Section III

Research-Based Prevention and Intervention Programs
A social-ecological model of the bullying dynamic is described in this chapter. The empirical literature linking individual, peer group, school, family, and community factors in bullying and victimization is reviewed. Data from 5,470 middle school students and 11,447 high school students in Grades 9 through 12 were analyzed to examine social-ecological variables involved in bullying and/or victimization. Specifically, we examined the influence of individual factors (depression, suicidal ideation, alcohol/drug use, sexual orientation, gender, race, grade); peer factors (peer alcohol, cigarette, drug use, delinquency); school factors (school climate, school belonging); family factors (free/reduced lunch, alternative home placement, risky family environment, parental abuse, positive parenting); and community factors (neighborhood safety, neighborhood connection) on bully perpetration and victimization. The social-ecological model of bullying was supported, illustrating the complex psychological and social picture of youth involved in bullying. Suggestions for positive supports across the social ecology are presented.
been written about the need to view bullying and peer victimization from a larger, social perspective. In this chapter, Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) classic ecological theory is used as a foundation to illustrate the interrelated nature between the individual, multiple contexts, and engagement in bullying and victimization behaviors. First, the bullying literature across the social-ecology is reviewed, a social-ecological model of bullying is proposed and evaluated, and implications for effective bullying prevention and intervention are discussed.

Social-ecological theory has been previously applied to the conceptualization of bullying and victimization (Swearer & Doll, 2001; Swearer & Espelage, 2004; Swearer et al., 2006). It is clear from both theory and research that bullying and victimization are phenomena that are reciprocally influenced by the individual, peer group, school, family, community, and society. However, while we know that bullying is the result of multiple factors, a major challenge facing bullying researchers is how to empirically examine these many contexts. Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine each area in depth, a brief overview of selected social-ecological variables associated with bullying and peer victimization is provided and followed by an empirical examination of these multiple influences.

**Individual Variables Associated with Bullying and Victimization**

**Depression**

Students who perpetrate bullying or who are bullied are more likely to report symptoms of depression than peers who are not involved in bullying (Roland, 2002; Seals & Young, 2003). Studies comparing students’ involvement based on bully/victim status have yielded several results that support this finding. The results of three such studies found that victims scored significantly higher on depressive symptoms than bully perpetrators (Roland, 2002); victims and bully-victims endorsed higher depression scores than bullies (Menesini, Modena, & Tani, 2009); and bullies and bully-victims were more likely to be depressed compared to victims (Swearer, Song, Cary, Eagle, & Mickelson, 2001). Involvement in bullying is related to higher rates of depression regardless of whether the bullying is direct or indirect (Klomek, Marrocco, Kleiman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2008; Marini, Dane, Bosacki, & YLC-CURA, 2006). Marini et al. (2006) found that bully-victims endorsed significantly higher levels of depression than bullies only when involved in indirect rather than direct bullying. Evidence suggests that bullying involvement, whether frequent or infrequent, is also associated with a higher risk for depression (Klomek, Marrocco, Kleiman, Schonfeld, & Gould, 2007). However, a student’s risk for depression increases as the frequency of his or her involvement in bullying increases. The results of the study undertaken by Klomek et al. (2007) also showed that students who were bully-victims had the highest risk for depression. This was especially true for girls; in fact, girls who were bully-victims were 32 times more likely to be depressed than girls who were not involved in bullying. These results suggest that students involved in bullying, particularly bully-victims and girls, are more likely to experience symptoms of depression compared to uninvolved peers.

**Suicidal Ideation**

Studies show that adolescents involved in bullying report higher levels of suicidal ideation than students uninvolved in bullying (Klomek et al., 2007; Roland, 2002). While some evidence suggests that the association between suicidal ideation and bully/victim status may be stronger for victims of bullying compared to perpetrators of bullying (Rigby & Slee, 1999), the results of another study showed that perpetrators of bullying were more likely to report suicidal ideation than victims of bullying (Kaltiala-Heino, Rimpela, Marttunen, Rimpela, & Rantanen, 1999).
The results of one study found that bully-victims had the highest risk for suicidal ideation, as compared to bullies, victims, and students uninvolved in bullying (Klomek et al., 2007). Yet, other evidence suggests that there are no differences in levels of suicidal ideation between bully-victims and students who are not involved in bullying (Herba et al., 2008). Furthermore, while some studies have found that girls score significantly higher than boys on measures of suicidal ideation, regardless of bully/victim status (Klomek et al., 2007; Roland, 2002), other studies have found no gender differences in levels of suicidal ideation (Herba et al., 2008) or have found that boy, but not girl, bullies showed higher than average levels of suicidal ideation (Rigby & Slee, 1999). Thus, there are still many unanswered questions regarding bullying and suicidal ideation.

After exploring the relationship between these constructs, Herba et al. (2008) found that parental internalizing disorders and feelings of rejection in the home moderated the relationship between suicidal ideation and victimization. Evidence also suggests that high self-control and authoritative parenting may decrease the likelihood that victims of bullying will experience suicidal ideation (Hay & Meldrum, 2010). Another study found that social hopelessness partially mediated the relationship between suicidal ideation and victimization (Bonanno & Hymel, 2010). Consistent with Rigby and Slee (1999), these results also showed that perceived social support from family members appeared to have an ameliorating effect, such that students who report greater perceived family support endorse lower levels of suicidal ideation. At this point in time, the complex relationship between bullying and suicidal ideation is not fully understood.

**Alcohol and Drug Use**

Alcohol or drug use (AOD) is related to involvement in bullying as well. This association is not surprising given the well-documented correlation between substance use and aggressive behaviors in the literature. For instance, there is a link between fighting others and alcohol consumption (Shepherd, Sutherland, & Newcombe, 2006). In their middle school sample, Berthold and Hoover (2000) found that youth who bullied others were also more likely to smoke, chew tobacco, and drink alcohol than students who did not bully. In addition to these findings, students who bully are not the only students who are at-risk for alcohol and drug use. Alcohol consumption appears to be related to victimization as well (Thompson, Sims, Kingree, & Windle, 2008). The relationship between substance use and victimization is particularly evident for victims of bullying who are aggressive (i.e., bully-victims). For instance, in one study of seventh- through eleventh-grade students, aggressive victims and aggressive non-victims reported more alcohol and drug use than nonaggressive victims and nonaggressive non-victims (Brockenbrough, Cornell, & Loper, 2002). Bystanders (i.e., individuals who observe bullying) are also at-risk for substance use (Rivers, Poteat, Noret, & Ashurst, 2009). Overall, involvement in bullying is clearly related to alcohol use.

