend.

Researcher observations. Danny was the youngest participant in the study, and one of the youngest participants in the camp. His hesitancy to participant in both was largely a result of his age. When it came to the camp, this hesitancy only lasted for a few minutes. Once Danny saw how much fun the other trainees were having, and with a little reassurance from his father, Danny was fully involved in the camp. Although from time to time he looked to his father for reassurance, Danny was able to fully participate in the camp, often with larger and older partners.

Thomas's decision to enroll Danny in the Gracie Bullyproof camp came largely from his past experiences with bullying and his perceptions of society in general. His case illustrates the complex interaction between individual agency and his relationship with his community and society. Thomas was also unique in that he sought for family solutions to an anticipated problem, before his son actually experienced bullying. Thomas's past experiences, combined with his perceptions of his community and society, motivated him to take preparatory steps to protect his son. Thomas was hesitant to apply the label "bullying" lightly. He clearly felt that some disagreements are a part of childhood. At the same time, he appeared dedicated to making sure that his son did not experience bullying without having the tools to deal with it.

Portrait #5: "Shawn."

Shawn is a seven-year-old boy from Texas who traveled to California with his father to participate in the Gracie Bullyproof camp. He and his father, Edward, both participated in the interview process. Shawn attended public school for two years before participating in the Gracie Bullyproof camp, completing the first grade a couple months before the camp began. He seemed excited about getting ready for the second grade.

When asked why he chose to participate in the Gracie Bullyproof program, Shawn said that he had been bullied by another student in the past. Edward remembered the experience well. "He was in kindergarten and I remember him coming . . . telling me on various occasions that there was this one kid that kept bullying him," he said. This individual had been held back a grade and was physically much larger than the other students. "He was afraid to turn his back to him or have fun," said Edward. This fear motivated his parents to take steps to keep Shawn safe, including enrolling him in the Gracie Bullyproof program.

Soon after Shawn's experience in kindergarten, his parents decided to enroll him in a jiu-jitsu program in Texas. Edward described this program as a "sport jiu-jitsu" program, something that immediately told me a lot about the academy Shawn enrolled in. Jiu-jitsu students often categorize themselves and their teams into "sport jiu-jitsu" and "self-defense" jiu-jitsu academies. There is some overlap, but sport jiu-jitsu academies judge their success largely by their success or failure in jiu-jitsu competitions. They focus primarily on the grappling side of jiu-jitsu, but teach very little self-defense from a standing position. Self-defense jiu-jitsu academies place great value on their ability to defend themselves in an actual fight and focus on a balance between standup and ground techniques. Martial arts magazines regularly feature articles advocating for one approach or the other. Edward's use of this terminology and his tone

suggested that he had some jiu-jitsu experience himself and had sympathies toward the self-defense side of things.

Shawn's parents felt that the sport jiu-jitsu program was beneficial, although not as tailored toward bullying as the Gracie Bullyproof program. "Most classes do not break it down like the Gracie program as far as how to respond, how to react, or what to do," said his father. They felt that the previous training was beneficial and helped Shawn's confidence quite a bit. When asked if the previous program taught him what to do when people say mean things to him, Shawn said, "no."

Shawn's bullying was not particularly overt. "They didn't say anything mean to me. They just . . . would bump into me or something every day," said Shawn. Even these relatively minor incidents had an effect on his family. Edward is a police officer in Texas. "As a father, I am very protective of my family. I am the protector, but when I feel that my son or my family is being bullied or harmed, I feel like I've failed," said Edward. "As a police officer, that's probably why I became one is to protect people, and when my own family is being targeted. Yeah, that's a really weird dynamic and I don't like it." I got the sense that Edward placed great value on the safety and security of his family. His experience as a police officer meant that he had regular interaction with victims and aggressors of all kinds. When he spoke about protecting his family, his determination was evident in his facial expressions.

Some of this determination likely came from Edward's own experiences as a child. He had previous experience with bullying himself, particularly when he was a middle school student. "I personally went through it. I used to cringe [for] when he gets in the middle school age. That's when I ran into it the most," he said. That experience clearly shaped his views of bullying and Edward didn't hide them. "I had made that decision when he [Shawn] was just an

infant that he would know self-defense, and we all went through it and it's just part of life," he said. After talking with Shawn's mother, they decided to do what they could to prepare Shawn ahead of time by giving him tools to respond to bullying. "I just remember feeling so afraid because I wasn't prepared. I didn't know how to handle that. I wish they would have had this back when I was growing up," said Edward. "When Shawn was born, I had already explained this to my wife—that we all go through it, most of us do—some type of bullying whether growing up, whether in the adult world."

Edward's passion for protecting his family and for protecting others resonated with me. It reminded me of the anger and determination I had felt throughout my life and the desire I had to try to make sure others didn't go through what I did. I had chosen to become a school teacher, while Edward chose law enforcement. Both of us spent our days trying to protect others. Perhaps his decision was also a reflection of his view of the situation in the public schools.

Edward expressed significant doubts about schools' ability to handle bullying situations. When asked how much confidence he had in their ability to protect his son from being bullied, he replied, "None at all. With the liability and those issues . . .they like to bury their head in the sand until it happens," he said. He described them as being "afraid to address those issues." "They say there's a zero tolerance on fighting, which I don't completely agree with, because if that's going to be in place, well, then they need to make sure that bullying doesn't occur." When his son was being bullied in kindergarten by a larger student, "the teachers weren't doing anything, and it got so bad."

Despite the emphasis on sport jiu-jitsu, Edward felt that Shawn's previous jiu-jitsu training helped his confidence quite a bit. After receiving some training, Shawn observed another student being physically bullied. The "teacher wasn't around and he intervened. He turned to

both of them and said ‘hey, that's not okay. Stop.’” Shawn’s father expressed how important it is to him that bystanders intervene. “That's one thing . . . I have tried to instill in him is that when you see something wrong, you want to do something.” His father was proud of his decision to intervene, and felt that the Gracie Bullyproof camp would only improve his confidence further.

Edward’s law enforcement background was evident in his conversation. He clearly believed that self-defense was something that was not only for the victim, but for bystanders as well. He strongly felt that victimization was something that should concern everyone. When describing his family’s philosophy about violence, he said, “Don't just act like it's not happening, you need to do something. Put yourself in that situation. Would you want someone to help you? Of course you would.”

Shawn and his father both stated that they felt the Gracie Bullyproof program had provided them with important tools that Shawn could use if confronted with a bullying situation in the future. Shawn said that he really didn’t know how he would handle a physical confrontation before his Gracie Bullyproof training. When pressed he said he supposed he would tell the teacher. When asked how he would handle physical aggression at school based on what he was taught, Shawn replied, “I'm going to talk my way out of the fight first, but... if they are wanting to start a fight or they throw a punch, that's when I'm going to do jiu-jitsu.” When asked specifically what that meant, he said, “take them down and like, get on them and hold them, until the teacher comes or until someone gets a teacher.” This response was a strong reflection of what the Gracie Bullyproof program teaches. Shawn said he is not going to punch anyone, “because that would make me the bully,” repeating one of the often repeated phrases from the Gracie Bullyproof course.

Shawn wasn't particularly worried about being bullied before or after the camp, but felt that he was much more prepared to handle it if he was. His father, on the other hand, felt that the Gracie Bullyproof training was helpful to both of them. "I think that it gives Shawn a whole different perspective on how to deal with the bullies on a day to day basis . . . [I am] much more confident that he'll be able to handle that situation . . . It just gives him many more options rather than just being petrified with fear and not knowing how to respond." This was comforting to Shawn's father. "This gives us peace of mind as far as Shawn being able to handle himself in a situation effectively." Edward described a shift in his own thinking that occurred during the one-week camp. Previously, Edward was supportive of more violent responses to bullying. "I'll be quite honest with you, [we had to] kind of revamp this but before we went to this program I was working drills with him, open hand slap to the ear . . . very effective, but probably not the best option," he said. Edward strongly supported the non-violent approach advocated by the Gracie Bullyproof program.

Like some other participants, Edward expressed his desire to see the Gracie Bullyproof program made available to more people. "I wish this program was available nationwide. He was very clear, however, that he didn't believe that all self-defense programs were the same. "Sports jiu-jitsu obviously concentrates on the sports aspect of the art. But it doesn't really teach you the day to day 'crunches' that may occur between young adults, young children, and even adults."

I asked Edward how he would respond to someone who believed that this kind of training would only escalate the level of violence involved in a bullying situation. "I would say that that is an inaccurate statement. That those who have that opinion, I welcome them to become educated and come participate in this program, and I am positive that their opinion would change." I decided to press him further and asked him how he would respond if his son chose to

use the physical techniques he had been taught, and then found himself in trouble at school. Edward was emphatic in his response:

> As a dad and as a police officer, I would very candidly explain to them that my son's safety is their responsibility . . . When I'm not there and if they're not there to be able to make sure that that situation didn't escalate, well then they're liable . . . The other aspect that I would explain to them [is] how my son could have chosen to use strong-handed tactics, in other words punching, and he didn't, he didn't. He just basically neutralized the situation and defended himself effectively without causing any harm to the other student.

Follow-up survey: Second grade self-defense. After returning home, Shawn went back to school and began second grade at his elementary school. Shawn's father described his school experience as "extremely positive." "The bully proof course definitely improved his self confidence. He was already confident, but just a little shy," said Edward.

Within two months of beginning the school year, Shawn was physically confronted by another student. "There was a fellow classmate who wanted to show Shawn that he knew karate and would persist in kicking Shawn. After a couple of warnings, Shawn took him to the ground and side mounted him while telling him to stop," said his father. "The next day, the other child attempted to tackle Shawn. Again, Shawn took him to the ground, mounted him, held him down and told him to stop and that he wasn't interested in playing karate. Shawn has not had any issues with him since."

When asked how he would describe the overall experience, Shawn's father was quite positive. "I think Shawn's overall experience as a result of his participation in the Bully Proof Camp has been great! He handles himself with more confidence and has already diffused a situation without hurting his classmate."

Researcher observations. Shawn and Edward's interview took place near the end of the camp. Their account provided a more complete view of their experience at the camp, but limited later observations of Shawn at the camp. Shawn was fully engaged in the program and seemed to enjoy the games and award ceremonies held on the last day of the camp. Shawn was very talkative and confident for a seven-year-old. He did not hesitate to talk about his feelings or share his experiences.

Edward clearly brought his past experiences and his perceptions of schools, the community, and society into the decision making process. His previous experience as a police officer made him very connected to the local community and clearly shaped his perceptions of society. While he hoped that Shawn would learn to protect himself, he saw this protection as a way to then be able to protect others—something that makes sense when one considers his law enforcement background.

Edward passionately communicated something that other respondents inferred, but never stated outright. He strongly supported the notion that when his son is at school, his son's safety was the responsibility of the school, and that if they cannot protect his son, he was going to take steps to protect him. This statement further illustrated the disconnect that can exist between families and schools.

Portrait #6: "Michael and Elaine."

Michael and Elaine are a brother and sister from British Columbia, Canada. They attended the Gracie Bullyproof camp with their father, Lewis, and their mother, Dorothy. All four family members agreed to be interviewed on the last day of the camp. I was drawn to the family for several reasons. Elaine was one of the oldest female trainees at the camp and based on her belt—held the highest rank of any female I observed. I was very interested in getting a knowledgeable, female perspective on several issues that had come up earlier. She and her brother were both highly engaged in the program and appeared to know the curriculum very well. In addition, the opportunity to interview a father, mother, son, and daughter, on the last day of the camp, provided a unique opportunity to wrap up this portion of the study. The children's father, Lewis, runs a boxing and mixed martial arts apparel business and has a lot of experience with the "less gentle" side of martial arts. I wondered what the family's perspective would be on different styles of self-defense for children.

The interview with Michael, Elaine, Lewis, and Dorothy was the most balanced of the study, with each participant making significant contributions to the discussion. The children and their parents regularly interacted with each other and provided input on the comments of others.

Michael is eight years old and Elaine is ten. Both were very open and talkative. Neither of them had previously experienced much in the way of physical bullying, but both had experienced some verbal bullying and teasing. Michael described his experiences as "not bullying but . . . really mean teasing." Elaine said that she had just started experiencing bullying during the past year. She said that the bullying was mainly verbal. This bullying had led to some changes in her circle of friends. "It was her friends [doing the bullying]," said Michael. "*Former* friends," Dorothy added, and Elaine agreed.

Several times during the camp, Rener Gracie mentioned that bullying can come from anyone, even friends. This emphasis seemed to have special meaning for Elaine. Elaine also called them “former friends” but said they weren’t friends any more. Clearly she had shared a lot of her experiences with her younger brother who shared quite a few details of her experiences during the group interview. He was more outspoken about it than his sister was.

Michael and Elaine both seemed very “bullying aware.” They shared stories about observing others being bullied and, after being taught all week about the importance of peer intervention, felt the need to share their experiences with trying to help other victims. Michael shared a story about a classmate of his who was often bullied because of a skin condition that was very apparent to other students. He once stood up for the boy, but did not think his Gracie Bullyproof instructors would have entirely approved of how he did it. “It happened before I went to Gracie Jiu-Jitsu, so I wasn't that confident. I was actually fidgeting when I did it. I was scared,” he said. “I was still young, so I didn't know that hitting back or pushing . . . would make me get in trouble too.”

Elaine expressed how she had felt about intervening in bullying situations before she had attended the camp. “We didn't want anything to do with it ourselves because we didn't want to get sent to the principal's office,” she said. She seemed very frustrated with how schools handled bullying situations and how easy it was to get punished even for trying to help. In one case, “they threatened everyone in the class. They threatened even people that weren't even playing,” she said.

While Michael and Elaine had not experienced any physical bullying, they heard rumors of others in their school being “beaten up.” Dorothy and Lewis stated that they were aware of two severe beatings that resulted in the victims being removed from the school by their families.

While these incidents did not directly involve Michael or Elaine, Dorothy was clearly angry with what she felt was a lack of enforcement by the school. She was not alone. In fact, each family member expressed their doubts about their school's ability to handle bullying situations effectively. "There's very little confidence in the school system," said Dorothy. "They wear the pink t-shirts, they have their Bullyproof day, or bully day, . . . [but] just put band aids on all the situations." "They don't care about the bullying. They let it go," said Elaine. "I think even if we tell the teacher or tell someone, it won't make much of a difference." When asked about his level of confidence in the schools, Michael said "not confident at all because if you tell someone, probably it will always happen again." Both Michael and Elaine said that they were concerned about being considered a "tattletale." "If you tell them then they will be even more upset at you," said Michael.

