

The Tentacles of Bullying: The Impact of Negative Childhood Peer Relationships on Adult Professional and Educational Choices

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Abstract

Being victimized by a bully in childhood has many potential effects on facets of adult life. This study attempted to examine whether being bullied in childhood has had an impact on the employment and post-secondary educational choices of the participants. Brief interviews and a resiliency inventory were administered in this regard. It was discovered that most of the participants who were bullied chose their occupations because of an interest in their field or a desire to assist others, rather than making their choices for financial reasons, or for reasons of familial pressure. In addition, participants who had an elevated number of conditions that foster resiliency in their environment had diminished manifestations of the bullying on their future educational and occupational selections. In fact, all of the participants had elevated resiliency levels, all were employed, and most were currently pursuing a profession or educational endeavor for which they were passionate. Consequently, it was recommended that bullying intervention stratagems should endeavor to produce academic environmental conditions that are positive despite the varied familial environment of the students. These programs should also promote a constructive learning environment. Finally, students should be made aware of career and post-secondary educational options that target their interests and aptitudes.

Barbara Coloroso (2001) states that: "Bullying is a life-and-death issue that we ignore at our children's peril" (p. 1). Many human beings bear the scars of being mistreated by a bully in childhood. Recent manifestations of violence in primary and secondary schools by students who were continuously mistreated by their peers indicate that this is an alarming occurrence that must be addressed. Moreover, the adverse impacts of being bullied in youth

do not necessarily come to an end once children reach adulthood.

Research surrounding many aspects of bullying has been conducted through the years. At the outset, Lynch (2004) states that: "Being bullied at school can result in long-term and social effects" (Paragraph 6). From a socio-emotional standpoint, some of the innate developmental constructs of individuals can be altered as a result of having had negative peer relationships in childhood. Some research has also shown that childhood bullying can be linked to future aggression, criminal behavior, depression, and even suicide (Patterson, 2005; Thompson, Cohen, & O'Neill Grace, 2002; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, n.d.). In instances where reconciliatory justice measures are not undertaken to aid the aggressors and their victims, a stage is set for the adverse effects of childhood bullying to continue into later life. In turn, numerous studies have been conducted to examine the immediate impacts of bullying on children (Coloroso, 2002; Gottheil & Dubow, 2001; Swearer, Song, Cary, Eagle, & Mickelson, 2001; Voors, 2000). However, the research conducted in regards to the long-term impacts of bullying and their materialization once adults make their vocational choices is limited.

Consequently, this study first examined the childhood environmental conditions of ten adult participants whose ages ranged from 26 years to 42 years. Seven were female, and three were male participants. All were victims of bullying at some point in their youth. It was conducted in a small, northerly, Canadian community. An attempt was made to determine how these conditions, in combination with childhood victimization in the form of peer aggressions, impacted the selections made by the participants in regards to their employment and post-secondary educational choices.

Instrumentation

Two measurement instruments were utilized to gather data for this study. The first was a resiliency inventory called the *Resiliency Quiz*. The second is a series of interview questions pertaining to demographic information, family environment, childhood bullying, and adult resiliency traits. These sources are further explained below.

Resiliency Inventory

The Resiliency Quiz was developed by Nan Henderson, who is an international trainer and renowned author on building and fostering resiliency, and who has given permission for its use in this study (Henderson, 2002). It was created to assist individuals in measuring and identifying the conditions in their lives that would assist them in further developing their level of resiliency. The inventory consists of a series of eighteen statements that require an affirmative or negative response. By identifying the areas where there are more negative responses, the individual can then concentrate on these particular areas to build his or her resiliency levels. This ability, in turn, can have an impact on the extent to which the participants were and are still affected by being victims of childhood bullying. Individuals who demonstrate higher resiliency levels, for example, may have a greater chance of being impacted positively, or of not being impacted as negatively by being victimized by peers in childhood as individuals with lower levels of resiliency.

Interviews

In turn, the interview questions were developed by the researcher, and were designed to gather additional data specifically in regards to certain areas of the participants' lives. The interview comprised four categories: Demo-

graphic Factors, Childhood Family Environment, Bullying, and Personality Dynamics.