**Sexual Orientation**

Research has also explored the relationship between sexual orientation and involvement in bullying. A study that matched 106 seventh- through ninth-grade students attracted to same-sex individuals with same-age students attracted to opposite-sex individuals found no differences between the two groups in their reported rates of bullying others, observing bullying, or being victims of bullying (Rivers & Noret, 2008). Yet, the results of other studies have yielded contradictory results. Based on the survey responses of adolescents ages 14 to 22, gay males were less likely than heterosexual males to bully others while heterosexual females and bisexual females were more likely than heterosexual females to bully others (Berlan, Corliss, Field, Goodman,
& Austin, 2010). Mostly heterosexual males and gay males were more likely to be bullied than their heterosexual male peers. Similarly, mostly heterosexual females, bisexual females, and lesbians were more likely to be bullied than their heterosexual female peers. In addition, Birkett, Espelage, and Koenig (2009) found that lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning (LGBQ) students reported being bullied and being the targets of homophobic victimization more frequently than their heterosexual peers, with questioning students reporting the highest levels of bullying. Surprisingly, the perpetration of homophobic victimization may not indicate the presence of homophobic attitudes. Although the social context is a significant factor in explaining students' use of homophobic teasing, evidence suggests that aggressive social climates were found to have a stronger association with increased use of homophobic teasing than homophobic social climate (Poteat, 2008).

Compared to other types of bullying, however, homophobic victimization warrants special concern given that it appears to be associated with more negative outcomes than other forms of bullying. For example, one study found that boys who had been bullied by being called “gay,” regardless of sexual orientation, showed more negative effects (e.g., more psychological distress) than peers bullied for other reasons (Swearer, Turner, Givens, & Pollack, 2008). Thus, it has been asserted that schools must combat homophobic teasing in order to improve outcomes for LGBQ students (Birkett et al., 2009). In addition, given that gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (GLBTQ) students appear to be more vulnerable to bullying than their heterosexual peers, researchers have called for more research on bullying within sexual minority populations (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Swearer, 2010).

Peer Variables Associated with Bullying and Victimization

It is the peer group that becomes a major socialization force during early adolescence. Researchers have consistently documented that the transition from elementary school to middle school is a potential stressor associated with negative emotional and psychological outcomes for some students. In the limited available research on the trend of bullying during this transition, it appears that there is a temporary increase in bullying during early adolescence (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 1995; Pellegrini, 2002; Pellegrini & Bartini, 2001; Pellegrini & Long, 2002). Indeed, Akos (2002) found that fifth graders identified bullying as one of their primary concerns about starting sixth grade.

Peer Influences

It is clear that the peer group has a significant influence on students’ socialization and behavior, especially during adolescence. Consequently, it is vital to closely examine peer groups to fully understand the bullying dynamic. Three theories that shed light on the peer group’s effect on aggression and bullying are the dominance theory, homophily hypothesis, and attraction theory (Swearer et al., 2006). The dominance theory posits that bullying can be perceived as an avenue to obtain a higher social status (i.e., dominance) within a group (Pellegrini, 2002). However, bullying may result from an underlying desire to behave in ways that are similar to one’s peers as well. This theory is captured by the term “homophily,” which means that individuals who associate with one another tend to be similar in some way (Kandel, 1978). Although there is a paucity of research examining the homophily hypothesis and how it applies to bullying in particular, the results of one study suggest that the homophily hypothesis pertains to less severe aggressive behaviors for adolescents, such as teasing (Espelage, Holt, & Henkel, 2003). Lastly, the attraction theory states that adolescents are likely to pursue relationships with peers who
reflect personality traits or behaviors indicative of independence, such as aggression, instead of with peers who represent adult-like values and conformity (Bukowski, Sippola, & Newcomb, 2000). These theories represent the myriad of explanations for how adolescents navigate peer relationships, which undoubtedly influence their involvement in bullying situations.

Within a bullying context, peers play a powerful role by encouraging aggressive behaviors, decreasing the likelihood of victimization, and buffering the adverse psychological effects that are associated with victimization. The literature indicates that peer influences are at least partially to blame for bullying behaviors. Observational studies conducted by Canadian researchers provided rich empirical data of how students participated or did not participate in bullying episodes on the playground (Craig & Pepler, 1995, 1997; O’Connell, Pepler, & Craig, 1999). It was evident that bullying was a group phenomenon because peers were present 85% of the time (Craig & Pepler, 1997), peers reinforced bullies’ behaviors 81% of the time (Craig & Pepler, 1995), and intervened to help the victim only 11% of the time (Craig & Pepler, 1997). Salmivalli (2010) developed descriptors for the various roles that students take during bullying episodes, including reinforcers, assistants, and passive bystanders. Furthermore, Salmivalli, Huttunen, and Lagerspetz (1997) found that categories of students who were involved in the perpetration of bullying (i.e., bullies, assistants, and reinforcers) were members of larger peer groups than those who defended the victims, were uninvolved, or were victimized themselves. Also, several studies have investigated the effects of friendships and popularity of students who bully. Bullies tend to have an easier time making friends than victims and bully-victims (Nansel et al., 2001), and spend more time with other bullies than other students (Espelage & Holt, 2001). Interestingly, Espelage and Holt (2001) also found that students who bullied others engaged in this type of aggression at levels that were similar to those of their friends. Furthermore, deviant peers often encourage bullying through their willingness to engage in negative behaviors in general. For instance, Espelage, Bosworth, and Simon (2000) found that individuals who were more likely to damage property, fight, and interact with gangs were also more likely to perpetrate bullying in early adolescence.

Although peers can have a negative influence on youth who bully by encouraging these behaviors, peers can also serve as positive role models and buffer the negative outcomes associated with bullying. Even perceptions of students’ social support are linked to their bully/victim status. For instance, Holt and Espelage (2007) found that bully-victims and victims report lower levels of social support than bullies and uninvolved peers. Additionally, the results of one study demonstrated that having a close friend decreased the likelihood that a student would be victimized and prevented the escalation of victimization for students who were already the targets of peer aggression (Hodges, Boivin, Vitaro, & Bukowski, 1999). Similarly, being liked by peers appears to serve as a protective factor against victimization (Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999).