Lewis and Dorothy hoped that Gracie Bullyproof training would help their children learn how to deal with verbal bullying, as well as prepare them in case they were confronted with physical bullying in the future. "The whole thing really happening with the kids in Gracie jiu-jitsu is self-respect, self-confidence," said Lewis. They hoped that Gracie Bullyproof would help their children deal with what both of them described as "psychological warfare" in schools.

Michael and Elaine attended part of the Gracie Bullyproof camp two years before participating in the interview with their parents. They then began using the DVDs and online program to continue learning at home. Despite their familiarity with the program, they felt that the camp was beneficial. "I still didn't feel that confident, but now I feel better after the whole week," said Michael. "Even just in five days here, for only three hours a day. That's a lot, and each day you feel more confident, and by the end of the week your . . . confidence is really pushed up to a higher level," said Elaine.

Michael and Elaine's parents like what they saw during the training. "They teach it in such a playful manner," said their mother. "Now they're not just waiting for the school to . . . handle the situation. They handle it themselves." When asked if their ability to "handle it themselves" meant that they might respond violently to a bullying situation, Dorothy said, "I don't think so." Lewis said that his children would be "much less" likely to respond violently. Speaking as someone who had some experience with violence and self-defense training, Lewis added that "the more comfortable they feel, the less they have to prove something or get scared." He said that fear is a major contributor to violence and fighting.

Michael and Elaine were asked how they planned on responding to bullying when they returned to school in the fall. "You always have to stand up for yourself," said Elaine. "Don't be scared," Michael added. "If you have to use the Bullyproof rules . . . the rules of engagement, and then the three-Ts: talk, tell, tackle . . . and just try and step up for yourself," said Elaine. When using physical self-defense techniques taught to them in the Gracie Bullyproof program, "you're not really hurting them physically; you're just telling them not to mess with you," she said. When pressed, Elaine added, "Some people will think that jiu-jitsu is actually violent, but if you actually were in jiu-jitsu, hearing these talks of Rener, Ryron—anyone who is teaching it, you would understand that it is not just for violent matters, it's for standing up." When asked under what circumstances she would use what she had learned, she replied, "You don't have to if you don't want to use jiu-jitsu. If it's just mild teasing or bullying, you don't want to do it until it gets pretty harsh and they do it every day." Her parents shared a similar philosophy, "My philosophy is, you know, don't react unless you have to, but you're in a position where you have to fend for yourself . . ." said Dorothy.

Dorothy was very passionate and not simply content with protecting only her own children. Her comments and passion reflected a strong desire to change society at large. Dorothy commented that parents are often unsure how to respond to bullying, leaving children even more unsure. “They just don't know how to deal with it . . . There's got to be some way to sort of educate the parents, the kids, the whole school,” she said. She felt that Gracie Bullyproof training would be beneficial for all students and that schools should incorporate the program into their curricula. Dorothy hoped that her children’s training would not only benefit their family, but others as well. “I'm hoping that my children can pass that on to their friends and peers and have that ripple effect where it's like, ‘You don't have to fight back. You don't have to be this proud person.”

Elaine was very curious about the boy to girl ratio at the camp. “I was actually thinking, ‘why aren't there more girls?’ because mostly, actually, in the world, girls get bullied more than boys I find,” she said. Michael chimed in and made an observation that had completely escaped me as a researcher. “I mostly saw that most girls that were there had a brother there,” he said. This was a very interesting observation, one that seemed to stand true as we returned to the mat area for the last session of the camp. As I looked around the room, every female that was with her family had a brother nearby. I am sure there were exceptions, but I was unable to identify one female participant that did not have a brother participating as well.

In the end, Elaine had a very interesting and mature outlook on this situation. “It doesn't really matter that there's less or more of your gender; It's just that some kids get more bullied than others,” she said. Elaine, at ten years old demonstrated an impressive grasp of the social-ecological model that served as the framework for this study. At this young age, she understood

that bullying may be a societal, community, and school issue, but ultimately bullying is about individuals and the families that surround them.

Follow-up survey: Michael reacts impulsively. After returning to school, Elaine did not have any immediate experiences with verbal or physical bullying at school. At the time of the two-month update, she did not feel she had to use any of the techniques she had learned to respond to a bullying situation.

Michael did have a situation where he felt he was bullied, and he responded in anger. His mother said:

> Michael was being teased by this boy, and even though he had kindly asked him to stop . . .he continued to verbally pester him. Michael reacted impulsively and pushed him to the ground. After school he explained the situation to me and of course we discussed better solutions to the problem at hand. We discussed what he had learned at the "bullyproof" camp, and he then realized he could have handled it better.

When asked to summarize the overall Gracie Bullyproof experience, Michael and Elaine's mother said:

> I think overall the camp had an amazing influence on both my kids. They are definitely more confident and knowledgable *[sic]* when it comes to bullying and how to handle themselves in difficult scenarios. It will take many trial and errors for the most part as it is a journey . . .but the core/essence of who they are and how people should be treated is within them.

Researcher observations. Michael and Elaine may have been the most enthusiastic and active participants observed in both the camp and the interview process. Both were completely engaged in the training. Rener called both of them up to demonstrate techniques in front of the

group, and both performed them with precision. As a teacher, self-defense instructor, and bullying researcher, I couldn't help but see this family as bullying educated. Michael and Elaine regularly demonstrated their grasp not only of the physical self-defense techniques, but an awareness of what bullying is, how to deal with it, and even issues like gender and culture. Clearly, bullying was something talked about and prepared for in this home.

Dorothy's view of society and the schools was particularly noteworthy. Her reference to the wearing of pink shirts and schools having bully-days was accompanied by a high degree of skepticism—almost sarcasm. She clearly felt that society and schools take many steps to *appear* that they are dealing with bullying, but that they take few concrete steps to actually deal with the problem. Dorothy clearly felt that there was a gap between family and school methods of dealing with bullying, but she hoped to reach out and help schools educate parents and community members. She was very unsatisfied with what is currently done, but had not given up on schools or communities entirely. She still held hope that she could make a difference in her school and in her community. In fact, she was passionate about doing so.

Conclusions.

As previously stated, trainees and families were chosen for participation in this study based on their ability to contribute to the overall picture and understanding of the lived experiences of participants. Participants included male and female students of various ages and backgrounds. Perspectives included fathers, mothers, boys, and girls. Previous experience with bullying ranged from none at all to traumatic victimization. Students with and without disabilities were included. Parents with many different perspectives participated as well. The result was a respectable cross-section of the participants in the Gracie Bullyproof summer camp.

All six families who participated in the interview process had previous experience with either the Gracie Bullyproof program, or a jiu-jitsu self-defense program of some kind. Rather than a separate and distinct experience, families typically viewed the camp as the culminating event in a series of family choices leading up to the Gracie Bullyproof experience. Many of the changes in individual participants and in families occurred over time and began long before the camp was held. This made the case study approach essential to the research process. The use of multiple research methods including family interviews, direct observations, and follow-up questionnaires are what made diachronic analysis possible.

Chapter V

Discussion

Introduction

Research has suggested that bullying prevention efforts are most effective when parents and schools are on the same page. However, parents and schools often take very different approaches to helping children respond to bullying at school. Researchers have suggested that children are more heavily influenced by family members than by anyone they interact with at school. If researchers want to gain a better understanding of how bullying can be prevented, they must spend more time investigating family responses to bullying.

Extensive research has been conducted in order to evaluate the effectiveness of school bullying prevention efforts and the results have been mixed. These prevention efforts are typically implemented at the classroom, school, or community level. The Gracie Bullyproof program is unique in that bullying prevention efforts are targeted at the family level. Researchers have not extensively dealt with bullying prevention efforts within this domain. Researchers have spent a fair amount of time evaluating the impact that family background can have on an individual's propensity to become a victim or a bully, but they have not dealt with the effectiveness of family responses to bullying after it occurs or their efforts to prevent it.

This study was an attempt to understand the experience of school age children and their families when they participate in a self-defense program designed to prevent bullying. Based on the social-ecological model, a case study was conducted that examined the lived experiences of children and their families as they participated in the Gracie Bullyproof program. Results of this study not only provided useful information directly related to the original research questions, but also revealed additional themes and insights into family relations and bullying in general.

Summary of Results: An Initial Glance

This study could be classified as a "social-ecological case study" in which the SEM domains provided a reference from which primary unit of analysis was selected. The primary unit of analysis was the family—in other words the family domain was chosen as the central domain for evaluation. This approach allowed the other domains to be evaluated primarily from the perspective of family members. Program trainees (children) were central to the process, but were treated as a part of the family, not as an independent unit of analysis.

The exploratory phase of this study provided an overview of the Gracie Bullyproof program and formed the foundation for later research. During the descriptive phase of the study, family group interviews were conducted to evaluate their experiences with the previously explored program. Interview questions were designed to elicit information that addressed the three research questions provided at the beginning of the study.

The combination of these two phases provided a very deep look into the program and the lived experiences of individuals and families who participated in the camp. Families also provided many insights into what led them to search out this program, their experience in the program, and the results that followed.

The Gracie Bullyproof program. Most bullying prevention programs focus on school and community interventions. Family efforts to respond to bullying often include reporting to schools, advising children to walk away or fight back, and turning to outside resources for help. One of the outside resources often turned to by parents is self-defense instruction. The advice given by parents, self-defense instructors, and educators can vary significantly, causing more confusion for victims of bullying. The Gracie Bullyproof program attempts to bridge the gap between parents, schools, and self-defense instructors, and it appears to do that very effectively.

The content of the Gracie Bullyproof program is strong. The program incorporates many of the elements shown to be at least partially successful in school-level bullying prevention efforts. These include teaching active, assertive responses to bullying, immediate reporting to teachers or staff, peer intervention, and strong parental support. Students are also taught how to avoid making themselves a target, by not provoking others, nor becoming bullies themselves. These approaches are almost universally supported by researchers and included in other bullying prevention programs. These methods alone, however, have not been proven to be sufficient, often resulting in parents looking for other solutions including self-defense.

Self-defense training programs often teach students to respond to violence with violence. In these programs, punching or kicking is taught as an appropriate response to physical, and sometimes even verbal aggression. It is understandable that educators might be hesitant to embrace this kind of training. On the other hand, it is also understandable that parents and victims may feel that if a school cannot provide complete protection, the family and the individual are left with little option than to provide their own. The Gracie Bullyproof program seems to remove those aspects of self-defense training that most educators may find questionable, while providing victims with the ability to verbally and physically protect themselves. The strong emphasis on telling bullies to stop and reporting aggression to teachers blends well with school policies, while allowing students to use non-violent self-defense techniques when physically attacked appeals to parents. In many ways, the program seems to address the primary concerns of both worlds.

The non-violent nature of the program is especially noteworthy. At no point were instructors seen teaching students to punch or kick anyone else. In fact, such aggressive behavior is expressly forbidden in the “Rules of Engagement.” Children are taught to use controlled

positions and submission holds, then trained to talk things out with a bully. It is important to note that these are similar to the techniques that a teacher or police officer would be trained to use when they found themselves in physical danger. After controlling the situation, students were taught to try and reestablish a friendly relationship with the bully; something that could prove essential in stopping the cycle of bullying.

The teaching methods used in the Gracie Bullyproof program are impressive. As a school teacher, I found myself continually impressed with the way that instruction was delivered in a positive but well-structured manner. Children were repeatedly challenged but reassured. They were continually engaged in the activities, and appeared safe at all times. Some of this safety came from learning in a very large padded room, but also from the way that techniques and methods were taught.

The heavy involvement of parents in the program was also unique. In the multi-media program and at the camp, parents played a central role in the learning process. The Gracie Bullyproof program emphasizes to parents that they take their children's concerns seriously and be there to provide the protection that they need. This emphasis on parental involvement appeals to parents who are personally involved with the child and searching for family solutions to the bullying problem.

Overall, the Gracie Bullyproof program appears to embrace much of what research has suggested is needed, while avoiding the downsides of most self-defense approaches. It appeals to victims and families without alienating educators by encouraging violent responses that could escalate the level of violence in bullying situations.

Returning to the research questions. These interviews and the follow-up questionnaires yielded an abundance of data. The second stage of data analysis resulted in 12 recurring themes.

Responses were chunked and placed into 12 columns, each representing a theme. Initially, coded data was reviewed at the family-group level—that is, responses were reviewed within the context of the family's other responses. This discrete data analysis was very beneficial in gaining an understanding of each family's lived experiences, independent of the other families. In order to better understand the nature of bullying and the Gracie Bullyproof experience, a comparative analysis was necessary.

Comparative analysis began with the matching of each thematic column with the same column from each of the other family groups. For example, columns labeled *Reasons for Participation* were taken from each coded interview and placed along side the same column from other interviews. An example with selections taken from this comparative analysis is included in Table 4. This provided an opportunity to compare family groups to each other based on their similar (or dissimilar) responses. Each "chunk" was associated with the child or parent who spoke: "m:" for mother, "f:" for father, "s:" for son, and "d:" for daughter.

Table 4

Example of Comparative Analysis - Reasons for Participation

Lee and Candace	Kimberly and Joseph	Gavin	Danny	Shawn	Elaine and Michael
m: "our kids were dealing with . . . some bullying" m: "he had been assaulted before" m: "he wound up going to the hospital"	*s: "I don't know, our dad just bought these discs one day . . . we just started playing the games and we loved them"* *d: "since we don't get bullied it's basically just about having fun and learning for if we ever do get bullied . . . and exercising"*	*s: "I was getting bullied a lot."* m: "it was getting physical" s: "*I couldn't even go to the washroom without being picked on. I was beat up in the washroom"* m: "we wanted him to be able to defend himself. We wanted him to be able to stick up for himself"	f: "nothing more than what what just kids do" f: "having something like this would have been extremely, extremely great" f: "building of confidence" s: *"so we could come wrestle"*	*s: "because of at my other school . . . there was this one kid . . . and he was bullying me"* f: "I just remember feeling so afraid because I wasn't prepared, I didn't know how to handle that. I wish they would've had this back when I was growing up"	*s: "not bullying but I've had teasing like, really mean teasing"* *d: "just verbal, just this year"* m:" he was taken into the bathroom and kids would beat, like punch him and kick him" m&f:" psychological warfare"

Comparative analysis continued as thematic columns were again compared, this time based on their unique usefulness in providing additional insights into changes that occurred over time. For example, *Effects on the Individual* were compared with *Program Results*. Such comparisons provided a more diachronic look into the lived experiences of families and individuals by comparing how individuals and families viewed their situation before and after participating in the program. An example of this stage of analysis is included in Table 5.