The questions addressed demographic information about the participants, their level of parental and environmental support in regards to personal and professional choices, their motivations for their professional and academic choices, the quality of their relationships with their family, the nature and extent of bullying they endured as children, intervention measures undertaken on their behalf, as well as their adult defense and coping mechanisms. Accordingly, the specificity in their design permitted the collection of data that was geared towards areas that were thought to be the more common areas that would potentially impact the vocational choices made by the participants.

Summary and Discussion of Results

Resiliency Quiz Summary

Administration of the resiliency inventory was conducted verbally by the researcher. This permitted clarification of ambiguous items by allowing the researcher to explain certain statements to the participants that could have had dissimilar meanings in different contexts. Clarification was given on the meaning of the items if required, and probing, non-leading questions were used only if the participant was unsure on how to respond. This was also noted during the administration of the inventory. The Resiliency Quiz (Henderson, 2002) encompasses five categories: Caring and Support, High Expectations for Success, Opportunities for Meaningful Participation, Positive Bonds, and Clear and Consistent Boundaries. The following table demonstrates the number of affirmative responses in relation to the number of items for every category on the Resiliency Quiz.

Table 1
Resiliency Quiz Responses

Participant Number	Caring and Support	High Expectations for Success	Opportunities for Meaningful Participation	Positive Bonds	Clear and Consistent Boundaries	Overall Resiliency Level
1	3/3	3/3	1/3	1/3	5/6	14/18
2	3/3	2/3	2/3	2/3	6/6	15/18
3	3/3	3/3	2/3	2/3	6/6	16/18
4	2/3	3/3	0/3	3/3	3/6	11/18
5	3/3	3/3	2/3	2/3	5/6	15/18
6	3/3	2/3	3/3	2/3	3/6	13/18
7	3/3	3/3	3/3	2/3	6/6	17/18
8	3/3	3/3	2/3	0/3	5/6	12/18
9	3/3	2/3	3/3	2/3	5/6	15/18
10	2/3	2/3	1/3	2/3	4/6	11/18

Caring and Support

The first category on the Resiliency Quiz, *Caring and Support*, addresses conditions in regards to the support received by the participants, their consequential achievements, as well as their ability to take care of themselves physically. These also represent other significant environmental influences. The results were elevated in this area. Two of the participants responded affirmatively to two of the items, and the remaining eight responded affirmatively to all three items. This suggests that the participants in this study have had many individuals in their lives who supported their endeavors.

High Expectations for Success

Successively, the second group, *High Expectations for Success*, can be related to adult conditions that are thought to foster resiliency in their workplace, with the people in their lives, and with their internal sense of self. In this section, all of the participants had at least two of the three conditions thought to develop resiliency. In actuality, four of the ten had two affirmative responses, while the remaining six responded affirmatively to all three items. This also represents generally elevated workplace, environmental, and familial conditions in these areas of the participants' lives.

Opportunities for Meaningful Participation

The third category on the Resiliency Quiz, *Opportunities for Mean-*

ingful Participation, addresses whether the participants' have the opportunity to participate in community groups or extra-curricular activities in which they feel that they are contributing positively. It also addresses whether they feel their opinions and choices are valued by their family, friends, and others in their professional or social connections. This section therefore describes some of the pertinent current environmental influences of the participants.

The resiliency levels in this area were varied. Of the ten participants, one did not respond positively to any items on this section of the resiliency inventory. Two of the participants responded affirmatively to one of the three items, and four of the participants possessed two conditions of the three. Finally, three of the participants responded affirmatively to all three items in this category. This signifies that less than half of the participants had all of the conditions in their lives that provided them with prospects to participate meaningfully in their environment.

Positive Bonds

The participants in this study were bullied for varied durations. The fourth grouping, *Positive Bonds*, addresses whether they possess meaningful bonds with individuals in their professional, social, and familial environments. This provides insight into the quality of their relationships with their peers in adulthood, which sequentially can be considered an effect of the duration of the childhood bullying.

In fact, for this area, one of the par-

ticipants did not give an affirmative response to any of the items in this section. One of the participants had one affirmative response. Nonetheless, seven participants, had two of three affirmative responses for this section, and one responded affirmatively to all three items. This reflects a reduction in the presence of bonds with the social and familial environments for some of the participants in adulthood, in comparison to other sections on the inventory.