Even though the quantity of friendships decreases one’s likelihood of being victimized, the behaviors and qualities of the victims’ friends matter more than the number of friends alone. Supporting this notion, a study by Hodges, Malone, and Perry (1997) found that students who were bullied were less likely to be targeted if their friends exhibited externalizing behaviors instead of behaviors or traits that could be interpreted as “weak.” These authors speculated that externalizing peers might be more likely than internalizing peers to stand up to bullies and actively offer protection. Moreover, peers can be excellent sources of emotional and psychological support. For instance, peer support can serve as a protective factor for those who are at-risk for experiencing negative psychological outcomes by promoting psychological well-being (McCreary, Slavin, & Berry, 1996). Furthermore, peer support bolsters self-esteem in adolescents (Colarossi & Eccles, 2003) and helps alleviate stress (Hartup, 1996). Thus, peer support and friendships can positively affect the lives of students who are victimized.
Delinquency

Much of the literature supports the relationship between delinquency and criminal behaviors among school-aged youth. Research has suggested that bullying is a precursor to subsequent delinquency (Baldry & Farrington, 2000). According to Olweus (1995), approximately 35% to 40% of sixth through ninth graders who bully others will be convicted of three crimes by the time they reach 24 years of age. This statistic underlies the relationship between bullying and criminality. Also, findings demonstrate that the same individuals who bully in the school setting also exhibit violent behaviors in the community. For instance, bullies are more likely to carry weapons than other bully/victim subgroups (Andershed, Kerr, & Stattin, 2001), and offenders who bully typically spend a longer time in jail than victims and uninvolved individuals (Ireland & Monaghan, 2006).

In conjunction with their tendency to perpetrate bullying, delinquent youth are prone to victimization. However, they are more likely to experience more violent forms of victimization outside of school than non-delinquent individuals (Andershed et al., 2001). This relationship is most likely explained by delinquent adolescents’ tendencies to engage in risky activities (Cuevas, Finkelhor, Turner, & Ormrod, 2007). Unlike a non-delinquent population, in which there are typically non-aggressive victims (i.e., pure victims) and aggressive victims (i.e., bully-victims), both victim subgroups within an adolescent offender population are characterized by aggressive tendencies. In support of this view, one study found that a pure victim group in a prison setting had bullied others in the community (Viljoen, O’Neil, & Sidhu, 2005). In general the link between bullying and delinquency is noteworthy regardless of the individual’s status as a bully, victim, or bully-victim.

Overall, peers play a critical role for adolescents who bully and who are victimized. In conjunction with the individual variables associated with bullying and victimization, the aforementioned peer factors can shed light on the processes that underlie and maintain bullying interactions. Unfortunately, there is a discrepancy between adolescents’ support for bullying, which tends to decrease after the transition to secondary school, and willingness to intervene when they witness a peer being victimized (Salmivalli, 2010). This decrease in willingness to intervene in bullying situations after the transition to secondary schools illustrates the importance of examining school variables that influence the experience of bullying and victimization (Espelage & Swearer, 2003).

School Variables Associated with Bullying and Victimization

While much of the research on bullying has focused on individuals and peers, the broader impact of school factors has largely been ignored. Individuals interact within peer groups for the majority of each day in the school setting. The school setting affects the academic, social, and emotional functioning of all students and is integrally connected to the overall climate of the school. School climate has long been recognized as an important factor in student outcomes, resulting in the identification of a number of factors that affect and are affected by school climate. Anderson’s (1982) comprehensive review of the literature identified several important factors influencing school climate. These factors were categorized into three groups: milieu (i.e., characteristics of the individuals and groups within the school); social system (i.e., the variables which address the relationships within the school); and culture (i.e., variables which include group beliefs and values).

School personnel play a key role in creating a positive or negative school climate. Recent research suggests that teachers may actually tolerate bullying, resulting in increases in bullying behaviors (Yoneyama & Naito, 2003). Teachers have also been found to be inaccurate in estimating the amount of bullying that occurs in their schools (Holt & Keyes, 2004). Additionally,
teachers may lack knowledge about how to effectively respond when they observe bullying (Espelage & Swearer, 2003). Teachers' abilities to respond to bullying have implications for student perceptions of effective interventions. Adair, Dixon, Moore, and Sutherland (2000) found that almost half of the students surveyed believed that bullying could not be stopped. When students observe a lack of awareness and responsiveness on the part of teachers, they may feel hopeless and believe that effective solutions are impossible (Dupper & Meyer-Adams, 2002; Houndoumadi & Pateraki, 2001). Unnever and Cornell (2003) also found that the majority of students felt that their peers and their teachers would not stop bullying.

**School Climate and Academic Engagement**

Research has explored a number of academic factors that may relate to the experience of being involved in bullying, such as connectedness to school. This is an important factor to consider since school belonging has been found to predict academic competence for students who bully or are victims of bullying (Ma, Phelps, Lerner, & Lerner, 2009). When teachers were asked to rate their students on school engagement, students identified as bullies, victims, or bully-victims were rated as being highly disengaged from school, with bully-victims receiving the highest school disengagement ratings (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003). Within a longitudinal study, fifth- and sixth-grade students identified as bullies self-reported lower rates of school belonging compared to students uninvolved in bullying (Ma et al., 2009). Students identified as victims reported rates of school belonging that were similar to those reported by uninvolved students. Similarly, among children 10–11 years of age, the experience of being victimized was only moderately related to low school belonging (Beran, 2008). However, it was theorized that being victimized leads to stress which may inhibit some children’s ability to concentrate, thus decreasing school engagement. In fact, a study that compared an experimental school, which received an intervention that successfully reduced the number of discipline referrals, to a matched control school found that students’ scores on measures of academic achievement increased within the experimental school but not the control school (Twemlow et al., 2001). This finding held for the experimental school’s overall test scores as well as for individual students’ test scores. Furthermore, within the experimental school, teachers reported that victims of bullying became less withdrawn and more verbal within the classroom after the intervention. In summary, being involved in bullying may decrease academic engagement, particularly for bullies and bully-victims, and decreases in bullying and other forms of violence within schools may lead to improved academic outcomes for all students.