Both methods of comparative analysis were very useful and provided additional insights into family experiences and bullying in general. Comparative and discrete analysis, when combined, was very useful in addressing the research questions identified at the beginning of the study.

Table 5

Example of Comparative Analysis – Before and After Participation

Effects on the Individual	Effects on the Family	Program Results
m: "there was some apprehension on his part"	m: "I watched my athletic, funny, smart kid just turn inward and crawl into a ball, with anxiety and fear"	*s: "nothing really happened after that"*
m: "the fear became less apprehension . . . and more, 'am I going to survive the day am I going to get hurt'"	f: "this is pervasive . . . everything else gets knotted up and it feeds on itself"	m :"he carried himself different . . . everywhere"
m: "migraines" m: "stomach issues" m: "almost vomiting" m: "chewing his nails down to almost nothing" m: "he could barely eat some days" m: "sleep was disrupted" m: "nightmares"	f: "anxious to go to school . . . you worry about . . . will he be safe in his class?"	m: "he played different in hockey . . . he broke up fights in the game. he would protect his goalie differently"
f: "this affects their entire life"		m: "he walked different when we walked through the mall"
f: "it affects how they eat, how they sleep, school, work, friendships . . . everything"		s: *"I don't have to be scared to do anything . . . just fight back with my words or jiu jitsu"*
		m: "it gives me peace to know that she's not starting as far back behind the line"
		m: "[son] isn't walking around as a fire, he's not spreading fire, but he knows how to put it out. And that's the difference . . . and that shifts who you are. All of the sudden you are like woah!"

Why do families choose to participate in the Gracie Bullyproof program? As might be expected, when families were asked why they chose to participate in the Gracie Bullyproof program, the discussion almost immediately turned toward bullying. Previous experiences with bullying varied dramatically from family to family. Past experience ranged from having had no history of victimization to having been hospitalized for injuries received during a physical attack. Respondents almost inevitably stated that they were motivated either by a desire to stop bullying from happening again, or to be prepared in case it ever did. Parents often had their own history of victimization that also motivated them to want to prepare their children. Whether or not they had experienced bullying in the past, all respondents felt that children needed to be given skills to help them know how to respond to bullying.

Children expressed some doubt about their schools' ability to protect them, although they did not express it as passionately as parents did. As previous research has suggested, there was some indication that children felt that reporting bullying to their teacher would simply make things worse. Parents and children expressed an almost universal disappointment with their schools' ability to handle bullying effectively. Parents routinely expressed frustration and lack of confidence in schools, teachers, and administrators. One of the most common complaints that parents had about their schools was that administrators would say one thing and do another. Parents seemed somewhat dismayed by what might be considered hollow promises of safety and competence at their schools. When describing past experiences with administrators handling bullying, parents used phrases like "sweep it under the rug," "put band aids on all the situations," and "bury their head in the sand." These emotionally loaded phrases suggest some very deep-seated concerns for the safety of their children at school.

One somewhat surprising issue that came up more than once during the course of this study was the perception that some bullying came from teachers. In two cases, families described the bullying of their child as beginning with or being made significantly worse by a teacher. In one case, parents felt that a teacher actually encouraged bullying from students. In both cases, the families suggested that teacher behaviors either initiated or exacerbated the problem.

In many cases, the initial decision to search for a bullying prevention program outside of the schools came from what might be described as an act of desperation on the part of parents. Parents usually did not turn to the Gracie Bullyproof program as their first response. Parents usually began by meeting with teachers and administrators, and then progressed to other strategies like transferring schools, homeschooling, taking the child to a doctor or therapist, teaching the child to hit back, and enrolling the child in a martial arts program. While some of these strategies helped, most were either ineffective or involved additional costs and liabilities that made them difficult to maintain.

Participating families often painted a very desperate picture as they searched for solutions to their child's bullying. Descriptions of the negative effects of bullying on the victim were very much in line with what previous research has shown. Children who were victims experienced depression, fear, migraines, nausea, social isolation, suicidal thoughts, and a host of other physiological symptoms. As the severity of these symptoms worsened, parents often became more and more desperate to break the cycle.

One of the most revealing themes that emerged as the study progressed was the profound impact that bullying can have on a family. While a lot of research has been done dealing with the effects of bullying on those directly involved, very little has been done examining the impact that bullying can have on a victim's family. Family members described experiencing symptoms very

similar to those experienced by the victims themselves including depression, insomnia, helplessness, anxiety, loss of appetite, a loss of trust in school leadership, family conflict, and marital distress. In addition, some participants described experiencing financial difficulties as a result of the victimization of their children which only compounded the family stress.

Not only did families reflect the negative effects of bullying on the victim and on the family, but suggested that these negative effects can feed on each other. As the negative effects on the victim would worsen, so would stress and discord within the family. As the level of stress and conflict within the family increased, the child's sense of stability and safety at home diminished. The result can be a vicious cycle that impacts much more than just the victim. "It can tear a family apart," one father said.

How do students and their parents perceive their experience in the program?

Without exception, parents and children used very positive terms when describing their experience during the Gracie Bullyproof camp, as well as any previous experiences with the Gracie Bullyproof program. Parents seemed to be most impressed with the way that lessons were taught at the Gracie Bullyproof camp. They routinely expressed how happy they were with the way that Gracie Bullyproof instructors conducted the camp. Parents described the camp as fun, playful, and an amazing experience. Several parents had enrolled their children in martial arts programs elsewhere, and often expressed their satisfaction with these programs. but they almost universally described the Gracie Bullyproof program as uniquely beneficial. Children seemed to love the program because it was fun. They described the games and activities in a very positive light.

Parents also expressed their satisfaction for what was taught in the program. They appreciated the emphasis on respect, confidence, and non-violence. They liked the physical

exercise portion of the training as well as the social interaction between students. Perhaps more than anything, they seemed to value the fact that their children were given a step-by-step plan for responding to verbal and physical bullying.

The only concern expressed about the camp was whether or not the Gracie Bullyproof staff on hand was large enough to handle the large number of children who enrolled in the camp. Two parents expressed the desire that more instructors be present in the future.

How do students and their parents perceive the impact of the program on their ability to prevent or respond to bullying? When interviewed at the camp, children and their parents expressed a lot of optimism about their ability to handle bullying situations once they returned home. Children quickly recited the steps and methods they had been taught, and parents expressed overall confidence in their children's ability to follow those steps. Parents also expressed that they felt more prepared as well, based on the parent preparation training, as well as what they observed in the camp. One parent did express some concern about her child's ability to apply what he had been taught, based largely on his disability and personality. All parents expressed confidence in the methods taught, if applied correctly.

When families returned home and completed the two-month update, confidence in the program was even more positive. Most students had at least one experience in which they used Gracie Bullyproof tactics to respond to aggression, and half of them had used physical self-defense methods to defend themselves against physical aggression. Respondents generally felt that these strategies were successful in neutralizing the situation and did so without resulting in the victim being disciplined by school officials.

In one case, a student responded to a physical confrontation by pushing the aggressor to the ground. He and his parents expressed that they felt this was done in spite of the training he

had received, and not because of it. His parents felt that this behavior was a violation of the Gracie Bullyproof "rules of engagement" and expressed their desire that he handle the situation better in the future.

Several of the families who participated in the study had significant histories of victimization. The Gracie Bullyproof program appeared to not only help victims respond to bullying, but to heal from past experiences. One of the students was able to return to school. Another reported that the physical and psychological symptoms that plagued him had disappeared. Parents also reported significant improvements in their outlook and confidence in their children's safety.

Several parents also reported that the program resulted in a "shift" in their thinking. In at least one case a parent had previously supported violent responses to bullying, but felt that the program gave his son other options. In another case a mother reported the opposite, stating that the program had encouraged her to allow her children to use non-violent but physical self-defense whereas she had previously been against it.

The Social-Ecological Model as a Framework for Analysis

As might be expected in a qualitative study, discussions, observations, and responses often extended beyond the scope of the research questions originally developed for this study and provided important insights that extended across all SEM domains. The original research questions dealt primarily with families' participation in the Gracie Bullyproof program. Throughout the study, there were many themes that emerged that extended well beyond the scope of the research questions but were certainly useful in understanding the wider issues of bullying and aggression in schools. While some of these emerging themes have been previously mentioned as they relate to the research questions themselves, it is important to discuss these

themes as they extended beyond those research questions. These themes were not necessarily independent of the research questions, but extended well beyond them. These themes can be viewed using the social-ecological model as a frame of reference.

The social-ecological model provided a framework from which themes were examined. Using the SEM provided not only a deeper look into the research questions themselves, but allowed the researcher to extend the examination beyond the scope of those questions as well. As the primary unit of analysis, the family functioned as the frame of reference from which all domains are explored. It is important to understand that perspectives on the individual, community, school, etc. are all given from the family perspective.

Individual. As previously discussed, the negative effects described by families in this study correspond closely with previous research. They were also a large part of why families chose to participate in the Gracie Bullyproof program. Study participants felt that participation in the Gracie Bullyproof program was helpful in both prevention and response to bullying. Students and their families felt better prepared to handle future incidents, and saw the effects from past experiences minimized.

Respondents also shared some unique insights into what prevented them from responding to bullying in the past. Students often felt confused about what to do and either responded in anger or failed to respond at all. Students also reported that they were unlikely to report bullying incidents to school personnel out of fear that they may get in trouble, or that the teacher or administrator may actually make things worse. They also worried about reprisals from the bully. As respondents participated in the Gracie Bullyproof program, they seemed more willing to report any future incidents because it fit into a more comprehensive plan to address the issue.

Students took great comfort in the fact that if reporting failed, they still had options and choices available to them.

Family. The choice to participate in the Gracie Bullyproof program was primarily a family decision. One of the emerging themes in this study was the profound negative impact that bullying can have on a victim's entire family. Families often mentioned this as a motivation for their participation in the Gracie Bullyproof program. Beyond this, multiple respondents made it very clear that they wanted others to know how strong and negative the impact of bullying was. Parents often became very passionate and emotional when sharing the stories of how their child's victimization had impacted their lives. They described the experience as "pervasive," "overwhelming," and "a terrible lifestyle." Parents routinely expressed feeling helpless, confused, stressed, and angry. They similarly painted a picture of being caught between wanting an education for their children and feeling that school was not a safe place for their children.

Lack of confidence in school officials was a running theme throughout this study, paralleling previous research. However, the results of this study seem to suggest that student and parent confidence in school officials doesn't start out poorly, but decreases with experience and despite repeated assurances that school officials are on top of things. When children are victimized, parents appear to be initially supportive of school strategies to deal with bullying. This suggests that schools need to do more than simply reassure parents. They need to follow-through on promises. They need to improve their abilities to prevent and respond to bullying.

Overall, respondents made it quite clear that bullying is largely a family ordeal. Fathers, mothers, and even siblings can be heavily impacted by the experiences of one member of their family. Researchers would be well suited to recognize the integral role of the family in bullying prevention, and in education in general.

Schools. Closely related to the impact that victimization can have on the family was the profound lack of confidence that parents and children expressed in their school's ability to deal effectively with bullying. It should be noted here that while this view was virtually universal in this study, respondents included families who had already pursued outside solutions to the bullying problem. That being said, the views expressed by these families can likely be considered representative of at least a portion of the student and parent population.

Perhaps even more revealing were the detailed concerns that parents and students expressed about their schools. As previously discussed, parents often used revealing phrases such as "sweep it under the rug," "put band aids on all the situations," and "bury their head in the sand." They routinely described situations in which school representatives would tell them one thing and then do another. Parents shared they were frequently reassured that everything was alright, only to see their children continue to spiral downhill. The result for these parents seemed to be an almost complete loss of trust and confidence in anything the schools did or said regarding bullying. As one father said, "I trusted adults. I trusted certificates on the wall, and I trusted that they told me they were going to do . . . I'll listen to children, but I'll believe an adult. Unfortunately I did." Although previous research has suggested that victims and victim families of bullying experience lower levels of confidence in schools, families who had not experienced victimization generally expressed a lack of confidence in schools as well. This apparent lack of confidence in schools appeared to come from discussions with other parents and media portrayals of school officials.

Community and Culture. Parents and families also expressed some doubt in the direction that society seems to be going with regard to bullying. Even those parents whose children had not really experienced bullying in the past cited the overall situation in schools and

society as a reason for deciding to participate in the Gracie Bullyproof program. Parents often cited new stories and movies as having influenced their perceptions, as well as conversations they had with other parents.

Interaction between domains. As suggested in previous research, families and schools deal with bullying in very different ways. Students who participated in this study exhibited more confidence in family responses to bullying than school personnel. The family-school disconnect initially discussed in this study appears to be significant. Respondents made several suggestions that may help shed light on this disconnect. Parents were quite aware that a family's priority will be the protection of the individual, while the school's priority will be the protection of the masses. This difference in focus inevitably leads to differences in approach. In addition, schools have to balance the well-being of victims, bullies, and other players. The family is under no such obligation.

Individual students regularly expressed their lack of confidence in school personnel. They did not express similar concerns about family responses. However, the presence of parents during the interview process may explain some of this. This issue will require further research to fully understand just how much confidence students have in their parents when it comes to bullying.

Researcher Reflections on the Social-Ecological Model.

As previously discussed, the interview process with family groups revealed a limitation to the bullying social-ecological model developed by the researcher, and similar models used by other educational researchers. The off-center, nested circles model is certainly useful in evaluating the complex relationships between various domains. In this study, however, it became clear that when families lose confidence in the school, they begin to take more and more independent steps to stop their children from being victimized. In more than one case, families

completely removed their children from the public schools—thereby eliminating the school relationship from their domain and from their child's domain.

The view of the individual and the family as inextricably linked to the school can be helpful. However, the idea that families and individuals can make decisions independent of their school is important as well, and could be beneficial in further understanding family-individual and family-school relationships.

It is also important to note that the nested-bullying SEM visually represents the individual as part of the family, and the family as part of the school. Family groups in this study made it very clear that they do not consider themselves wholly "contained" within the school domain. This arrangement may suggest some subordination or at least a level of "containment" that did not accurately represent each family's perception of the relationships between the individual, family, and school. In order to better represent their experiences and perceptions, an additional approach was needed.