Clear and Consistent Boundaries

It is evident that all of the participants in this study were bullied in different measures during their childhood. The impact that these negative childhood peer relationships have had on their resiliency levels in adulthood, in relation to their life choices, is difficult to ascribe to a specific component of the Resiliency Quiz. However, the fifth grouping, *Clear and Consistent Boundaries*, questions whether the participants are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and can utilize this knowledge to achieve their goals. It also investigates their current behaviors in their professional or academic lives. This section therefore categorizes the presence of conditions in the participants' lives that could possibly exacerbate or alleviate the long-term consequences of childhood bullying on these particular aspects.

In this section, all participants scored a minimum of three out of six conditions that generally represent optimal circumstances for the development of resiliency. One of the participants responded affirmatively to four of the items on this section of the resiliency inventory. In turn, four of the ten participants had five affirmative responses, and three of the six participants responded affirmatively to all of the items in this section. This indicates that the majority of participants had high resiliency levels in this category. This could possibly minimize the long-term manifestations of the bullying they experienced at the hands of their peers in childhood on their adult vocational decisions.

Emergence of Themes from Interview Transcripts

Upon close scrutiny of the individ-

ual responses, the researcher collectively compared the responses for every question, and denoted observations of common recurring trends that were of interest. Certain themes were derived as a result. The narratives were scrutinized, and words of interest that arose more than once were noted for every individual response. Next, the researcher utilized the *Find* function in Microsoft

Word to locate these common words in the transcripts as a whole. These transcripts were revisited collectively. The following table represents the common words or trends noted, the interview category in which they arose, the frequency of their recurrence in the transcripts, as well as whether or not they were included as a theme:

Table 2
Re-occurring Words and Trends in the Interview Transcripts

<i>Common Words Or Trends</i>	<i>Interview Category</i>	<i>Frequency of Re-occurrence</i>	<i>Inclusion as a Theme</i>
More than one previous occupation	Demographic Factors	Ten	Yes
More than one previous educational endeavor	Demographic Factors	Nine	Yes
Help people	Demographic Factors	Ten	Yes
More than one career change	Demographic Factors	Ten	Yes
Career or educational program change to pursue passion	Demographic Factors	Seven	Yes
Financial motives	Demographic Factors	Four	No
Passion for field of choice	Demographic Factors	Eight	Yes
Good relationship with mother	Childhood Family Environment	Ten	Yes
Strained relations with father	Childhood Family Environment	Four	No
Parental involvement in professional decisions	Demographic Factors, Childhood Family Environment	Seven	Yes
Parental involvement in personal/life decisions	Childhood Family Environment	Eight	Yes
Bullied for more than one year	Bullying	Ten	No
Too many to count/remember	Bullying	Two	No
Never reported the bullying	Bullying	Eleven	Yes
Told figure of authority of the bullying	Bullying	Nine	Yes
Bullied by more than one person	Bullying	Eight	No
Ignoring/avoiding bullies	Bullying	Six	Yes
Defending myself	Bullying	Four	Yes
Teachers or authority did not intervene	Bullying	Fifteen	Yes

cont'd. p. 38

Table 2 (cont'd.)
Re-occurring Words and Trends in the Interview Transcripts

<i>Common Words Or Trends</i>	<i>Interview Category</i>	<i>Frequency of Re-occurrence</i>	<i>Inclusion as a Theme</i>
Parent or authority figure successful in ending the bullying	Bullying	Three	No
Adult behaviors stemming from childhood bullying	Bullying, Personality Dynamics	Two	Yes
Recall names of bullies	Bullying	Two	No
Encounter bullies in later life	Bullying	Two	No
Resilient in adulthood	Personality Dynamics	Eight	Yes
Severely affected by trauma or major upsets	Personality Dynamics	Seven	Yes
I just do it	Personality Dynamics	Five	Yes
Depends what it is	Personality Dynamics	Three	No
Compliant to authority	Personality Dynamics	Eight	Yes
Sometimes question authority	Personality Dynamics	Six	Yes
Optimistic	Personality Dynamics	Nine	Yes