**Family Variables Associated with Bullying and Victimization**

Although much of the bullying and victimization reported by adolescents occurs in the schools, researchers have begun to examine the early developmental processes such as family socialization that may contribute to bullying and victimization. According to Lickel, Schmader, and Hamilton’s (2003) investigation of public perception after the Columbine shootings in Littleton, Colorado, parents were perceived as having the most responsibility for the tragedy. The authors contend that parents are often held responsible by the public because they are expected to be close to and have authority over their children. Although some research has investigated the impact of the family on bullies and victims there is less research investigating the parent responsiveness to bullying. However, numerous news reports detail parents’ attempts to talk with school personnel about bullying incidents. When schools respond ineffectively, parents take matters into their own hands by either transferring their child to another school or pursuing legal action. Research suggests that students tend to report bullying to their parents instead of teachers, suggesting that...
students believe their parents will be more effective in addressing the bullying than their teachers (Houndounadi & Pateraki, 2001).

Risky Family Environment

Although peers have a powerful impact on adolescents, family variables and the home environment are also strongly related to bullying and victimization. Adolescents who report high rates of bullying tend to have problematic relationships with their parents that are typically characterized by conflict (Pepler, Jiang, Craig, & Connolly, 2008). There is evidence to suggest that students who bully have ambivalent relationships with their family members and feel emotionally restricted at home (Connolly & O’Moore, 2003). Research has found an indirect relationship between mother and father disengagement and bullying in a sample of adolescents (Flouri & Buchanan, 2003). Relatedly, youth who do not communicate with their parents may be more likely to engage in delinquent actions (e.g., bullying) than youth who openly communicate with their parents since they do not feel the need to earn their parents’ respect (Hirschi, 1969).

Parents’ relationships with each other also impacts youth’s involvement in bullying. Social learning theory can explain how students’ behaviors are modeled at home and then transferred to the school environment (Bandura, 1978). Social learning theorists contend that children acquire aggressive behaviors such as bullying through modeling and imitation. Thus, exposure to parental conflict puts youth at increased risk for bullying at school since parents or caregivers are modeling ways to be aggressive toward others (Bowes et al., 2009). Therefore, interparental discord does not offer youth opportunities to learn effective, non-violent ways to manage conflict. Overall, the evidence stresses the importance of considering family relationships in conjunction with the quality of relationships between the parents and youth who are at-risk for bullying involvement.

How parents respond to their children’s misbehavior is correlated with adolescents’ involvement in bullying interactions, particularly for students who bully others. Students whose parents resort to overly harsh punishment and power-assertion strategies perceive aggressive approaches to be effective ways to solve problems and achieve one’s goals (Roberts, 2000). Furthermore, many parents inadvertently excuse or even ignore bullying since they consider bullying to be “childish” and developmentally appropriate. In other words, parents frequently minimize the severity of these behaviors (Korbin, 2003). These reactions set the stage for bullying to continue by communicating that there will be no negative consequences for bullying.

In addition to parental interaction styles and interparental conflict, having a parent in jail places youth at risk for aggressive tendencies that could be manifested through bullying. Much of the existing literature highlights the link between having a parent in jail and externalizing and delinquent behaviors (Miller, 2006). Some believe that this aggression results from the lack of support received once a parent is in jail. For example, Fritsch and Burkhead (1981) found that a lack of sympathy and less family cohesion followed a parent’s incarceration. These authors also found that both externalizing and internalizing symptoms emerged in children with incarcerated fathers or mothers. Dysfunctional home environments that are characterized by family variables such as interparental discord, child abuse, low emotional support, and incarceration increase the chances that youth will be involved in bullying at school.

According to social control theory, delinquency occurs in the absence, or weakening, of ties to society (Hirschi, 1969). When exploring bonds to parents in particular, virtual supervision (i.e., the knowledge parents have of where and with whom their children are when they are away from home) has been identified as an important factor in understanding one’s risk for engaging in delinquency. When comparing self-reported delinquency to perceived maternal virtual supervision, 100% of junior high and high school boys reporting low maternal supervision also
reported engaging in at least one act of delinquency. Of boys reporting high maternal supervision, roughly 62% reported engaging in no acts of delinquency and only approximately 12% reported engaging in two or more acts of delinquency. Therefore, it appears as though boys reporting low maternal supervision are more likely to engage in delinquency than boys reporting high maternal supervision. In addition to helping to explain delinquency in general, social control theory has been applied to specific acts, such as bullying (Espelage & Swearer, 2009). Middle school students receiving less parental supervision have been found to be significantly more likely to bully others (Espelage et al., 2000). Adolescent boys 13–18 years of age involved in indirect bullying either as bullies or bully-victims reported receiving less parental supervision than indirect victims and students uninvolved in bullying (Marini et al., 2006). Thus, low parental supervision appears to put youth at risk for bullying others.

**Parental Abuse**

Although hostile, aggressive home environments lead the way for bullying behaviors, abuse at home is a strong predictor of later victimization at school. The homes of bully-victims tend to be characterized by high levels of hostility, low warmth, and abuse (Pellegrini, 1998). Although child maltreatment is associated with involvement in the bullying dynamic in general (i.e., role as a bully, victim, or bully-victim), being the victim of maltreatment is closely related to victimization or victimization with aggressive tendencies (Bowes et al., 2009). On the other hand, Fang and Corso’s (2008) study lends support for their hypothesis that different types of child abuse (i.e., sexual, physical) and neglect are related to the perpetration of these actions as individuals approach adulthood. The general consensus is that experiencing parental abuse places youth at risk for perpetration of aggressive behaviors (e.g., bullying) later in life since the abuse conveys the acceptability of violence.

Few studies have explored the impact of parental alcohol problems on their children’s bullying involvement. One longitudinal study explored connections between parental alcohol problems, attachment styles, and bullying behaviors and found that parental alcohol problems directly predicted bullying behaviors for boys (Eiden et al., 2010). There was a significant relationship between paternal alcohol problems and bullying behaviors for boys who had an insecure attachment with their mothers but not for girls or secure boys. There was a significant relationship between bullying behaviors and maternal alcohol problems for secure boys but not girls or insecure boys. More research is needed to better understand the impact of paternal alcohol problems on their children’s bullying involvement, particularly for girls.