Neal and Neal (2013) have recently argued for the use of a *networked* rather than *nested* social-ecological model. In this model:

> the ecological environment is an overlapping arrangement of structures, each directly or indirectly connected to the others by the direct and indirect social interactions of their participants. This definition not only highlights that systems are not necessarily nested within one another but also clarifies that it is individuals' patterns of social interactions with . . . another that determine how systems relate to one another. Moreover, it allows each type of system to be precisely defined in terms of patterns of interaction. (p. 727)

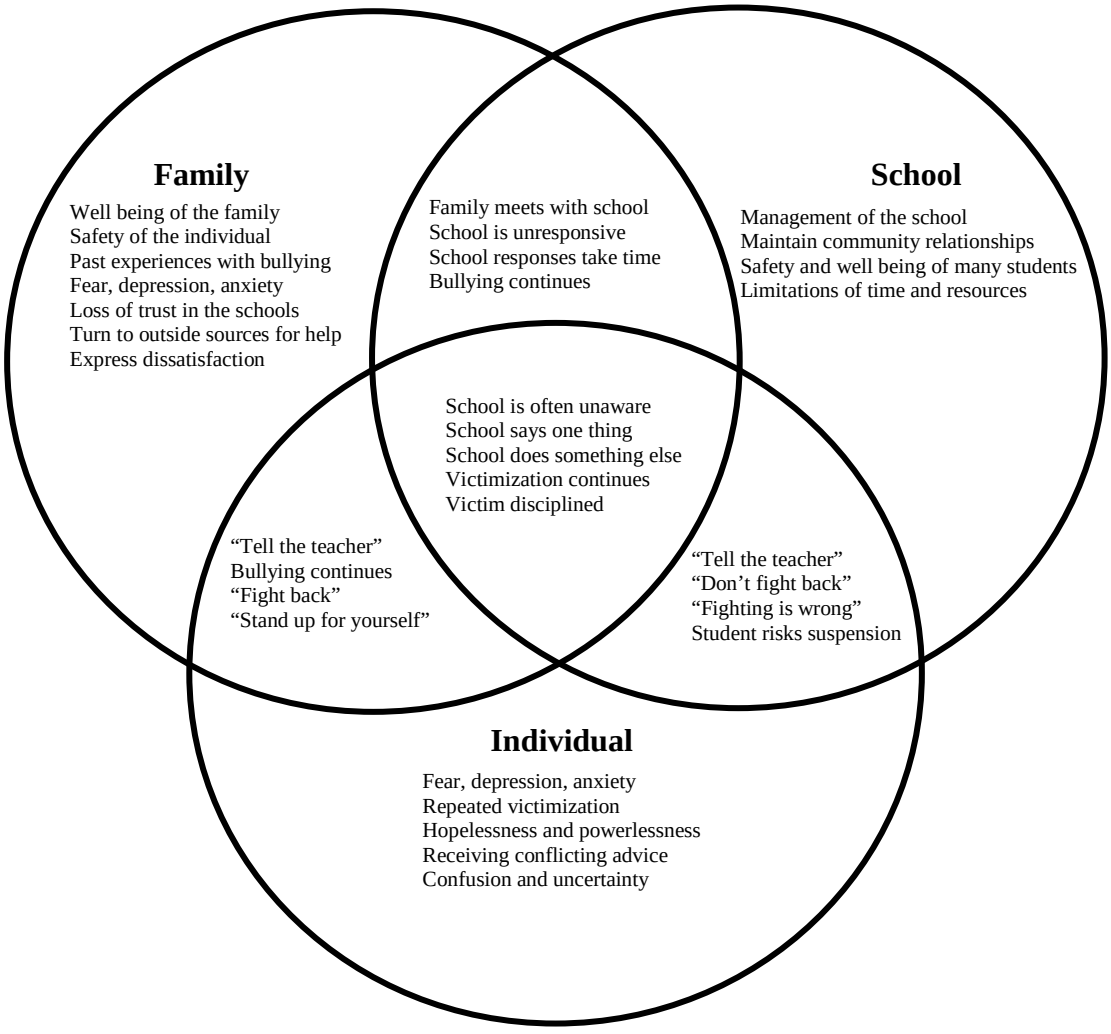
The model proposed by Neal and Neal (2013) is a useful one, but not tailored to the unique needs of this study. This concept, however, that domains can be treated as overlapping

rather than nested structures, and that these overlaps consist of interactions between the two domains, can be quite useful in understanding family decision making in this study. I believe this approach more accurately portrays the family perspective of the decision making process and family-school interactions.

Figure 6 represents a networked SEM model that summarizes the family experiences and researcher findings included in this study. This model can be treated largely as an extension of the original bullying model. Only the three inner domains are included, and the circles have been

Figure 6

Networked Bullying Social-Ecological Model



shifted to represent an overlapping but not subordinate relationship. These two models, used in conjunction, provide additional insight into family experiences and the decision making process. This revised model should be treated as another perspective to, not a replacement for, the original model.

The model represented in Figure 6 includes common themes and family perspectives of the factors at play within each domain, as well as the interactions between those domains. The overlapping sections include family perspectives of the interactions between those two domains. The overlapping portions of the circles include values or *considerations* that influence decisions. It is important to remember that these interactions are given primarily from the family perspective. A similar illustration could be composed from the perspective of the school or the individual, but that is beyond the scope of this study.

Utilizing this model, it is not hard to see where conflicts begin and trust breaks down. Schools and parents approach bullying prevention from very different angles, and with different considerations. While the primary concern of the family is the protection of their child, the school must balance the management of hundreds or thousands of students, limitations of time and resources, and public perceptions. The victim has immediate needs, needs which are not always addressed in a timely manner. When victimization continues at school, the family often perceives this as a failure in school policy or procedure. As expressed by one parent, during the school day the student's safety is the responsibility of the school. Families often felt that schools were either unable or unwilling to provide that safety.

Conclusions

Bullying in schools continues to be a problem in the United States and many other nations. Most bullying prevention efforts in the United States emphasize changes in school

culture designed to minimize bullying, and reporting of those incidents that do occur. Despite a dramatic increase in awareness and prevention efforts over the last twenty years, there is little evidence that bullying is decreasing or that current strategies are having a significant impact on victimization rates. The results of this study when combined with previous research can provide some guidance for educators to help them understand why current strategies may be proving ineffective as well as what steps might be taken in the future.

Bullying is harmful and dangerous. Involvement in bullying has profound negative consequences on victims, bullies, and even bystanders. These effects extend well beyond the individual. It makes sense that aggressive or violent behavior might have an effect on an individual's family or peers as well. The negative effects of victimization alone were very apparent in this study. Quite simply, failing to effectively deal with bullying has long term and far reaching consequences for individuals, for families, and likely for schools and communities.

School personnel are rarely aware of bullying that occurs. Most bullying takes place in unsupervised areas and out of the view of teachers and administrators. When incidents do occur, students seldom report them to school personnel. Students are often afraid that reporting an incident may get them in trouble, or that the teacher's response may make the situation worse. "Zero tolerance" policies that treat all parties involved in acts of violence appear to exacerbate the problem by making students less likely to report and further decrease student and parent confidence in school officials. In short, victims typically do not report bullying when it does occur and express high levels of skepticism that school officials will effectively deal with the problem.

Actions taken by school personnel often lower student and parent confidence levels. Even though bullying incidents by definition must involve an aggressor and a victim, school

officials often elect to discipline both participants similarly. This may come, in part, from a hesitancy to choose sides and engage in the conflicts that may come with doing so. However, these “zero tolerance” policies not only fail to discourage aggressive behavior, but further discourage victims from reporting. Generally speaking, when students and parents do report bullying, the result is counterproductive and their level of confidence in school personnel decreases.

As parent confidence levels decrease, they often give their own advice and turn to outside sources for help. These outside sources of help do not always align well with school policy, nor are they inevitably more effective. Students often find themselves receiving mixed signals from parents and school personnel. This results in a high level of confusion, which further exacerbates the bullying cycle. On the other hand, the Gracie Bullyproof program appears to be an effective and helpful program as evaluated by parents and families.

Families are an essential part of bullying prevention, and education in general. Student relationships with school personnel, mentors, and other influential individuals can be important. However, the connection between students and their families is a significant one. Educators would be well served to recognize the importance and influential nature of family relationships in the educational process.

Providing students with a series of step-by-step instructions is beneficial. Individuals directly involved in bullying provide the most potential for influencing behavior as it occurs. Emotional and violent responses are often the result of confusion and fear. Providing strong guidelines and a series of incremental steps that can be taken to deal with bullying lessens fear and confusion, likely lessening victimization.

Non-violent, self-defense training has many positive outcomes for students and families. Students and parents universally expressed positive views of the Gracie Bullyproof program and its results. Participants in the study routinely described increased confidence, decreased levels of fear, and a decrease in the effects experienced from previous victimization. Evidence strongly suggests that such training may not only help prevent students from becoming repeated victims of bullying, but may also assist victims to emotionally recover from the effects of past victimization.

Recommendations for Further Research

As might be expected, many of the findings in this study mirror those of previous research. in addition, some new themes also arose, while others merited further consideration.

Findings supporting previous research. Those participants who had previous experiences with bullying fit very well into the profile of the "typical victim" described by Fanti and Kimonis (2013); Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim and Sadek (2010); and Brown, Birch, and Kacherla (2005). Participants were "different" in some ways that seemed to encourage or attract bullies. They often did well academically, but struggled socially. Each experienced struggles with self-image, which can be both a consequence of and a contributor to victimization. Negative views of themselves and their life situations were clearly present. In at least two cases, participants readily acknowledged a higher level of impulsivity which they felt increased the chances of them becoming a target. In response to bullying, some students tried to fight back, tell the bully to stop, or reported the incident to an adult. but in most cases they chose to do nothing. Participants expressed a high level of confusion about what to do when initially confronted with bullying. Both passive and provocative victims were present in the study. In

both cases, passivity and provocation appeared to contribute to the bullying cycle as suggested by Perry, Hodges, and Egan (2001).

Participants described a host of short and long-term negative consequences associated with their victimization. These negative effects included physical and emotional symptoms. Two participants had past experiences of such severity that they experienced numerous physical and emotional ailments. These negative effects often combined with one aother to make the situation quite overwhelming.

The findings of this study strongly support contentions made by Bandura (1989); Sharp (1996); and Reid, Monsen, and Rivers (2004); that actively and assertively responding to bullying is essential to prevention, response, and recovery. Participants with no significant history of bullying expressed confidence in their ability to respond, and a decrease in fear and anxiety about the possibility of being bullied in the future. More remarkably, students with a history of severe bullying expressed a profound change in experience and well-being. They reported that the full utilization of such training stopped the cycle of bullying and aided significantly in recovery.

Emerging themes. There were also several themes that arose during this study that were unanticipated and merit further research. As a result of the nature and limitations of this study, there were also several areas where conclusions were difficult to make, or where the generalizability and transferability of those conclusions was unclear. While limited in their applicability at this time, these areas could prove very useful as guides for further research.

As has been noted, very little research has been conducted to evaluate the impact that self-defense training can have on individuals and families who are victims of bullying. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that if done correctly, self-defense training may have a significant

and positive impact on victims and their families. It is possible that such training may also help individuals from becoming bullies or passive bystanders. Given the positive impact that such training has been shown to have on victims of other forms of violence as well as the results of this study, more research is warranted. Such research could potentially help inform school practices as well as family strategies to stop bullying. It will be important to include both qualitative and quantitative research in order to establish just how generalizable these positive benefits may be.

One of the most important themes that continually arose throughout the course of this study was the extent to which bullying is a family experience. What was somewhat surprising was how deeply the negative effects of bullying extended into the family. Parents described negative effects very similar to the victims themselves. They also described how these negative effects experienced by the various family members fed on each other. The social-ecological model and similar systems models often place family relationships very near the individual in influence and proximity. Despite this awareness, very little research has been done to evaluate the complex interactions that take place between the individual, their family, and the school. Specifically, how do family and school strategies impact each other? Further research is also needed to examine the effects that bullying has on the family and on family dynamics. If educators hope to team up with families to stop bullying, they need to better understand what goes on within the families of victims, bullies, and even bystanders.

Additional research is needed to evaluate the impact that comprehensive and non-violent self-defense training can have on overall school culture. While the positive benefits for individuals and families who participated in the Gracie Bullyproof program were quite clear in this study, it remains to be seen if similar benefits would be experienced by classes or entire

schools. Additional research is needed to evaluate whether or not the Gracie Bullyproof philosophy and methodology could be used as an overall bullying prevention strategy for schools or educational agencies.

Implications for Professional Practice

A study that focuses primarily on family dynamics may seem to have limited implications for professional practice in education. However, previous research has clearly shown that cooperation between families and schools has a very positive effect on student performance and well-being. Improving our understanding, in and of itself, is valuable to educators. In addition, the recognition that schools and parents are often sending mixed and/or conflicting signals to children is an important concept.

Today, school bullying prevention efforts generally rely on teacher observations, student reporting, and rules enforcement. Unfortunately, most bullying occurs in unsupervised areas, most bullying is not reported, and actions taken by school personnel are largely ineffective. Professional educators should recognize these deficiencies and be willing to consider alternative methods.

Based on input from parents, school leaders may need to consider the need to identify an aggressor and a victim in bullying situations could be beneficial to all concerned--victims, bullies, and bystanders. Zero tolerance and similar policy approaches that treat victim and aggressor as equally culpable appear to have very negative effects on victims as well as to alienate their parents.

Zero tolerance policies were strongly opposed by most parents in this study. Individuals and families repeatedly expressed the view that treating acts of aggression and acts of physical self-defense as one and the same actually empowered bullies and further weakened victims.

While it is clear that escalating violence in schools is not a good thing, educators and administrators would be well served to consider allowing students to use non-violent but physical methods to defend themselves. School leaders may need to consider making allowance for non-violent but physical self-defense responses to bullying. If educators acknowledge that freedom from fear and harm is a fundamental human right, then it stands to reason that if educators fail to ensure that human right, students should be allowed to do what they can to ensure their own safety and security. The right to resist violence has been shown to be an essential aspect of prevention and recovery for victims of other forms of violence. The recognition that being a victim does not mean that you have done something wrong is an important part of recovery for any victim. Educational policies that blame the victim would never be tolerated for victims of sexual assault for example. Educators need to consider the possibility that resistance to violence may also be a fundamental human right that should not be denied to any individual whether they are a school student or not.