Table 3
Themes Ensuing From Interview Transcripts

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Re-Occurring Word or Trend</i>
Depressive Tendencies	Depression, depressed, anti-depressants, severely affected
Motivations for Post-Secondary Choices	Severely affected by trauma or major upsets More than one previous occupation More than one previous educational endeavor Help people More than one career change Career or educational program change to pursue passion Passion for field of choice
Adult Resiliency	Good relationship with mother More apt to defend themselves in adulthood than in childhood Resilient in adulthood Severely affected by trauma or major upsets
Future Exhibition of Behaviors	Defending myself Adult behaviors stemming from childhood bullying More apt to defend themselves in adulthood than in childhood I just do it Optimistic
Perception of Authority	Teachers or authority did not intervene Compliant to authority Depends what it is Sometimes question authority
Familial Influences	Good relationship with mother Parental involvement in professional decisions Parental involvement in personal/life decisions

These common words or trends were then studied individually, and were analyzed to determine whether they arose sufficiently to be considered a theme. Four or less occurrences of a trend or word were generally excluded as a theme unless sufficient evidence supported their inclusion in the remainder of the dialogue.

However, in two cases, despite the elevated number of occurrences in the transcripts, trends were excluded as themes. In fact, while all ten participants were bullied for more than one year, insufficient evidence was found to determine the nature and extent of impact on their adult vocational choices. In addition, while eight of the participants noted that they had been bullied by more than one person, the researcher could not link this trend to a future manifestation on adult career and educational selections.

In contrast, only two participants specifically noted that they utilized similar strategies in childhood and adulthood to resolve conflicts. However, other instances were linked to the future exhibition of behaviors to lead to their inclusion as a theme. Similarly, four participants utilized the words *defending myself* in some form, but this was still included as a theme because further analysis of data suggested that seven participants noted that they were more apt to defend themselves in adulthood than they were in childhood. The following table delineates the themes, and outlines the words or concepts that led to their inclusion

As such, one of the means used to analyze the interview data was to verify the frequency of re-occurrence of certain words or trends. The researcher attempted to explicate their frequent appearance in the interview responses. Where sufficient literature support was found that could potentially link childhood bullying to the trend or word, these were then categorized according to similarity, as can be observed in the above table. A title was then given to the category, which constituted the theme for that category.

Description of Themes

Depressive Tendencies

The inclusion of depressive tendencies as a theme was due to the fact that

seven of the ten participants mentioned the word “depression” in reference to their emotional state at some point in their lives. This relates to the findings of Lynch (2004), who states that: “Students who are chronic victims of bullying experience more physical and psychosocial problems than their peers who are not harassed by other children” (Paragraph 6). In fact, she highlights the results of a survey administered to more than one thousand adults, which indicate that over 46 percent of these adults contemplated suicide at one point, as opposed to only 7 percent of individuals who were not bullied (Paragraph 20).

The U.S. Department of Health (n.d.) supports the fact that adults who were victimized by their peers in childhood are more likely than their non-bullied peers to have low self-esteem and to suffer from depression (Paragraph 2). In turn, Lynch (2004) states that being bullied in childhood affects the adults’ ability to make social connections, and to succeed in work and educational endeavors (Paragraph 20). Furthermore, Thompson et al. (2002) attribute high drop-out and drug use rates to childhood bullying (p. xvi).

One of the participants who suffered from a severe depression noted that she used to believe that she would

be a homemaker like her mother, because she dropped out of high school. She stated that she also did not have faith in her abilities to pursue her studies. Nevertheless, she ultimately returned to post-secondary education, and is currently returning to college for a second degree. In contrast, none of the four participants who divulged no signs of depressive tendencies made any significant career changes in their lives. However, two of them had parents who always supported their educational and employment decisions. These two participants pursued one single career avenue to date in their lives. The other two participants noted that their parents