In addition to parental alcohol problems, exposure to domestic violence (DV) may be associated with bullying behaviors. Baldry (2003) found that witnessing DV was significantly associated with bullying others and being bullied at school, even after controlling for direct child abuse. Children who witnessed DV were more likely to be bullied at school compared to peers who were not exposed to DV. Both boys and girls exposed to DV in which a mother threatened a father were significantly more likely to be involved in indirect bullying than peers not exposed to this form of DV. These results are consistent with Bowes et al. (2009), who found that witnessing DV by the age of 5 was associated with bullying behaviors. Overall, it is clear that witnessing violence at home puts children at risk for bullying involvement, and leads to the need for positive home environments.

**Positive Parenting**

The ecological nature of bullying suggests that parental factors influence the bullying phenomenon. Parental support plays a unique role in the lives of those on the bully/victim continuum. Children who engage in bullying behaviors often report lower perceived parental social support
than their peers while victims of bullying perceive having the most parental social support (Demaray & Malecki, 2003). Those students who perceive high paternal social support, however, are less likely to be victimized (Rubin et al., 2004) and may also be protected from the effects of victimization when they are bullied (Flouri & Buchanan, 2002). Fewer studies have narrowed the focus of parental influence to the specific roles of parental communication and parental values as they relate to bullying. Parental communication refers to how frequently children talk to their parents about certain topics (e.g., drugs, friends, personal issues). Parental values generally refer to the perception children have about their parents’ beliefs and if they consider them to be acceptable (e.g., violence, sexual behavior).

The effects of parental communication on children involved in bullying are still unclear. In a study by Spriggs, Iannotti, Nansel, and Haynie (2007), bullying and parental communication were examined between three different racial groups (i.e., White, Black, and Hispanic). Results from this study suggested that children who engage in bullying behaviors, regardless of race, perceive having poor communication with their parents. A separate study by Jeynes (2008) examined parent-child communication in a sample of college and secondary school students. In both samples, those who were victims of bullying perceived having less communication with their parents. Despite these studies providing evidence of a connection between bullying and parental communication, contrasting research also exists. A study presented by Espelage and Swearer (2009) found that, from a sample of seventh and eighth grade students in a Midwestern county, engaging in bullying behaviors was not associated with parental communication. These differences could be due to many factors including the differing scales used to measure parental communication and the samples assessed.

The relationship between parental values and the involvement of children in bullying is still largely unknown. Parenting behaviors, however, have been shown to be related to the goals and values parents hold for their children (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Relatively few studies have examined parental values in particular with most studies having a form of parental values subsumed in other variables (e.g., parent involvement in school, parenting style, enmeshment). In the study previously presented by Espelage and Swearer (2009), parental values had no significant effect on the bullying experiences of the seventh and eighth grade children. Studies examining parental values via proxy variables, however, have found some significant results. One of the most common findings is that victims of bullying have mothers who are overprotective (Bowers, Smith, & Binney, 1994; Georgiou, 2008; Perren & Hornung, 2005; Stevens, De Bourdeaudhuij, & Van Oost, 2002). Several of these studies propose that the overprotection these children receive may encourage the development of passive personalities which lead these children to appear weak and as “easy targets” for bullying.

The children of parents who endorse authoritative parenting values (i.e., permitting independence while setting limits and being responsive to their child’s needs) are less likely to engage in bullying behaviors (Rican, Klicperova, & Koucka, 1993). Furthermore, parents who use physical discipline and have poor conflict resolution strategies are at greater risk for their children bullying others. Espelage et al. (2000) examined the bullying behaviors and parental styles of 558 middle school students. They found that parents who use physical discipline in the home are more likely to have children who bully. Other studies have shown that the strategies families use to resolve conflict in the home may influence bullying behavior. Children who perceive fair resolutions to conflicts with their parents are less likely to engage in bullying behaviors (Brubacher, Fondacaro, Brank, Brown, & Miller, 2009), while those who come from families using poor conflict resolution strategies are more likely to engage in bullying behaviors (Duncan, 2004). It seems that the values parents endorse and how they communicate these values affects the likelihood that their children will be involved in bullying and/or victimization.
Community Variables Associated with Bullying and Victimization

Just as individual, peer, school, and family characteristics impact bullying and victimization, the characteristics of the community in which children live and go to school also have direct and indirect influences on these behaviors. Rates of child maltreatment, delinquency, violence, aggression, and general externalizing behavior in youth have all been linked to community-level variables (Jonson-Reid, 1998; Kupersmidt, Griesler, DeRosier, Patterson, & Davis, 1995; Plybon & Kliewer, 2001). However, few studies directly connect community structure to the phenomenon of bullying. Bullying differs from other aggressive behaviors in that it is chronic, involves a power differential, and is repetitive (Olweus, 1993). Many bullying prevention programs incorporate components addressing community factors (Cox, 1997); however, an analysis of community variables and bullying is sparse.

Neighborhood Safety and Neighborhood Connection

Researchers have asserted that a consideration of community factors is necessary if bullying prevention and intervention programs are to be effective (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, & Hymel, 2010). One such community factor, neighborhood safety, has been found to be associated with fewer externalizing behaviors, including bullying, for adolescents 11–17 years of age (Youngblade et al., 2007). Similarly, within this study, perceptions of negative neighborhood influences were associated with higher rates of externalizing behaviors. Consistent with these findings, a positive association was found between neighborhood safety concerns and bullying behaviors, such that middle school students who perceived their neighborhoods as being less safe were significantly more likely to bully their peers than students who perceived their neighborhoods as being safer (Espelage et al., 2000). This trend may be partially explained by increased opportunities to witness, and thus learn to perpetrate, acts of violence in more dangerous neighborhoods (see social learning theory; Bandura, 1978). However, a study that presented children with hypothetical situations and pictures of houses manipulated to appear in good vs. poor condition yielded results that complicate this picture (Pitner & Astor, 2008). Specifically, the results demonstrated that a greater proportion of children approved of retribution for name-calling in the context of a setting perceived to be in poor vs. good physical condition (34% vs. 19%, respectively). Thus, to some extent, children’s attitudes toward bullying may be context-dependent.