Researcher Reflections

As explained earlier, my educational and career decisions have been shaped largely by a desire to understand bullying and to learn what I can do to help others prevent and respond to it. I began this study as a teacher, a former school administrator, a self-defense instructor, a parent, and a former victim, with all the experiences, values, and biases that this entails. Not only during the study, but throughout my career, these roles have resulted in conflicting interests and loyalties. I remember well having students who were both pupils of mine at the public school and at my self-defense academy. When I was asked how to handle a bullying situation, I gave very different answers depending on whether I was functioning in my role as a father, a self-defense instructor, or an educator. I remember more than once asking, “are you asking your principal,

your martial arts instructor, or a father?" If the prevention of bullying was a scientific endeavor, why did I feel that these answers had to vary? If bullying is a consistent behavior, then shouldn't the solutions be consistent as well?

As the study progressed, I found that my previous experience and biases actually provided some balance and a great deal of insight. When families expressed their concerns about public schools, the teacher in me wanted to be defensive. At the same time, the parent in me had experienced similar concerns, and empathized with their position. My own positive and negative experiences with self-defense training also allowed me to conduct research from multiple angles.

Despite all efforts, I did not find a cure-all solution for bullying in schools. What I did find were many small answers that helped me understand the situation and what could be done to help individuals and families. I am convinced that victims need have hope. They need to feel that they are not completely powerless and that they have some control over their own destinies. When victims feel powerless, they turn to outside sources to regain some sense of control over their lives. These sources may be constructive and helpful. At other times, these may include self-destructive behaviors or even acts of violence. As educators, parents, and mentors, we need to provide students with hope.

In this study, children and parents spoke very highly of the Gracie Bullyproof program. They appreciated what was taught and how the training was conducted. For some, it was a fun and positive experience. For others, it was a life-changing godsend that helped victims and their families finally recover and move forward from traumatic past experiences. From those who had experienced traumatic victimization, healing and positive change came as a result of the confidence and hope participants took away from the program. They departed with the belief they could break the cycle of victimization in their lives.

References

Archer, J., & Coyne, S. M. (2005). An integrated review of indirect, relational, and social aggression. *Personality & Social Psychology Review (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates)*, *9*(3), 212-230. doi:10.1207/s15327957pspr0903_2

Atlas, R. S., & Pepler, D. J. (1998). Observations of bullying in the classroom. *Journal Of Educational Research*, 92(2), 86.

Baldry, A. C. (2003). Bullying in schools and exposure to domestic violence. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *27*(7), 713-732. doi:10.1016/S0145-2134(03)00114-5

Ball, K., & Martin, J. (2012). Self-defense training and traditional martial arts: Influences on self-efficacy and fear related to sexual victimization. *Sport, Exercise, And Performance Psychology*, *1*(2), 135-144. doi:10.1037/a0025745

Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. *American Psychologist*, *44*(9), 1175-1184.

Banks, A. L. (2010). Self-defense education: Five steps for developing awareness and prevention tactics. *Journal Of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, *81*(6), 13-20.

Barton, E. A. (2006). *Bully Prevention: Tips and Strategies for School Leaders and Classroom Teachers. Second Edition*. Corwin Press.

Bauman, S. (2008). The role of elementary school counselors in reducing school bullying. *Elementary School Journal*, *108*(5), 362-375.

Bauman, S. (2010). Cyberbullying in a rural intermediate school: An exploratory study. *Journal Of Early Adolescence*, *30*(6), 803-833.

Baxter, P., & Jack, S. (2008). Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers. *Qualitative Report*, *13*(4), 544-559.

Berg, B., & Lune, H. (2012). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (8th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Berger, K. (2007). Update on bullying at school: science forgotten?. *Developmental Review, 27*(1), 90-126.

Bernstein, J. Y., & Watson, M. W. (1997). Children who are targets of bullying: A victim pattern. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 12*(4), 483-498.

Borg, M. (1998). The emotional reactions of school bullies and their victims. *Educational Psychology, 18*(4), 433-444.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1976). *The Experimental Ecology of Education.*

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Toward an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist, 32*(7), 513-531. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.32.7.513

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press

Brown, S., Birch, D., & Kancherla, V. (2005). Bullying perspectives: experiences, attitudes, and recommendations of 9- to 13-year-olds attending health education centers in the United States. *Journal of School Health, 75*(10), 384-392. doi:10.1111/j.1746-1561.2005.tb06642.x10.1111/j.1746-1561.2005.00053.x

Bullyproofing the world, one child at a time. (n.d.). *GRACIEKids.com - Bullyproofing the world, one child at a time*. Retrieved June 10, 2014, from https://www.graciekids.com.

Buse, G. (2006). No holds barred sport fighting: a 10 year review of mixed martial arts competition. *British Journal Of Sports Medicine, 40*(2), 169-172.

Carlyle, K., & Steinman, K. (2007). Demographic differences in the prevalence, cooccurrence, and correlates of adolescent bullying at school. *Journal of School Health, 77*(9), 623-629. doi:10.1111/j.1746-1561.2007.00242.x

Cassel, K. (2010). Using the Social-Ecological Model as a research and intervention framework to understand and mitigate obesogenic factors in Samoan populations. *Ethnicity & Health, 15*(4), 397-416. doi:10.1080/13557858.2010.481330

Cook, C. R., Williams, K. R., Guerra, N. G., Kim, T. E., & Sadek, S. (2010). Predictors of bullying and victimization in childhood and adolescence: A meta-analytic investigation. *School Psychology Quarterly, 25*(2), 65-83. doi:10.1037/a0020149

Cooper, H. (1984). *The integrative research review.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Cooper, L., & Nickerson, A. (2013). Parent retrospective recollections of bullying and current views, concerns, and strategies to cope with children's bullying. *Journal of Child And Family Studies, 22*(4), 526-540.

Craig, W. M., & Pepler, D. J. (2007). Understanding bullying: From research to practice. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne, 48*(2), 86-93. doi:10.1037/cp2007010

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Creswell, J. (2012). *Educational research : planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Boston: Pearson.

Dake, J., Price, J., & Telljohann, S. (2003). The nature and extent of bullying at school. *Journal of School Health, 73*(5), 173-180. doi:10.1111/j.1746-1561.2003.tb03599.x

De La Rue, L., Espelage, D. L., & Rao, M. A., & (2013). Current research on school-based bullying: A social-ecological perspective. *Journal Of Social Distress & The Homeless, 22*(1), 7-21. doi:10.1179/1053078913Z.0000000002

Duncan, R. D. (2004). The Impact of Family Relationships on School Bullies and Their Victims. In D. L. Espelage, S. M. Swearer (Eds.), *Bullying in American schools: A social-ecological perspective on prevention and intervention* (pp. 227-244). Mahwah, NJ, US: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Erdur-Baker, Ö. (2009). Peer victimization, rumination, and problem solving as risk contributors to adolescents' depressive symptoms. *Journal of Psychology*, *143*(1), 78-90.

Espelage D.L., Swearer S.M., eds (2004). *Bullying in American schools: A social-ecological perspective on prevention and intervention.* Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers, Mahwah, NJ, US: pp. 1-12

Fanti, K. A., & Kimonis, E. R. (2013). Dimensions of juvenile psychopathy distinguish “bullies,” “bully-victims,” and “victims”. *Psychology of Violence,* doi:10.1037/a0033951

Farmer, T. W., Petrin, R. A., Robertson, D. L., Fraser, M. W., Hall, C. M., Day, S. H., & Dadisman, K. (2010). Peer relations of bullies, bully-victims, and victims: The two social worlds of bullying in second-grade classrooms. *Elementary School Journal, 110*(3), 364-392

Farrington, D. P., & Ttofi, M. M. (2011). Bullying as a predictor of offending, violence and later life outcomes. *Criminal Behaviour & Mental Health, 21*(2), 90-98. doi:10.1002/cbm.801

Fein, R. A., Vossekuil, B., Pollack, W. S., Borum, R., Modzeleski, W., & Reddy, M. (2002). *Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates*.

Fekkes, M., Pijpers, F. I. M., & Verloove-Vanhorick, S. P. (2005). Bullying: who does what, when and where? Involvement of children, teachers and parents in bullying behavior. *Health Education Research*, *20*(1), 81-91.

Ferguson, C. J., San Miguel, C., Kilburn, J. J., & Sanchez, P. (2007). The effectiveness of school-based anti-bullying programs: A meta-analytic review. *Criminal Justice Review*, *32*(4), 401-414. doi:10.1177/0734016807311712

Fraire, M., Prino, L., & Sclavo, E. (2008). An analysis of italian newspaper articles on the bullying phenomenon. *International Journal Of Psychology & Psychological Therapy*, *8*(2), 237-245.

Frey, K. S., Hirschstein, M. K., Edstrom, L. V., & Snell, J. L. (2009). Observed reductions in school bullying, nonbullying aggression, and destructive bystander behavior: A longitudinal evaluation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *101*(2), 466-481. doi:10.1037/a0013839

Frisén, A., Jonsson, A., & Persson, C. (2007). Adolescents' perception of bullying: who is the victim? Who is the bully? What can be done to stop bullying? *Adolescence*, *42*(168), 749-761.

Gidycz, C., Rich, C., Orchowski, L., King, C., & Miller, A. (2006). The evaluation of a sexual assault self-defense and risk-reduction program for college women: A prospective study. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, *30*(2), 173-186.

Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory—strategies for qualitative research.* New York: Aldine.

Gracie Academy (2014). *Gracie Bullyproof: Prepare your child for life.* [Brochure]. Torrance, CA: Gracie Academy.

Gracie BullyProof - Training Programs. (2014, January 1). Retrieved October 8, 2014, from http://www.gracieacademy.com/bully_proof.asp

Gracie, R., (Producer). (2009). *Gracie Bullyproof: Prepare your child for life* [DVD]. Torrance: The Gracie Academy.

Greenbank, P. (2003). The role of values in educational research: The case for reflexivity. *British Educational Research Journal*, *29*(6), 791-801.

Hampel, P., Manhal, S., & Hayer, T. (2009). Direct and relational bullying among children and adolescents: Coping and psychological adjustment. *School Psychology International*, *30*(5), 474-490.

Hancock, D., & Algozzine, R. (2006). *Doing case study research: A practical guide for beginning researchers*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Hawker, D. J., & Boulton, M. J. (2000). Twenty years' research on peer victimization and psychosocial maladjustment: A meta-analytic review of cross-sectional studies. *Journal Of Child Psychology & Psychiatry & Allied Disciplines*, *41*(4), 441.

Hawkins, D., Pepler, D. J., & Craig, W. M. (2001). Naturalistic observations of peer interventions in bullying. *Social Development*, *10*(4), 512-527.

Hazler, R. J., Miller, D. L., Carney, J. V., & Green, S. (2001). Adult recognition of school bullying situations. *Educational Research*, *43*(2), 133-146. doi:10.1080/00131880110051137

Hollander, J. A. (2014). Does self-defense training prevent sexual violence against women?. *Violence Against Women*, *20*(3), 252-269. doi:10.1177/1077801214526046

Horne, A. M., Stoddard, J. L., & Bell, C. D. (2007). Group approaches to reducing aggression and bullying in school. *Group Dynamics*, *11*(4), 262-271. doi:10.1037/089-2699.11.4.262

Hunter, S. C., Boyle, J., & Warden, D. (2004). Help seeking amongst child and adolescent victims of peer-aggression and bullying: The influence of school-stage, gender, victimisation, appraisal, and emotion. *British Journal Of Educational Psychology, 74*(3), 375-390.

Hunter, S. C., & Borg, M. G. (2006). The influence of emotional reaction on help seeking by victims of school bullying. *Educational Psychology*, *26*(6), 813-826.

Juvonen, J., & Graham, S. (2001). *Peer Harassment in School: The Plight of the Vulnerable and Victimized*. New York: Guilford Press.

Juvonen, J., Graham, S., & Schuster, M. (2003). Bullying among young adolescents: the strong, the weak, and the troubled. *Pediatrics, 112*(6), 1231-1237.

Juvonen, J., & Gross, E. (2008). Extending the school grounds?--Bullying experiences in cyberspace. *Journal of School Health*, *78*(9), 496-505. doi:10.1111/j.1746-1561.2008.00335.x

Klomek, A., Marrocco, F., Kleinman, M., Schonfeld, I. S., & Gould, M. S. (2007). Bullying, depression, and suicidality in adolescents. *Journal Of The American Academy Of Child And Adolescent Psychiatry*, *46*(1), 40.

Kochenderfer-Ladd, B., & Pelletier, M. E. (2008). Teachers' views and beliefs about bullying: Influences on classroom management strategies and students' coping with peer victimization. *Journal of School Psychology*, *46*(4), 431-453. doi:10.1016/j.jsp.2007.07.005

Koss, M. P. (1990). The women's mental health research agenda: Violence against women. *American Psychologist, 45*(3), 374-380. doi:10.1037/0003-066X.45.3.374

Krug, E. G., Mercy, J. A., Dahlberg, L. L., & Zwi, A. B. (2002). The world report on violence and health. *Lancet, 360*(9339), 1083.

Lamb, J., Pepler, D., & Craig, W. (2009). Approach to bullying and victimization. *Canadian Family Physician*, *55*(4), 356-360.

Larios, S. E., Lozada, R., Strathdee, S. A., Semple, S. J., Roesch, S., Staines, H., & ... Patterson, T. L. (2009). An exploration of contextual factors that influence HIV risk in female sex workers in Mexico: The Social Ecological Model applied to HIV risk behaviors. *AIDS Care*, *21*(10), 1335-1342. doi:10.1080/09540120902803190

Lather, P. (1986). Research as praxis. In W. Shadish, C. Reichardt, W. Shadish, C. Reichardt (Eds.), *Evaluation studies: Review annual, Vol. 12* (pp. 437-457). Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.

Law, D. R. (2004). A choice theory perspective on children's taekwondo. *International Journal Of Reality Therapy*, *24*(1), 13-18.

Limber, S. P., & Small, M. A. (2003). State laws and policies to address bullying in schools. *School Psychology Review*, *32*(3), 445-455.