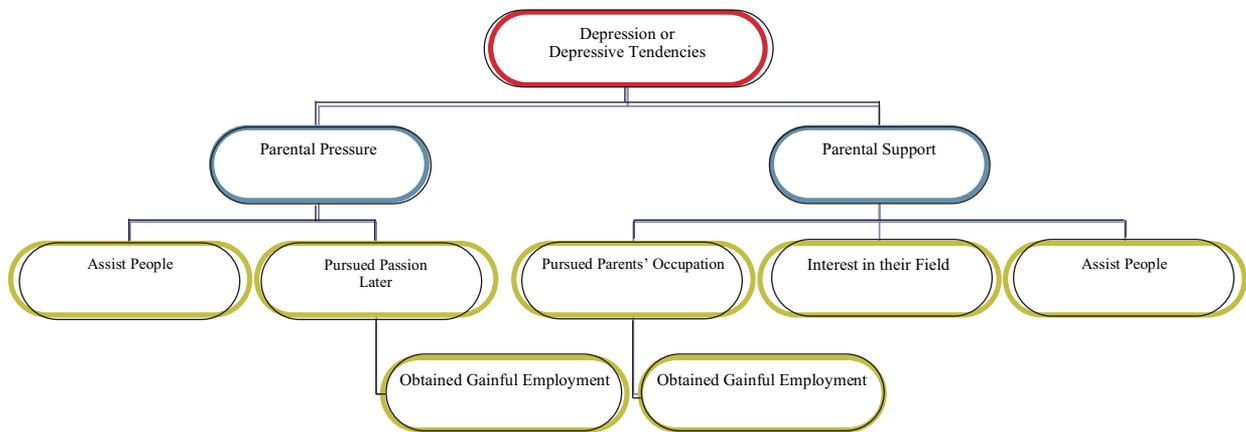


Figure 1: Depressive tendencies and their Impact on Vocational Choices

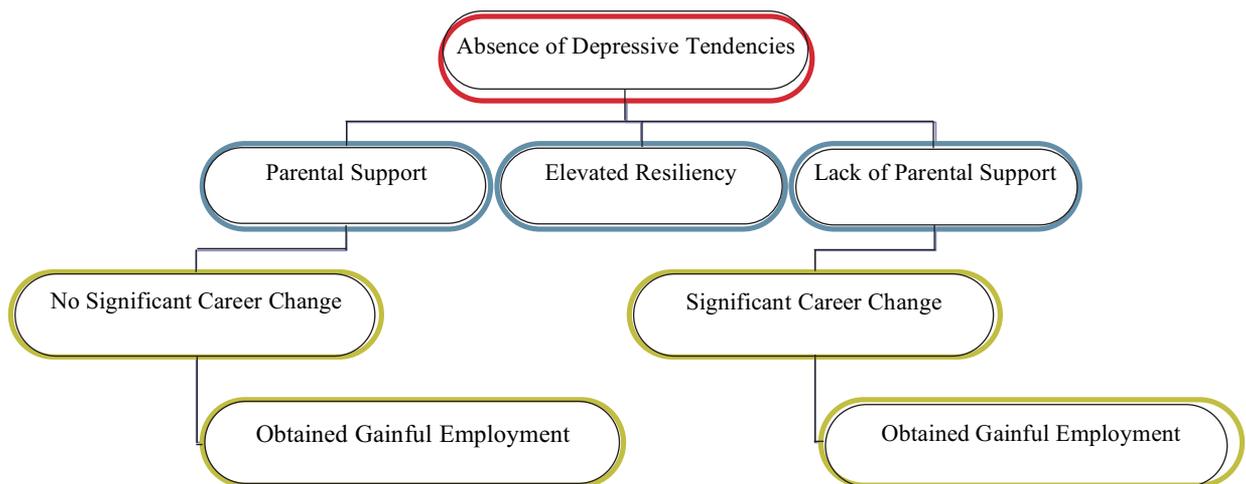


Figure 2: Absence of Depressive Tendencies and their Impact on Vocational Choices

did not always support their life, career, and educational choices. The two figures below illustrate these trends:

This could suggest that reduced self-esteem brought on by childhood bullying has potentially caused the individuals who participated in this study, who had depressive tendencies, to be more submissive in their post-secondary selections. They were, in some cases, more likely to yield to parental demands when making vocational choices. In contrast, where their non-depressive counterparts had parental support, the participants tended to only pursue on career option, while those whose parents were opposed to their choices made at least one significant career change. This could potentially imply that when parental support was present, the participants pursued their general area of interest in early adulthood, and those whose parents were opposed pursued different avenues. Further research would be needed to draw conclusive findings in this regard.