Based on the brief review of individual, peer, family, school, and community variables that impact involvement in bullying and victimization, it is easy to see that the interaction between these multiple systems is critical to understanding the social-ecological framework of bullying and victimization in early adolescence. During the transition from elementary school to middle school, students enter a new environment where the nature of peer groups is changing, teachers are less connected to students, academic work becomes more rigorous, and biological changes occur within the individual. Additionally, the family becomes a less salient force in the lives of middle school students. The community that surrounds the home and the school becomes more important as students may walk to and from school and become more involved in community activities. Some students may use aggressive behaviors, in the form of bullying, to establish a higher position on the hierarchy of social dominance within their peer group. Attraction theory suggests that these students will be seen as attractive by their peers and potentially could have a socializing effect on other students, as bullying may be viewed as “cool” (Rodkin, 2004). These changes across multiple contexts present fertile ground for bullying during this developmental period.

In the remainder of this chapter, a social-ecological model of bullying and victimization in early adolescence is proposed and parts of this model are empirically examined. In this model,
influences of *individual factors* (i.e., sex, grade, race, free/reduced lunch, history of alternative home placement, sexual orientation, depression, suicidality, alcohol/drug use), *peer factors* (i.e., delinquency, peer influences), *school factors* (i.e., school climate and belonging), *family factors* (i.e., risky family environment, parental abuse, positive parenting), and *community factors* (i.e., neighborhood safety and neighborhood connection) are tested.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants in the 2009 Dane County Youth Survey (DCYS) were 5,470 middle school students in Grades 7 and 8 (50.2% girls) and 11,447 high school students in Grades 9 through 12 (49.8% girls), ages 10 through 18 (M = 14.85, SD = 1.76). The racial diversity was similar to that of the 2005 DCYS (see Espelage & Swearer, 2009). Of the participants, 85.3 and 87.9% were classified as heterosexual among middle school and high school students, respectively. At the middle school level, the remaining students were classified as LGBT or questioning (14.7%), and at the high school level the remaining students were classified as LGBT or questioning (12.1%).

**Measures**

To provide validation for the study’s measures, longitudinal data were used to inform measurement models. The 2005 Dane County Youth Survey (Koenig, Espelage, & Biedndseil, 2005) was conducted to collect extensive information on the opinions, behavior, attitudes, and needs of students. The survey assessed specific information on self-reported attitudes and behaviors related to health-related behaviors (e.g., bullying, victimization, substance use) and perceptions about parents, peers, schools, and communities among students from Grades 7 through 12. First, exploratory factor analyses (EFA) of items in the 2000 Dane County Youth Survey were conducted (Mayberry, Espelage, & Koenig, 2009). Next, results from the EFA informed the construction of measurement models using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) from data collected in 2005 and further evaluated in the 2009 survey (Koenig & Bettin, 2009). CFAs with robust maximum likelihood estimations were conducted using LISREL 8.2 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1998). Because the purpose of the EFA was to identify the most applicable model with meaningful factors, two criteria were used in retaining a preliminary factor structure: (a) factor loadings that exceeded .40 were retained (Floyd & Widaman, 1995), and (b) cross loadings greater than .40 were eliminated. The intent was to maintain both theoretical and conceptual plausibility. CFA determines if the number of factors and the loadings of indicator variables conform to what is expected on the basis of the previous results from the 2005 data. Indicator variables were selected on the basis of prior theory and the EFA/CFAs of the 2005 data set.

**Bullying/Victimization Outcomes**

The major outcomes of bullying perpetration and peer victimization were assessed with two scales that yield scores with established validity and reliability. A self-report scale of bullying perpetration behavior (University of Illinois Bullying Scale; UIBS; Espelage & Holt, 2001) included 9 items assessing verbal, physical, and social bullying (α = .91) and the peer victimization (University of Illinois Victimization Scale; UIVS; Espelage & Holt, 2001) scale included 4 items measuring verbal and physical victimization (α = .87).
Individual Factors

Depression/Suicidal Ideation

To assess depression/suicidal behavior (α = .65), participants were asked the following three questions: (1) During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or helpless almost every day for two weeks in a row or more that you stopped doing some usual activities?; (2) During the past 12 months, have you attempted to kill yourself?; (3) During the past 30 days, have you seriously thought about killing yourself?

Alcohol/Drug Use

Alcohol and drug abuse (α = .90) was assessed with the following six items: In the past 30 days, how many days did you: (1) have 5 or more alcoholic drinks at one time in a row?; (2) use marijuana?; (3) drink hard liquor?; (4) attend school after drinking alcohol or using marijuana?; (5) drink beer or wine?; (6) use other illegal drugs?

Sexual Orientation

Measures including self-report of sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning, heterosexual) were elicited to examine individual characteristics.

Demographics

Measures including self-reports of sex, grade (middle vs. high school), race, free/reduced lunch, and a history of alternative home placement (i.e., foster care, juvenile detention) were also elicited.

Peer Factors

Peer Influences

Two items were used to assess the extent to which participants’ friends drank alcohol or used tobacco as a measure of positive peer influence. Participants were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following two statements: (1) Most of my friends DO NOT drink or do drugs; (2) Most of my friends DO NOT smoke cigarettes or chew tobacco.

Delinquency

Delinquency was measured with three items (α = .73): (1) Have you ever tagged or vandalized private or public property in the last 12 months?; (2) Are you a member of a gang?; (3) During the past 30 days, on how many days DID YOU carry a weapon onto school property?

School Factors

School Climate and Belonging

Six items were used to assess school climate and belonging (α = .86). Participants were asked how they agreed or disagreed with the following items: (1) The rules and expectations are clearly
explained at my school; (2) I usually enjoy going to school; (3) It is important to me that I graduate from school; (4) Teachers and other adults at my school treat me fairly; (5) There are adults I can talk to at school when I have a problem; (6) I feel like I belong at this school.

**Family Factors**

**Risky Family Environment**

A risky family environment emerged through factor analysis and included five items ($\alpha = .80$). Participants were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following: (1) My parents and I physically fight; (2) My parents physically fight with each other; (3) My parent uses illegal drugs at least once a week; (4) My parent gets drunk at least once a week; (5) Sometimes things feel so bad at home I want to run away.