Limber, S. P. (2011). Development, evaluation, and future directions of the olweus bullying prevention program. *Journal of School Violence*, *10*(1), 71-87.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. (2011). *Designing qualitative research*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

McLeroy, K., Bibeau, D., Steckler, A., & Glanz, K. (1988). An ecological perspective on health promotion programs. *Health Education Quarterly*, *15*(4), 351-377.

Mears, C. (2007). Computer gaming -- when virtual violence becomes real. (Cover story). *Psychiatric Times*, *24*(13), 1-8.

Merrell, K. W., Gueldner, B. A., Ross, S. W., & Isava, D. M. (2008). How effective are school bullying intervention programs? A meta-analysis of intervention research. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *23*, 26–42.

Min Jung, K., Catalano, R. F., Haggerty, K. P., & Abbott, R. D. (2011). Bullying at elementary school and problem behaviour in young adulthood: A study of bullying, violence and substance use from age 11 to age 21. *Criminal Behaviour & Mental Health*, *21*(2), 136-144. doi:10.1002/cbm.804

Mishna, F. (2004). A qualitative study of bullying from multiple perspectives. *Children & Schools*, *26*(4), 234-247.

Nansel, T., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R., Ruan, W., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among US youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *Journal of American Medical Association*, *285*(16), 2094-2100. Retrieved from http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=193774

Nansel, T. R., Craig, W., Overpeck, M. D., Saluja, G., & Ruan, W. J. (2007). Cross-national consistency in the relationship between bullying behaviors and psychosocial adjustment. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, 158,* 730–736. doi: 10.1001/archpedi.158.8.730.

Neal, W. & Neal, J. (2013). Nested or networked? Future directions for ecological systems theory. *Social Development*, *22*(4), 722-737.

Olweus, D. (1978). *Aggression in the schools: Bullies and whipping boys*. Oxford England: Hemisphere.

Olweus, D. (1993). Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do. Cambridge, MA:Blackwell.

Olweus, D. (1994). Bullying at school: basic facts and effects of a school based intervention program. *Journal of Child Psychology And Psychiatry, And Allied Disciplines*, *35*(7), 1171-1190.

Olweus, D. (1995). Bullying or peer abuse at school: Facts and intervention. *Current Directions in Psychological Science (Wiley-Blackwell), 4*(6), 196-200. doi:10.1111/1467-8721.ep10772640

Olweus, D. (2011). Bullying at school and later criminality: Findings from three Swedish community samples of males. *Criminal Behaviour & Mental Health, 21*(2), 151-156. doi:10.1002/cbm.806

Olweus, D., & Limber, S. (2010). Bullying in school: Evaluation and dissemination of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. *American Journal Of Orthopsychiatry*, *80*(1), 124-134. doi:10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01015.x

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., Collins, K. T., & Frels, R. K. (2013). Foreword: Using Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to frame quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research. *International Journal Of Multiple Research Approaches*, *7*(1), 2-8. doi:10.5172/mra.2013.7.1.2

Orchowski, L. M., Gidycz, C. A., & Raffle, H. (2008). Evaluation of a sexual assault risk reduction and self-defense program: A prospective analysis of a revised protocol. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 32*(2), 204-218. doi:10.1111/j.1471-6402.2008.00425.x

Padgett, S., & Notar, C. E. (2013). Anti-bullying programs for middle/high schools. *National Social Science Journal*, 40(2), 88-93.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage Publications, Inc.

Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.

Pearn, J. (1998). Boxing, youth and children. *Journal Of Paediatrics & Child Health, 34*(4), 311-313.

Pelissier, C. (1991). The anthropology of teaching and learning. *Annual Review Of Anthropology*, *20*75-95.

Perius, J. G., Brooks-Russell, A., Jing, W., & Iannotti, R. J. (2014). Trends in bullying, physical fighting, and weapon carrying among 6th- through 10th-grade students from 1998 to 2010: Findings from a national study. *American Journal Of Public Health, 104*(6), 1100-1106. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2013.301761

Perron, T. (2013). Peer victimisation: Strategies to decrease bullying in schools. *British Journal of School Nursing, 8*(1), 25-29.

Perry, D.G., Hodges, E.V.F., & Egan, S.K. (2001). Determinants of chronic victimization by peers: A review and new model of family influence. In J. Juvonen and S. Graham (Eds.), *Peer harassment in schools: The plight of the vulnerable and victimized* (pp. 73-104). New York: Guilford.

Porter, S. (2013). Why our approach to bullying is bad for kids. *Independent School, 72*(2), 72-78.

Ravitch, S., & Riggan, M. (2012). *Reason & rigor: How conceptual frameworks guide research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Reid, P., Monsen, J., & Rivers, I. (2004). Psychology's contribution to understanding and managing bullying within schools. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, *20*(3), 241-258.

Richard, J. F., Schneider, B. H., & Mallet, P. (2012). Revisiting the whole-school approach to bullying: Really looking at the whole school. *School Psychology International*, *33*(3), 263-284.

Robers, S., Kemp, J., Truman, K., & Snyder, T. (2012). National center for education statistics: *Indicators of school crime and safety: 2012*. (NCES 2013-036). Retrieved from: http://nces.ed.gov.

Rosa, E. M., & Tudge, J. (2013). Urie Bronfenbrenner's Theory of Human Development: Its Evolution From Ecology to Bioecology. *Journal Of Family Theory & Review*, *5*(4), 243-258. doi:10.1111/jftr.12022

Rozee, P. D., & Koss, M. P. (2001). Rape: A century of resistance. *Psychology Of Women Quarterly*, *25*(4), 295.

Sanjek, D. (1999). Paying the cost to be the boss. *Popular Music & Society*, *23*(3), 25.

Schwartz, D., Dodge, K. A., & Coie, J. D. (1993). The emergence of chronic peer victimization in boys' play groups. *Child Development*, *64*(6), 1755. doi:10.1111/1467-8624.ep9406130032

The Social-Ecological Model: A Framework for Prevention. (2014, August 26). Retrieved November 25, 2014, from http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/overview/social-ecologicalmodel.html

Selekman, J., & Vessey, J. A. (2004). Bullying: it isn't what it used to be. *Pediatric Nursing*, *30*(3), 246-249.

Shah, N. (2013). Progress, persistence seen in latest data on bullying. *Education Week, 32*(35), 14.

Sharp, S. (1996). Self-esteem, response style and victimization: Possible ways of preventing victimization through parenting and school based training programmes. *School Psychology International*, *17*(4), 347-357. doi:10.1177/0143034396174004

Sherer, Y. C., & Nickerson, A. B. (2010). Anti-bullying practices in American schools: Perspectives of school psychologists. *Psychology In The Schools*, *47*(3), 217-229.

Sinclair, J., Sinclair, L., Otieno, E., Mulinge, M., Kapphahn, C., & Golden, N. H. (2013). A Self-Defense Program Reduces the Incidence of Sexual Assault in Kenyan Adolescent Girls. *Journal Of Adolescent Health*, *53*(3), 374-380. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2013.04.008

Smith, P. K., Pepler, D., & Rigby, K. (2004). *Bullying in schools: How successful can interventions be?*. New York, NY US: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511584466

Smith, P., Smith, C., Osborn, R., & Samara, M. (2008). A content analysis of school anti-bullying policies: Progress and limitations. *Educational Psychology in Practice, 24*, 1–12. doi:10.1037/ a0022748.

Spiegel, D., & Alpert, J. L. (2000). The relationship between shame and rage: Conceptualizing the violence at Columbine High School. *Journal For The Psychoanalysis Of Culture & Society*, *5*(2), 237-245.

Stake, R. (1995) *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stocker, C. M., & Youngblade, L. (1999). Marital conflict and parental hostility: Links with children's sibling and peer relationships. *Journal Of Family Psychology*, *13*(4), 598-609. doi:10.1037/0893-3200.13.4.598

Strauss, A. (1995). Notes on the nature and development of general theories. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *1*(1), 7.

Strayhorn, J. M., & Strayhorn, J. C. (2009). Martial arts as a mental health intervention for children? Evidence from the ECLS-K. *Child And Adolescent Psychiatry And Mental Health*, *3*doi:10.1186/1753-2000-3-32

Suler, J. (2004). The online disinhibition effect. *Cyberpsychology & Behavior*, *7*(3), 321-326. doi:10.1089/1094931041291295

Swearer, S., Espelage, D. L., Vaillancourt, T., & Hymel, S. (2010). What can be done about school bullying? Linking research to educational practice. *Educational Researcher*, *39*(1), 38-47.

Theeboom, M., De Knop, P., & Vertonghen, J. (2009). Experiences of children in martial arts. *EJSS European Journal For Sport And Society*, *6*(1), 19-35.

Thomas, D. (2009). In praise of the anecdote or gaming for columbine. *Television & New Media*, *10*(1), 158-161.

Turkel, A. (2007). Sugar and spice and puppy dogs' tails: the psychodynamics of bullying. *Journal of The American Academy Of Psychoanalysis & Dynamic Psychiatry*, *35*(2), 243-258.

Vandebosch, H., & Van Cleemput, K. (2009). Cyberbullying among youngsters: Profiles of bullies and victims. *New Media & Society*, *11*(8), 1349-1371. doi:10.1177/1461444809341263

Veenstra, R., Lindenberg, S., Oldehinkel, A. J., De Winter, A. F., Verhulst, F. C., & Ormel, J. (2005). Bullying and victimization in elementary schools: A comparison of bullies,

victims, bully/victims, and uninvolved preadolescents. *Developmental Psychology*, *41*(4), 672-682. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.41.4.672

Vernberg, E. M., & Jacobs, A. K. (1999). Peer victimization and attitudes about violence during early adolescence. *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, *28*(3), 386.

Vertonghen, J., Theebom, M. (2012). Martial arts and youth: An analysis of contextual factors. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth, 17*(4), 237-241.

Vreeman, R. C., & Carroll, A. E. (2007). A systematic review of school-based interventions to prevent bullying. *Archives Of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, 161*(1), 78-88.

Waasdorp, T., Bradshaw, C. P., & Duong, J. (2011). The link between parents' perceptions of the school and their responses to school bullying: Variation by child characteristics and the forms of victimization. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 103*(2), 324-335. doi:10.1037/a0022748

Walsh, P. (1999). Values and detachment in educational research: The need for nuance. In D. Scott (Ed.) *Values and Educational Research.* London: Institute of Education/University of London.

Watson, M., & Bain, A. (1992). A preliminary study in teaching self-protective skills to children with moderate and severe. *Journal Of Special Education, 26*(2), 181.

Wolak, J., Mitchell, K. J., & Finkelhor, D. (2007). Does online harassment constitute bullying? An exploration of online harassment by known peers and online-only contacts. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 41*(6, Supplement 1), S51-S58.

Yin, R. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Appendix A1

Document and Media Sources

Gracie Bullyproof Electronic Documents

"Gracie Bullyproof"
http://www.gracieacademy.com/bully_proof.asp

"Embrace the Lifestyle: Gracie Bullyproof"
https://secure.gracieacademy.com/categories/dvds/GSD-GBPDVD.html

"Gracie News: Gracie Bullyproof 10-DVD Instructional Series"
http://www.gracieacademy.com/news/gracie-bullyproof®-10-dvd-instructional-series.asp

"Gracie News: Gracie Bullyproof Sponsorship"
http://www.gracieacademy.com/news/gracie-bullyproof-sponsorship.asp

"Embrace the Lifestyle: Gracie Bullyproof Summer Camp – Torrance, CA"
http://secure.gracieacademy.com/categories/bullyproof_camps/GSK-GBPSC715.html

"Gracie Bullyproof"
https://www.graciekids.com

"Gracie Bullyproof: About Gracie Bullyproof"
https://www.graciekids.com/about.aspx

"Gracie Bullyproof: Curriculum"
https://www.graciekids.com/track.aspx

"Gracie Bullyproof: Students and Schools"
https://www.graciekids.com/students.aspx

"Gracie Bullyproof: Frequently Asked Questions"
https://www.graciekids.com/faq.aspx

"Gracie Bullyproof: Select a Category"
https://www.graciekids.com/store.aspx

Appendix A2

Document and Media Sources

Gracie Bullyproof Printed Documents

Flyer
"Gracie Bullyproof: Prepare Your Child for Life"
Retrieved from the Gracie Academy

Class Schedule
"Gracie Jiu-Jitsu Academy"
Retrieved from the Gracie Academy

Flyer
"Blue Belt: Qualification Requirements"
Retrieved from the Gracie Academy

Printed Materials Accompanying 11-Volume DVD Set
"Gracie Bullyproof: Prepare Your Child for Life"
Purchased from www.gracieacademy.com

"Gracie Bullyproof Summer Camp in Flint, MI"
Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhOBMFofz58

Appendix A3

Document and Media Sources

Gracie Bullyproof Videos

11-Volume DVD Set
"Gracie Bullyproof: Prepare Your Child for Life"
Purchased from www.gracieacademy.com

"Video Album: Plugged In Breaking the Bully Culture: What Educators are Doing"
"Video Album: From Autistic to Bullyproof"
"Video Album: Gracie Jiu-Jitsu at Kids Birthday Party"
"Video Album: Gracie Bullyproof: A Teacher's Perspective"
"Video Album: GracieKids.com Guided Tour (Part 1/2)"
"Video Album: GracieKids.com Guided Tour (Part 2/2)"
"Video Album: Gracie Kids – White Yellow Belt Test"
"Video Album: Gracie Bullyproof by the Gracie Academy"
"Video Album: How to Bullyproof a Nation"
Retrieved from http://www.gracieacademy.com/media_videos.asp?aid=58&vp=8&#a

"Gracie Bullyproof: Austin's 1-Week Transformation"
Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8isR_Y-kfk

"How to 'Bullyproof' the Bully (The Gracie Way)"
Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f2jR00MSBJQ

"Let's Bullyproof Mackenzie"
Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vljWCEf39MY

"Gracie Bullyproof 1-Week Summer Camp (July 29-August 3, 2013"
Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DoyyPCwHfqg

"Please Help: Let's Bullyproof the 'Victim' and the 'Bully' from Australia Bullying Incident"
Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-HFLkCVnXU

Appendix A4

Document and Media Sources

Media Reports About Gracie Bullyproof

"Video Album: Gracie Bullyproof in the News"
http://www.gracieacademy.com/media_videos.asp?aid=58&vp=8&#a

"Bullyproof | GimmeMo.com"
Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dIxp95GKwU

"How to Teach Your Child to Be Bullyproof"
Retrieved from http://www.oprah.com/relationships/How-To-Teach-Your-Child-to-Be-Bullyproof-Video

Bullyproof Your Child for Life
Retrieved from http://www.oprah.com/relationships/Bullyproof-Your-Child-for-Life

"Gracie Bullyproof on NBC"
Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0GCzP2nfmo#t=12

"Bullying Victims Fight Back With Help From Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu Royalty"
Retrieved from http://www.thepostgame.com/features/201108/real-it-gets-victims-schoolyard-bullying-can-fight-back-help-ufc-royalty

"Brave: Austin 1 Year After the Beating. He is a Living Sara Bareilles Song"
Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMFpdD0Uytc

"Martial Arts to Stop Bullies - Rener Gracie Teaches Kids Self Defense in Norfolk Virginia"
Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HfaUCCJ4_M

"Gracie Jiu-Jitsu Academy Bullyproof Program (KTLA)"
Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yVUCj56gao

Fighting Back Against Bullies
Retrieved from http://am.blogs.cnn.com/2010/10/06/fighting-back-against-bullies/

Appendix B

Observation Protocol

Researcher: _____ Date: _____

Time: _____ Location:_____

Observation	Reflection

Appendix C

Participant Selection Criteria

Age	<9	10-12	13-15	16-17
Gender	M	F		
Origin	United States		Other:	

Level of Engagement in Learning

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Instructor Recommendation

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Skill Level / Proficiency

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Parent/Guardian Availability

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Appendix D

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Date: _____

Family ID: _____

Introduction

- ☐ Introduce yourself
- ☐ Read verbatim the Study Introduction and Instructions
- ☐ Provide Informed Consent, Parental Permission, and Minor Assent forms
- ☐ Ask if participants have any questions
- ☐ Upon receipt of forms, double check audio equipment and continue…

Demographics

- ☐ Tell me a little bit about yourself.
  Prompts:
  - o Trainee age
  - o Trainee grade
  - o School attended by trainee?
  - o What motivated you to want to participate in the Bullyproof program?