Motivations for Post-Secondary Choices

One of the more significant discoveries that ensued from analyzing the data collected was in regards to the motivations of bullying victims for their employment and educational choices. First, their current employment situations were noteworthy. All but one of the participants pursued post-secondary education, and eight even completed more than one degree or diploma in more than one area of study. In addition, all participants were currently employed, but two were on temporary leave from work to return to school. Willet (2004) highlights numerous factors that could influence post-secondary selections. Among these factors, he delineates the availability of post-secondary offerings in the geographical location of choice, the influence of family members, the availability of information in regards to post-secondary offerings, among other factors (Paragraph 1).

Additionally, the geographical location where this study took place comprises two colleges, one which offers French programming, and the other which offers similar English options. There is also a bilingual University and

Table 4

Participant Motivations for Career and Educational Selections

Participant Number	Continuous Parental Support	Depressive Tendencies	Financial	Same Occupation as Parent(s)	Helping People	Passion/Interest in Field
1		X			X	X
2	X	X			X	X
3	X		X			
4		X	X			X
5	X	X	X		X	X
6	X			X	X	
7	X	X		X		X
8					X	X
9	X	X			X	X
10	X		X			X

varied private institutions with post-secondary offerings. This suggests that there were numerous opportunities for the participants to continue their studies beyond high school.

However, Taylor, Harris, & Taylor (2004) make the following statement in regards to the roles of the parents in individuals' career selections: "Families, parents, and guardians in particular, play a significant role in the occupational aspirations and the career goal development of their children" (Paragraph 2). They further attribute academic settings, familial inspirations, money, and social circles as contributing factors in the selection of a career.

As was noted in an earlier section, two of the participants simply succumbed to authority in their educational and employment selections. These two participants, and two others, also failed to pursue certain areas in an earlier stage of life but later returned to school or changed their professional situation in some manner to pursue their passion. Using Erikson's theory of Psychosocial Stages as a point of reference, this could be explained by the incomplete transition between certain tasks or phases of life engendered by being victimized in childhood by peers (Bridges, 1980, p. 35). It could also signify that some of the participants limited their opportunities to identify themselves in one of their areas of expertise due to a reduced self-esteem caused by bullying. In turn, this would have caused them to pursue their true passion in later life, when the threat of their peers was reduced.

However, the main motivation be-

hind employment and educational selections seemed to be geared towards pursuing an area of interest. In fact, five of these participants pursued an area of interest at a later time in their lives. Furthermore, six participants chose their current occupation at least in part because of a desire to assist people in some way. Four participants indicated that there were some financial considerations for their choices. The following table represents a profile of all of the participants in this study.

This table also includes whether the participants had depressive tendencies, have always had parental support in their endeavors, as well as their motivations for their educational and career selections. These findings could suggest that these participants, who were bullied in childhood, possessed a desire to intervene among the populace, and to be of assistance to people in some way. The majority of the participants' career choices centered on the pursuit of a field of interest, but this sometimes occurred after the pursuit of other avenues. Other factors such as following in a parent's footsteps, or financial considerations, which are common factors of employment choices (Taylor et al., 2004), were not prominent factors for vocational choices among these participants. While the low number of participants in this study is insufficient to ascertain conclusively that people who are bullied in childhood develop a desire to help people once they reach adulthood, further research in this area would be noteworthy.

Familial Influences

It is important to include the influence of the familial environment on the vocational choices of the participants. Certain factors surfaced during the examination of the interview data and demographic profiles. One of these issues was that two participants indicated that they still utilize certain strategies that were suggested by their parents to deal with their bullies in their present social lives and in their workplace. To support this concept, Patterson (2005) suggests that “Guiding children to manage conflict in their relationships would be helpful in preventing relationship disruption” (Paragraph 3).