**Parental Abuse**

Two items assessed history of physical or sexual abuse ($r = .50$). First, participants were asked: (1) When was the last time a parent kicked you or hit you with their hand/fist or with an object leaving bruises or bumps?; (2) When was the last time any adult touched you in a sexual way or forced you to touch them in a sexual way that made you feel unsafe or hurt you in anyway? Response options were (1) Never, (2) Last 30 days, (3) Last year (4) Longer than a year ago.

**Positive Parenting**

Positive parental dynamics was assessed with six items ($\alpha = .84$). Participants were asked how much they agreed with the following statements: (1) My parents set clear rules about what I can and cannot do; (2) My parents encourage me to do my best; (3) My parents have consequences if I break rules; (4) My parents usually know where I am when I go out; (5) My parents love and support me; (6) My parents have talked to me about my future plans.

**Community Factors**

**Neighborhood Safety and Neighborhood Connection**

Finally, neighborhood safety/connection ($\alpha = .71$) was assessed with the following three items: (1) Adults in my neighborhood know me; (2) My neighborhood is generally a safe place to live; (3) Usually I can count on the police if I am having a problem or need help. Participants are asked how they agree or disagree with each statement.

**Data Analysis Plan and Results**

To test predictors of bullying perpetration and victimization across the social-ecological framework, correlations among study variables are presented followed by two separate hierarchical regression models. Bully perpetration was the outcome in the first model and peer victimization was the outcome in the second regression analyses. The following sets of variables were entered in a step-wise fashion in each regression analysis: Step 1: Gender, school type (middle vs. high), free/reduced lunch, history of alternative home placement, sexual orientation; Step 2: Depression/suicidality scale, alcohol/drug abuse scale, delinquency; Step 3: Risky-family scale, abuse history, positive parental involvement; Step 4: School belonging, neighborhood safety/connection.
Correlations Among Study Variables

Significant bivariate correlations are summarized here for the ecological variables with bullying perpetration and then those significant correlations for the ecological variables with victimization. Correlations above .20 are noted as clinically significant given the large sample size. Bullying perpetration or victimization were not significantly associated with gender, school type (middle vs. high), free/reduced lunch, or number of alternative home placements. Greater bullying perpetration was significantly related to more self-reported depression/suicidality ($r = .28$), alcohol and drug abuse ($r = .39$), delinquency ($r = .50$), risky family behavior ($r = .32$), and history of sexual and physical abuse ($r = .31$); but less bullying perpetration was significantly related to greater positive parental behaviors ($r = -.25$), school belonging ($r = -.26$), and living in a safer and more connected neighborhood ($r = -.25$). Self-reported victimization was associated with fewer of the proposed ecological models than those reported for bullying perpetration. That said, greater victimization was associated with more depression/suicidality ($r = .28$), greater delinquency ($r = .27$), risky family behavior ($r = .23$), and a history of physical or sexual abuse ($r = .25$).

Hierarchical Regression—Predicting Bullying Perpetration

In the first model predicting bullying perpetration, the overall model was significant ($F = 550.41; p < .001; R^2 = 0.29$; Table 25.1). The final model is depicted in Table 25.1, with Step 1 (demographics) accounting for 2% of the variance, Step 2 (depression/suicidality, alcohol and drug use, delinquency) accounting for an additional 24%, Step 3 (family) accounting for an additional 3% of the variance, and Step 4 (school & neighborhood belonging) adding an additional 1%. The strongest predictor of bullying perpetration in the final model was delinquency ($\beta = .35$), followed by AOD ($\beta = .09$). Having friends that do not smoke or drink ($\beta = -.08$), living in safe/connected neighborhood ($\beta = -.07$), and having a sense of school belonging ($\beta = -.07$) were associated with less bullying perpetration. Depression/suicidality ($\beta = .06$), being in a family where parents fight and use drugs or alcohol ($\beta = .05$), or reporting a history of physical or sexual abuse ($\beta = .07$) were associated with greater bullying perpetration. An interesting pattern emerged in relation to sexual orientation and bullying perpetration; students who identified as lesbian ($\beta = -.06$) bullied less and so did those individuals who identified as bi-sexual ($\beta = -.05$), but students who identified as questioning reported higher bullying perpetration ($\beta = .05$).

Hierarchical Regression—Predicting Victimization

In the model predicting victimization, the overall model was significant ($F = 218.67; p < .001; R^2 = 0.14$; Table 1). The final model is depicted in Table 25.1, with Step 1 (demographics) accounting for 2% of the variance, Step 2 (depression/suicidality, AOD, delinquency) accounting for an additional 10%, Step 3 (family) accounting for an additional 1% of the variance, and Step 4 (school & neighborhood belonging) adding an additional 1%. The strongest predictor of victimization in the final model was delinquency ($\beta = .15$), followed by depression/suicidality ($\beta = .15$). Living in safe/connected neighborhood ($\beta = -.09$) and having a sense of school belonging ($\beta = -.09$) were associated with less victimization. Being in a family where parents fight and use drugs or alcohol ($\beta = .05$) or reporting a history of physical or sexual abuse ($\beta = .08$) were associated with greater victimization. An interesting pattern emerged in relation to sexual orientation and victimization; students who identified as lesbian reported less victimization ($\beta = -.05$), but students who identified as questioning reported higher victimization ($\beta = .08$). Middle school students reported more victimization ($\beta = -.12$), as did boys ($\beta = -.06$), and those students who reported the greatest number of alternative home placements, like foster care or juvenile detention ($\beta = -.06$).
Discussion and Limitations

In order to truly stop bullying, interventions need to target the social ecology in which individuals function. In this chapter, we reviewed the literature that examined the individual, peer group, school, family, and community factors that contribute to involvement in bullying and then we tested a social-ecological model of bullying. Across the study variables we found that youth who bully others also report higher depression/suicidality, alcohol and drug abuse, delinquency, risky family behavior, and a history of sexual and physical abuse. Youth who were bullied also reported higher depression/suicidality, delinquency, risky family behavior, and a history of physical or sexual abuse. Thus, the picture for youth involved in bullying and victimization is consistent with the broader peer victimization and aggression research. These youth carry with them concomitant internalizing, externalizing, and social problems.