  Prompts:
  - ▪ Trainee Responses
  - ▪ Parent Responses

The Training Experience

- ☐ Tell me about the experience you've had while attending this camp
  Prompts:
  - o Trainee Responses
  - o Parent Responses

- ☐ How would you describe the level of concern you had about being bullied (your child being bullied) before your training?
  Prompts:

- Trainee Responses
- Parent Responses

☐ How would you describe it (the level of concern you had about being bullied or your child being bullied) now?

☐ If you are confronted with a bullying situation, do you feel more or less confident in your ability to handle that situation effectively than you did before you participated in this camp?

☐ If you are bullied in the future, how do you think you will respond?

☐ If you were bullied in the past, how do you think you would have responded?

☐ Is there anything else that you would like to add that I may not have asked you about? Any insights that you have are appreciated.

Appendix E

Follow-Up Electronic Questionnaire

Date: _____

Family ID: _____
questionnaire

Dear Participant,

Earlier this year, you and I spoke about your experiences with the Gracie Bullyproof Camp held in Torrance, California. I am contacting you so that you can share what has happened since then. Please take a moment to tell me about your child's experiences at school since attending that camp. Please share as much information as you can.

1. How has your child's school experience been impacted by his or her participation in the Bullyproof Camp?

2. Are there any specific situations where your child used what they learned to handle a situation they were confronted with at school? Please explain.

3. How would you describe the overall experience your child has had as a result of their participation in the Bullyproof Camp?

Appendix F

Member Checking Email

Dear _____:

Thank you for your participation in the bullying prevention study conducted during the summer. As we discussed during your interview, I am contacting you to share some of the results of that study. Please let me know whether or not these accurately represent our conversations and the thoughts you shared. If you have any suggestions or want me to make any modifications, please let me know.

[Results]

Thank you again for participating in this study. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jared Emfield
Doctoral Candidate
Northwest Nazarene University

Appendix G1

“Lee and Candace”

Social-Ecological Domains

Family	Individual	School	Community/Culture
Father Mother Son age 12 Daughter age 9 Minnesota, US d: "*home school"* *s: "I'm homeschooled"*	m: "[he is] a child of mixed race with Caucasian parents" m: "the black on black bullying was huge" m: "he did not handle that because he never experienced it" m: "when you get down to it he's a good kid" m: "[daughter]… hasn't had the physical situations"	f: "principal kept saying there is no bullying in this school" m: "administrators would say… 'bullying happens...but we got it'" m: "they're like, 'oh, it's not... that bad'" f: "lets just sweep it under the rug" m: "I don't think they saw... the... bullying that was really happening and the physicality of it" m: "the first response of the administrators was to grab them both, scream at them, put him in an office next to the bully" m: "ask what happened as he's standing shoulder to shoulder with the kid that accosted him" m: "as we are in the hospital, his main concern was, 'am I in trouble, am I suspended?'" m: "his number one concern is am I going to get suspended" m:" 'we'll talk to them,' and they'd be out for a day and they'd be right back doing the same thing" m: "it's one thing to say, 'it's our policy,' it's another thing for how you implement it"	m: "with the constraints that a lot of the schools have, the overriding response is 'walk away.' 'ignore it,' 'just leave them alone' and kids know that" m: "when you have kids like mine who are very respectful of rules and are afraid to be in trouble, they don’t want to... stand out as kids who are troublemakers or cause trouble, and there becomes a concern" m: "we live in upper-middle-class suburban place where people say, 'oh it’s not that bad'" m: "he said... the school district will tell you one thing and the police officer... 'if I was a dad I would be telling you... 'protect yourself'" m: "he [the police officer] specifically said, 'I'm proud of your reflexes and I want you to continue defending yourself'" m: "we talked to the pediatrician about jiu jitsu and... and he clapped his hands [claps her hands] and he's like 'yeah, good, perfect'" m: "we really need to work on training the community with the school" m: "how did you shift your attitude to allow your child to use physicality as a means of protection... It's not until we empower them physically"

Appendix G2

"Lee and Candace"

Bullying

Effects on the Individual	Effects on the Family	Previous attempts to stop bullying	Insights
m: "there was some apprehension on his part" m: "the fear became less apprehension… and more, 'am I going to survive the day am I going to get hurt.'" m: "migraines" m: "stomach issues" m: "almost vomiting" m: "chewing his nails down to almost nothing" m: "he could barely eat some days" m: "sleep was disrupted" m: "nightmares" f: "this affects their entire life" f: "it affects how they eat, how they sleep, school, work, friendships... everything"	m: "I watched my athletic, funny, smart kid just turn inward and crawl into a ball, with anxiety and fear" f: "this is pervasive… everything else gets knotted up and it feeds on itself" f: "anxious to go to school... you worry about... will he be safe in his class?"	m: "our pediatrician said there is manifestations of anxiety there becoming physical" f: "he was seeing a therapist first" m: "it is an imminent threat to your survival" m: "we actually switched schools"	m: "he has to use his body, but that's why our kids are handicapped at school because you can say, 'leave me alone' until you are blue in the face... but there's still the bathroom, there's still the bus stop, there's still the baseball field and you're gonna get your ass kicked." m: "kids don't want to get the police involved. You don't want to be known as the kid who... had to call the police because you got beat up" m: "they're not going to be champion UFC fighters but if he's teaching them how if you find yourself in a situation that physical confrontation is going to happen whether you like it or not then you are going to take control"

Appendix G3

“Lee and Candace”

Gracie Bullyproof

Reasons for Participation	Program Experience	Use of Bullyproof Techniques	Program Results
m: "our kids were dealing with… some bullying"	m: "we actually flew to Texas to meet with Rener"	*s: "he started pushing and I put him in a choke hold"*	*s: "nothing really happened after that"*
m: "he had been assaulted before"	m: "it was a significant investment but I honestly believe, his future was on the line"	m: "the other kids were telling the kid..., "you better... cry uncle" basically… and [son] let go and it was done"	m :"he carried himself different... everywhere"
m: "he wound up going to the hospital"	m: "he was with him about 15 hours of one-on-one"	m: "I was ready to go down the stairs... I heard him take control so I just stopped"	m: "he played different in hockey... he broke up fights in the game. he would protect his goalie differently"
m: "the reason we looked for this is every time... we'd contact teachers... administrators and we'd get [reasons for inaction]"	m: "Rener would come at him with gloves"	m: "he never... attempted anything physical after tha,t in fact the other kids were like 'damn!'"	m: "he walked different when we walked through the mall"
m: "[daughter]'s.. very very intelligent and perceptive girl and she saw what was going on and we wanted her to feel powerful and to be kind of a step ahead"	f: "a big part of what we took away is... him sharing his experiences... because it was wow, even Rener Gracie got bullied.	m: "kid was playing his version of the knockout game..."	s: *"if I'm not the one who starts it or I don't argue with anybody then I most likely won't get in trouble"*
		s: *"I turned around and he tried to throw another punch and I blocked it with my arm"*	s: *"I don't have to be scared to do anything... just fight back with my words or jiu jitsu"*
		s: "I was kind of scared but not really"	m: "it gave [daughter] some tools watching her brother"
		s: "so I just turned around and took him out of the classroom"	m: "it gives me peace to know that she's not starting as far back behind the line"
		*m: "*there was a kid on his baseball team... who would not stop smacking"	m: "and there was a shift in our family... you say 'you stand up'"
		m: "[son] said stop it, and looked at him and said if you do it again I'm going to take you down... there was a shift in [son]"	m: "he wouldn't have punched him in the face, blood wouldn't have spurted. It would've been... ' I'm smothering the situation not inflaming it.'"
			m: "[son] isn't walking around as a fire, he's not spreading fire, but he knows how to put it out. And thats the difference... and that shifts who you are. All of the sudden you are like woah!"

Appendix H1

"Kimberly and Joseph"

Social-Ecological Domains

Family	Individual	School	Community/Culture
Father Son age 9 Daughter age 9 (twins) Washington, US	*d: "we're going to be in fourth grade"* *d: "for a long time I went to public school then in the middle of the year I changed to a private school"*		

Appendix H2

“Kimberly and Joseph”

Bullying

Effects on the Individual	Effects on the Family	Previous attempts to stop bullying	Insights
i: "have you ever been bullied really?" *d:"no"* *s: "I have been bullied"* *d: "unless it counts by being basically bullied by a teacher"* f: "that's why we had to move from a public school to a private school" *s: "there was this kid... who attacked me a lot"* *d: "we were in a camp... and there was this really little girl... who just kept walking up to people, me and [son], and pushing them for no reason and hitting them"* *s:"I know the difference between mean teachers and strict teachers and this teacher did not like teaching"*			

Appendix H3

"Kimberly and Joseph"

Gracie Bullyproof

Reasons for Participation	Program Experience	Use of Bullyproof Techniques	Program Results
s: "I don't know, our dad just bought these discs one day... we just started playing the games and we loved them" *d: "since we don't get bullied it's basically just about having fun and learning for if we ever do get bullied... and exercising"*		s: *"the three Ts are talk, tell, tackle so first you talk to the kid and then you tell the teacher and tell a bunch of people... you don't tackle them physically you tackle them mentally and you use the critical question you know um, "now are you challenging me to a fight" and that kind of stuff, and then, and then if they attack you physically tackle."*	*d: "before that… I'd mix all the steps up like first I'd tell the teacher, then I'd tell the kid, then I'd all be mixed up but after I went to this camp... it made me a lot more comfortable"* *d: "this is one of the ways that really makes me feel energetic and happy like"* *d: "it makes me feel energetic and happy and it makes me feel like I have accomplished something"* **i: "how prepared do you feel to handle that (bullying)?"** *s: "a lot more"* *d: "I feel very, very prepared"* *d: "one of the things that makes me confident is knowing what to say to the bully, because if I didn't know what to say to the bully I'd be just like 'stop' and they'd be like, "stop, eh?"*

Appendix I1

“Gavin”

Social-Ecological Domains

Family	Individual	School	Community/Culture
Father Mother Son age 11 Ontario, Canada	m: "we found out that [son] has autism" m: "he has a lot of sensory issues, very sensitive, things that don't normally bother other kids bother [son]" f: "he has a high level for hearing" m: "[son] eats very healthy, so when he goes to school he has weird things in his lunch" m: "because of his differences, he is a bully magnet, you know he's an easy target" m: "now that we know that he is on the spectrum, he has been accepted to this school, the autism program"	m: "they put him somewhere else to eat so that he wasn't around the other kids, rather than make sure that these kids weren't bothering him" m: "then the kids started picking on him because he was going into the computer lab at recess" m: "and it's like 'okay, you need to keep him safe outside. I mean he has come home now with a bruised and swollen nose.'" m: "the teacher didn't hear what was going on" m: "had teachers that have been bullies" f: "I'll believe an adult. unfortunately I did" m: "[son] hasn't been using it at school because school has a zero tolerance policy" m: "he has been afraid that he was going to get in trouble so rather than use what he's been learning... he would react and he would cry or he would scream at the kids" m: "we had been to school numerous times over that" m: "their way of fixing it was, 'well, what we're going to do now is we're going to keep him in for recess. and he can go to the computer lab at recess.'" m: "it doesn't matter how many times you call the school or go into the school, you're not getting any help, you're not getting any support. they seem to brush you off"	f: "the trouble is that our school has zero tolerance for violence and they would consider any... if [son] blocks something they would consider it violence at our schools" f: "their best way of handling it is just to pass it by and just send the child back home" f: "the school is good at protecting for outside troubles come in to school but they're not good at protecting if there's troubles in the school"

Appendix I2

"Gavin"