In addition, Thompson et al. (2002) further state that relationships and social skills are learned in the home. In this study, all ten of the participants had good relations with at least one parent. This is possibly one of the reasons that they are now all employed, and that most pursued post-secondary studies despite research findings that suggest that victims of childhood bullying are likely to encounter difficulties in their future employment and educational avenues (Lynch 2004; Knoester, 2003; Pattersen, 2005; U.S. Department of Health, n.d.).

of their career choices suggests that this could have built up their self-esteem, and could potentially account for their successes despite their negative childhood experiences. As such, it can be assumed that having life conditions that foster resiliency may have an impact on the extent of the effect that childhood bullying has on professional and educational selections made in adulthood.

Adult Resiliency

There were significant extrapolations of data that occurred in regards to the adult resiliency environments of the participants in this research. First, the resiliency inventory suggested that all ten participants had elevated resiliency levels. In fact, they seemed to grow more resilient in adulthood than they were in their childhood. However, six of the participants stated that they were accommodating, but nonetheless indicated that they have difficulty dealing with traumatic situations.

Conversely, Nan Henderson (2002) indicates in reference to her Resiliency Quiz that: “People bounce back from tragedy, trauma, risks, and stress by having the following conditions in their lives” (Paragraph 2). These conditions consist of having a caring and support-

and consistent limitations and realistic expectations. She continues by outlining the fact that higher numbers of affirmative responses suggests that there are greater chances of bouncing back from life problems.

This could explicate the fact that, in this research, the participants all obtained gainful employment, which contradicts some research findings that suggest that adults who are bullied in childhood are more likely to have difficulty in school and in the workplace (Knoester, 2003; Lynch 2004; Pattersen, 2005; U.S. Department of Health, n.d.).

The following figure represents how having elevated resiliency levels, optimism versus pessimism, and developing the ability to deal with trauma in adulthood impacts the extent of the manifestation of childhood bullying in later life, in accordance to the observed trends in this study:

Copper, Estes, & Allen (2004) designate hopefulness as a characteristic that is thought to be more often present in resilient individuals (Paragraph 2). The fact that all of the participants had elevated resiliency levels could suggest that their environmental conditions have lessened the impact of being bullied in childhood in their later lives. In short, these indications suggest that positive

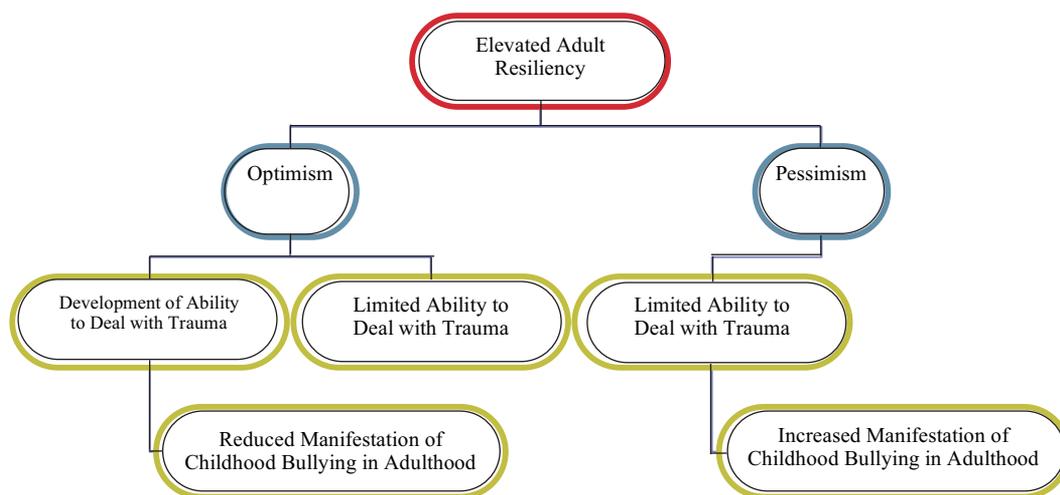


Figure 3: The Impact of Elevated Resiliency and the Ability to Deal with Traumatic Situations in Adulthood and the Extent of Manifestation of Childhood Bullying

As a final point, Voors (2000) considers assertiveness on the part of a bullying victim to be an effective strategy to reduce future incidents. The fact that seven of the participants noted that their parents are supportive of their life and

ive familial and social circle, having elevated expectations for success, belonging to community groups with opportunities for meaningful contribution, having positive, constructive relationships, and finally, establishing clear

environmental factors as well as certain internal characteristics found in resilient individuals can potentially affect the extent of the effect of childhood bullying on adult vocational choices.