We also found positive connections in the social ecology that were connected to less bullying perpetration. Specially, positive parenting, a sense of school belonging, and living in a safe and connected neighborhood were all related to less bullying perpetration. Parents who are involved and supportive of their children create a positive environment that is associated with less bullying and greater support (Flouri & Buchanan, 2002; Rubin et al., 2004). Students who feel a connection to school are less likely to bully others, presumably because they feel that school is a supportive and enjoyable place (Ma et al., 2009). It stands to reason that students who are victimized do not feel a connection to school (Swearer et al., 2008) and thus, report less school belonging. Finally, living in a safe neighborhood was also connected to less bullying perpetra-

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**Table 25.1  Regression Analyses — Ecological Examination of Bullying Perpetration and Victimization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor Variable</th>
<th>Bullying Perpetration as Outcome</th>
<th>Victimization as Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (Boy =1; Girl =2)</td>
<td>$b = -.04, SE = .01$</td>
<td>$b = -.04**$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle (1) vs. High School (2)</td>
<td>$b = -.04, SE = .01$</td>
<td>$b = -.04**$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>$b = .02, SE = .01$</td>
<td>$b = .02**$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Alternative Home Placement</td>
<td>$b = .03, SE = .03$</td>
<td>$b = .02**$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation – Gay</td>
<td>$b = .02, SE = .03$</td>
<td>$b = .01$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation – Lesbian</td>
<td>$b = -.11, SE = .03$</td>
<td>$b = -.06**$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation – Bisexual</td>
<td>$b = -.07, SE = .02$</td>
<td>$b = -.05**$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation – Transgender</td>
<td>$b = .02, SE = .03$</td>
<td>$b = .01$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation – Questioning</td>
<td>$b = .08, SE = .02$</td>
<td>$b = .05**$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression/Suicidality</td>
<td>$b = .10, SE = .01$</td>
<td>$b = .06**$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol/Drug Abuse</td>
<td>$b = .07, SE = .01$</td>
<td>$b = .09**$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delinquency</td>
<td>$b = .41, SE = .01$</td>
<td>$b = .35**$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Peers – Drinking &amp; Smoking</td>
<td>$b = -.05, SE = .01$</td>
<td>$b = -.08**$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risky Family – Fighting &amp; Alcohol/Drug Use</td>
<td>$b = .05, SE = .01$</td>
<td>$b = .05**$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of Sexual &amp; Physical Abuse</td>
<td>$b = .08, SE = .01$</td>
<td>$b = .07**$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Parental Behavior</td>
<td>$b = .01, SE = .01$</td>
<td>$b = .01$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School sense of belonging</td>
<td>$b = -.06, SE = .01$</td>
<td>$b = -.07**$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Safe/Connection</td>
<td>$b = -.05, SE = .01$</td>
<td>$b = -.06**$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$. 
tion. So, while the psychological and social picture of youth involved in bullying is bleak, there are positive supports that can help youth either refrain from engaging in bullying and/or help them cope with being bullied.

We were interested in which variables were the strongest in predicting bullying perpetration and victimization. Hierarchical regression analyses examined the role of the factors across the social ecology that might be predictive of bullying perpetration and victimization. We found that delinquency and alcohol and drug use were the strongest predictors of bullying perpetration. This finding supports the homophily hypothesis (Kandel, 1978), since most delinquent behaviors occur within a deviant peer group. In order to reduce bullying behaviors among students, educators need to target students who are using drugs and alcohol and to work in tandem with law enforcement officials who are typically involved with youth who are engaging in delinquent behaviors. We found that delinquency and depression/suicidality were the strongest predictors of victimization, which is consistent with the research that has found that delinquent youth are more likely to be both perpetrators and victims (Andershed et al., 2001). Our findings also suggest that delinquency is related to both bullying and victimization.

Given the recent focus on bullying toward sexual minority youth and the need to further explore this connection (Espelage & Swearer, 2008), we examined the experiences of bullying perpetration and victimization among GLBTQ youth. In terms of bullying perpetration, students who identified as questioning their sexual orientation bullied others more than students who identified as lesbian and bi-sexual. It could be that students who are unsure of their sexual orientation feel conflicted and may bully others as a way to deal with their own internal strife. Students who self-identified as lesbian or questioning reported higher rates of victimization. Again, it could be that questioning students are involved in bullying and victimization to a greater degree because they are dealing with their own internal questioning about their sexual orientation (Birkett et al., 2009).

Limitations

It is not surprising that very few studies have examined the social-ecological theory in one comprehensive study. To do so requires measures that assess individual, peer, school, familial, and community risk and protective factors. This requires many items and scales (e.g., depression, family abuse variables) that invoke mandated reporting when data are linked to individual youth. Although we were able to assess these risky variables, we did so with an anonymous, cross-sectional study design. Using a cross-sectional design limits our ability to track these individual participants over time and therefore limits what we can say about the longitudinal relations of these variables. Indeed, our survey design also brings with it the limitation of self-report measures and the concurrent mono-method bias. In addition, the alpha for the depression/suicidality scale had a low alpha (.65), which is not a major concern given there are three items. However, we believe our strong theoretical framework used to design and evaluate our items and scales temper our concerns about the sole reliance on self-report. Finally, we would be remiss if we did not recognize that these data are drawn from one county in a Midwestern state. Thus, our findings generalize to similar sample populations only. We are hopeful that this chapter will inspire other cities/counties to forge similar efforts to develop youth assessment measures so that resource allocation and prevention efforts can be directed based on data.

Results from this study further underscore the importance of examining bullying from a social ecological perspective (Swearer et al., 2010) and have direct implications for bullying prevention and intervention (see Table 25.2). How can our schools and communities create a culture that is not conducive to the intolerance and discrimination that lead to the engagement in bullying behaviors? These are complex issues and are not easily “fixed” by purchasing a bullying
prevention and intervention program. In fact, one alarming trend is that school personnel are purchasing bullying prevention programs and holding assemblies focused on bullying awareness, yet our efforts to limit or eradicate bullying are falling short (Swearer et al., 2010). The results presented in this chapter support the tenets of social-ecological theory that effective solutions for reducing bullying must include prevention and intervention efforts across multiple contexts in which individuals reside. As researchers and educators work to decipher the complexity of the social ecology of bullying and victimization, equal attention should be paid to developing bullying interventions that emphasize effective home-school communication and provide parents with ways to model effective coping and conflict resolution strategies.

References


Social-Ecological Model


Susan M. Swearer et al.