Bullying

Effects on the Individual	Effects on the Family	Previous attempts to stop bullying	Insights
m: "by grade five it had gotten to the point where he didn't even want to go to school anymore"	f: "as a parent, it's saddening"	m: "we took him in to see the family doctor and he referred me to someone else and they arranged for him to have some testing done… to find out… what's been going on"	m: "this program should be part of a curriculum. it should be in every school... Worldwide"
m: "he would be crying before he left"	m: "in grade three we were getting calls from the school, 'your son's having a meltdown. you have to come and get him.' it's like 'what?' so we'd go get him and they would explain, 'well, he's crying and we can't calm him down. he's uncontrollable. he's yelling. he's screaming. he won't calm down.'"	m: "two years later we were still waiting for this test. nothing had gotten done"	m: "you're starting to hear this from other kids in the class, and parents of other kids in the class"
m: "he would come home at the end of the day. he would cry the minute he walked in the door"	m: "we never seen anything like this at home. never. so we'd go get him bringing him home. 'what's going on?' 'well, I'm being picked on. I'm being bullied.'"	m: "we pulled him from school and we started home schooling him"	
m: "meltdowns"	m: "he came in the door from school he sat on the floor and he just cried and cried and cried, and, and... kicked and did all kinds of things and it's like 'I'm being bullied and I can't take it anymore.' that's the first time I saw that."	m: "he goes to the Gracie Academy in [redacted]"	
m: " he started saying things that, 'I wish I was dead.'"	f: "I trusted adults. I trusted certificates on the wall, and I trusted that they told me they were going to do"	*s: "almost two years now"*	
m: "he asked me to get him an operation for his face so he would look better, and he said 'if I look better then maybe the kids will like me.'"	m: "no one has any idea how it affects a family unless they are actually going through it themselves"		
	m: "it can tear a family apart"		
	m: "I cried every morning sending [son] to school because it broke my heart to know that I was sending him somewhere where he didn't want to be"		
	m: "the stress and the anxiety is unbelievable"		
	m: "you don't sleep"		
	m: "you feel helpless"		

“Gavin”

Bullying (continued)

Effects on the Individual	Effects on the Family	Previous attempts to stop bullying	Insights
	m: "very difficult on a family because then the mother and father start having disagreements"		
	m: "so then this would cause more stress for him. you know, then he felt, ‘well, you know what I'm causing problems with mom and dad. it's all my fault. well, I shouldn't have been born’”		
	m: "I am on antidepressants and the anti-anxieties"		
	m: "I was having panic attacks when I went to bed"		
	m: "it is so overwhelming"		
	m: "how am I going to do this? am I adequate enough? am I able to do it?"		
	f: "we ran up huge credit bills for them teachers"m: "so either you leave him there so he gets an education, but at the same time you know he's being constantly taunted and teased and harassed, or you pull him out and it's like "okay, now what"		

Appendix I3

"Gavin"

Gracie Bullyproof

Reasons for Participation	Program Experience	Use of Bullyproof Techniques	Program Results
s: "I was getting bullied a lot." m: "so the kids made fun of his lunch" m: "it was getting physical" s: *"verbal and physical"* m: "it always happens when the teachers are not around... m: "in the classroom it wasn't so bad. the kids would whisper under your breath, "you're stupid. you're retarded." you know, or calling names..." m: "they were leaving notes in his desk, 'you're gay. you're stupid.'" m: "They've stolen some of his belongings" m: "then it started getting physical out in the schoolyard" m: "he had been jumped and tackled and pushed face first onto the ice" s: "*I couldn't even go to the washroom without being picked on. I was beat up in the washroom"* *m:* "every opportunity this teacher got to throw in a little stab or a little pun or something." m: "we wanted him to be able to defend himself. we wanted him to be able to stick up for himself" m: "mostly we wanted him to find friends" m: "[son] entered a contest" **i: "so they covered his tuition?** m: yes, and the flight"	f: "it's amazing" f: "close to one hundred kids in there, and when says "silent" what happens" m: "the way he gets the respect and everything from the kids. they all look up to him" m: "this program I find is good whether the child is a bully or not. this program I see many good features and even if the child is a bully in this program it is automatically going to change him over to the other side of the fence. it's designed for that" m: "there's discipline. there's respect. there's health benefits. there are so many plusses it's... it's incredible" m: "it's actually helped him socially because now he has friends. he didn't have friends at school but he has developed some friendships" m: "he's also taken down a few names and numbers of some of the, the kids that are here now so he's made friends here, just in the last two days that he's been here" s: *"it's fun"*	*s: "I'm not the kind of person that's going to hurt somebody"* *s: "he just started calling names and I said "quit it." so he punched me and then I got really upset and I grabbed his collar and his shirt and I helped..."* m: "it hasn't really done anything yet because [son] hasn't learned to be assertive"	

Appendix J1

“Danny”

Social-Ecological Domains

Family	Individual	School	Community/Culture
#731141 Father Son age 6 San Diego, CA	f: "we are going to a bonus year... bonus year kindergarten" f: "a public school"		f: "I think part of it is growing up. it's going to happen but then we see how terrible it is these days" f: "we don't see the school systems... making the right decisions for the kids necessarily because there's so many of them"

Appendix J2

“Danny”

Bullying

Effects on the Individual	Effects on the Family	Previous attempts to stop bullying	Insights
		f: "he did a little bit through, remember, coach [redacted]" f: "we really like what we've seen here with the verbal preparation, the mental mindset, and scenarios"	

Appendix J3

“Danny”

Gracie Bullyproof

Reasons for Participation	Program Experience	Use of Bullyproof Techniques	Program Results
f: "maybe verbally a little bit"	f: "you were a little curled up the first day, a little intimidated and then you got out there and started playing and having fun with it right"	f: "knowing what you're supposed to say"	f: "I think that the course has definitely helped, I mean we intend on coming back in the future because, your brother [brother] really wants to come back right"
f: "nothing more than what what just kids do"	f: "if there was anything I would like to see maybe more... some more instructors out there"		f: "I'm pretty confident at this point. it's uh, um, you don't know until it really happens"
f: "having something like this would have been extremely, extremely great"			f: "children will need reinforcement"
f: "we can see the writing on the wall a little bit with the way the public schools are"			
f: "want to give our uh [son] uh, other son and kids the best tools they can have to succeed"			
f: "we liked the way that it's compact"			
f: "building of confidence"			
f: "if we can give him tools right now... that'd be better later on "			
f: "we are trying to attack a slippery slope before it every happens."			
s: *"so we could come wrestle."*			

Appendix K1

"Shawn"

Social-Ecological Domains

Family	Individual	School	Community/Culture
#731142 Father Son age 7 Dallas, TX	(public school)	f: "they say there's a zero tolerance on fighting, which I don't completely agree with, because if that's going to be in place, well then they need to make sure that bullying doesn't occur"	f: "with the liability and those issues… they like to bury their head in the sand until it happens" f: "we all went through it and it's just part of life"

Appendix K2

“Shawn”

Bullying

Effects on the Individual	Effects on the Family	Previous attempts to stop bullying	Insights
f: "at recess he wouldn't play" f: "he was afraid to turn his back to him or have fun"	f: "I'll be quite honest with you, I'm glad we've had kind of revamp this but before we went to this program I was working drills with him, open hand slap to the ear. now, which, very effective, but probably not the best option." f: "as a father, I am very protective of my family. uh I am the protector, but when I feel that my son or my family is being bullied or harmed, I feel like I've failed." f: "as a police officer, that's probably why I became one is to protect people, and when my own family are being targeted, yeah, that's a really weird dynamic and I don't like it."	f: "he does participate in sport Jiu-Jitsu" f: "it doesn't really teach you the day to day... uh, "crunches" f: "most classes do not break it down like the Gracie program as far as how to respond, how to react, or what to do." f: "at our school would, do they teach how to respond to bullies like they do here?" *s: "not really"* *f: "*sports jiu -jitsu... built his confidence and this Gracie Bullyproof program is just going to add to that."	**i: "what, what would be your response, [dad] to those who say that using jiu-jitsu to stop a bullying situation does nothing but escalate the level of violence"** f: "I would say that that is an inaccurate statement, that um, those who have that opinion, I welcome them to become educated and come participate in this program and I am positive that their opinion would change." f: "I would um, as a dad and as a police officer, I would, um, very candidly explain to them that my son's safety is their responsibility" f: "I would explain to them how my son could have chosen to use, um, strong handed tactics, in other words punching, and he didn't, he didn't, he just basically neutralized the situation. and uh, defended himself effectively without causing any harm to the other student." f: "that's one thing I've tried to teach his mother and my wife and I have tried to instill in him is that when you see something wrong, you want to do something."

Appendix K3

"Shawn"

Gracie Bullyproof

Reasons for Participation

s: "because of at my other school... there was this one kid… and he was bullying me"

s: "they didn't say anything mean to me. they just like, would bump into me or something every day."

f: "he was in kindergarten and I remember him coming him telling me on various occasions that there was this one kid that kept bullying him, and he was a bigger kid and the teachers weren't doing anything, and it got so bad"

f: "I just remember feeling so afraid because I wasn't prepared, I didn't know how to handle that. I wish they would've had this back when I was growing up"

Program Experience

Use of Bullyproof Techniques

s: "I'm going to talk my way out of the fight first, but... if they are wanting to start a fight or they throw a punch, that's when I'm going to do jiu-jitsu."

s: "take them down and like, get on them and hold them, until the teacher comes or until someone gets a teacher"

i: are you going to punch anybody?
s: "no"
interviewer: no? why not?
s: "because that would make me the bully."

*f: "*there was a classmate of his, that was actually being bullied... teacher wasn't around and he intervened, he turned to both of them and said "hey, that's not okay. stop."

Program Results

i: "if you were, how do you think you would have handled if before?"
s: "I don't know"

f: "before you took jiu-jitsu, how would you have handled it?"
s: "um, tell the teacher."

i: "before you came here, how worried were you about getting bullied?"
s: "um, not worried at all."

i: "if you do get bullied when you go back to school, how good do you feel about how you are going to handle it?"
s: "feel good"

i: "how confident are you in their (the school's) ability to handle bullying?"
f: "none at all"

f: "I think that it gives [son] a whole different perspective on how to deal with the bullies on a day to day basis,"

f: "much more confident that he'll be able to handle that situation"

f: "this gives us peace of mind as far as [son] being able to handle himself in a situation effectively."

f: it just gives him many more options rather than uh, just being petrified with fear and not knowing how to respond. this gives him some viable options."

f: "I think with this week's training, it's just going to give him more tools."

Appendix L1

“Elaine and Michael”

Social-Ecological Domains

Family	Individual	School	Community/Culture
#830141 Father Mother Son age 8 Daughter age 10 British Columbia, Canada		*d: "they threatened everyone in the class. they threatened even people that weren't even playing california ball."* *d:" I think even if we tell the teacher or tell someone, it won't make much of a difference"* *d: "they tell the teachers, and it would still happen"* *s: "not confident at all because, if you tell someone, probably it will always happen again"* *s: "if you tell them then they will be even more upset at you"*	m: " there's very little confidence in the school system" m: "they wear the pink t-shirts, they have their Bullyproof day, or bully day" *d: "they don't, they don't care about the bullying. they let it go"* m: " just puts bandaids on all the situations"

Appendix L2

“Elaine and Michael”

Bullying

Effects on the Individual	Effects on the Family	Previous attempts to stop bullying	Insights
	m: "my philosophy is, you know, don't react unless you have to, um, but you're in a position where you have to fend for yourself"	*s: "it happened before I went to Gracie Jiu-Jitsu, so I wasn't that confident. I was actually fidgeting when I did it. I was scared."* *s: "we watched those [points to the Gracie Bullyproof DVDs on the shelf]"* *d: "we watched the online Bullyproof and thought it was really cool and we, we did karate, and my brother still does, and so, we thought it would be cooler to just do on the ground instead of memorizing all this stuff"* *d: "we've been to this Gracie one last year, but only for half."* *s: "I was still young, so I didn't know that hitting back or [crosstalk] pushing or all pushes, I didn't know that pushing her would make me get in trouble too."*	*d: "we didn't want anything to do with it ourselves because we didn't want to get sent to the principal's office"* m:" it would be amazing if people could come in the schools (bullyproof)" m:" they just don't know how to deal with it so I would love to educate parents" *d: "I was actually thinking why aren't there more girls"* *d: "but, it doesn't really matter that there's less or more of your gender, it's just that some kids get more bullied than others"* *s: "I mostly saw that most girls that were there had a brother there"* m:" I'm hoping that my children can pass that on to their friends and peers and have that ripple effect where it's like you don't have to fight back. you don't have to be this proud person."

Appendix L3

"Elaine and Michael"

Gracie Bullyproof

Reasons for Participation	Program Experience	Use of Bullyproof Techniques	Program Results
s: "not bullying but I've had teasing like, really mean teasing" *d: "just verbal, just this year"* m:" he was taken into the bathroom and kids would beat, like punch him and kick him" m&f:" psychological warfare"	m: "they teach it in such a playful manner"	*d: "you always have to stand up for yourself"* *s: "don't be scared"* *d: "if you have to, use the Bullyproof rules"* *d: "the rules of engagement, and then the three-Ts. um, talk, tell, tackle... and, um, just try and step up for yourself"* *d: "you're not really hurting them, physically, you're just telling them not to mess with you"* m: "exactly, you're not hurting them. submission holds" *d: "some people will think that jiu-jitsu is actually violent, but if you actually were in jiu-jitsu, hearing these talks of Rener, Ryron... anyone who is teaching it, you would understand that it is not just for violent matters, it's for standing up."* *d: "you don't have to if you don't want to use jiu-jitsu. if it's just mild, um, teasing or bullying. you don't want to do it until it gets pretty harsh and they do it every day."*	m: "now they're not just waiting for the school to… handle the situation. they handle it themselves" m: "confidence… independence" f: "the whole thing really happening with the kids in gracie jiu-jitsu is self-respect, self-confidence" **i: "do you feel more or less confident in your ability to handle bullying than you did before you started taking the Bullyproof program?"** *s: yes!* m: definitely! i**: do you have any concern that... [son] or [daughter] would respond more violently because of the training they've had in Bullyproof?** m: "I don't think so." *d: "I like the three Ts in the Gracie Jiu-Jitsu, cuz you actually... if the people that you tell, about the person who is bullying you or bullying other people, at least you can do something about it"* i**: you like that there's a third T, so that if they don't take care of it, you can. is that what you're saying?** *d: "yeah"* m: "mm hm" *s: "I still didn't feel that confident, but now I feel better after the whole week."* *d: "even just in five days here, for only three hours a day? that's a lot, and each day you feel more confident? and by the end of the week you're really, like you're confidence is really pushed up to a higher level."*

“Elaine and Michael”

Gracie Bullyproof (continued)

Reasons for Participation	Program Experience	Use of Bullyproof Techniques	Program Results
			i: "do you think [dad] that they are more or less likely to get in a fist fight because of the training they had here today?" f:" uh, much less."m:" the whole Gracie Jiu-Jitsu approach is something that just builds on that foundation, right? and makes a family unit stronger" f: "the more comfortable they feel the less they have to prove something, or get scared and then fear usually dictate... "well, fight fight, I want to fight"