Future Exhibition of Behaviors

General trends in regards to adult exhibition of certain behaviors were also noted. At the outset, Knoester (2003) notes that being a victim of bullying in childhood can cause the adaptation of anti-social behaviors that can sometimes continue across the life-span (Paragraph 8).

For this study, nine of the ten participants indicated that they could not stand up for themselves in the past, but that now they are much more apt to speak up when they feel someone is disrespecting them. In addition, seven of the participants even stated that they are sometimes firm and blunt in their defense. Finally, two participants noted that they still utilized the conflict resolution strategies provided by their parents in their youth to resolve present situations.

In regards to employment, five of the participants often questioned their employers when they were asked to complete a task. One even noted that he sometimes got into trouble at work for voicing his opinions too firmly. Another participant noted that her new, strong attitude at work definitely stemmed from being bullied in childhood.

Conversely, Bandura's theory of Social Cognition suggests that children learn certain behaviors in the home, in the media, or from their social connections (Isom, 1998, Paragraph 1). As such, in reference to this theory, being victimized by their peers in childhood could have reinforced the need for the participants to defend their rights assertively. Their victimization could have caused them to want to eliminate the possibility of this reoccurring in adulthood. Finally, this could suggest that maturity, in combination with optimal life-conditions, have provided the victims of childhood bullying with necessary tools once they reach adulthood to ensure that they are not victimized again. It is possible that assertiveness was developed as a defense mechanism to avoid the trauma they experienced in childhood.

Perception of Authority

Certain observations also led to the development of the participants' perception of figures of authority in adulthood

Table 5

Relation between Resiliency Levels, Parental Support and Participant Perception of Authority

<i>Participant Number</i>	<i>Overall Resiliency Level</i>	<i>Depressive Tendencies</i>	<i>Continuous Parental Support</i>	<i>Immediate Compliance With Authority</i>
1	14/18	X		
2	15/18	X	X	
3	16/18		X	X
4	11/18	X		X
5	15/18	X	X	X
6	13/18		X	
7	17/18	X	X	X
8	12/18			
9	15/18	X	X	
10	11/18		X	

as a theme. At the outset, Watkins (2000) indicates that certain children who are continuously victimized by their peers sometimes develop a pattern of compliance with authority (Paragraph 5). For this study, the areas of interest were specifically geared towards the participants' use of coping mechanisms in their perception of authority, and its' impact on their subsequent vocational and educational choices.

In fact, the research findings suggest that the participants were not always immediately acquiescent to authority. In truth, six of the participants actually questioned their employers when they were asked to complete a task. Three even indicated that they do not act in accordance with the request unless it is something that they felt was reasonable. Four participants, however, immediately conformed to the requirements of their employers or teachers. The following table represents a profile of the participants in regards to their level of resiliency, their depressive tendencies, whether they were pressured by their parents in their vocational selections, and whether they complied with their employer's or another figure of authority's requests:

As such, the evidence is conflicting in this regard. There does not seem to be a relation between the adult overall resiliency level and the surfacing of depressive tendencies, and the resiliency level does not seem to be related to immediate compliance with authority. At the moment, based on the information gathered from the demographic profiles and from the interview responses, there

is no reason to conclude that the level of compliance to authority had any consequence, positive or negative, on the participants when they made their choices. The only factor that was evident was that two participants yielded to the will of their parents in their choice of an educational program or employment field. Eight participants ultimately ended up pursuing what they considered to be their passion at a later point in their lives. One of these two participants had depressive tendencies and the other did not, therefore the evidence in inconclusive in this regard as well.

This could suggest that authoritarian influence did not continue to be a factor in the selection of post-secondary options, for these participants, despite being bullied in childhood. However, this could also suggest that maturity and life circumstances that foster resiliency can potentially assist individuals in making employment and educational decisions that are better suited to their area of interest rather than being based on environmental conformity.

Conclusions

The research findings of this study suggest that there might be manifestations of adult bullying that surface into adulthood when adults make choices for their vocations. In fact, many of the participants could recall clear facts about their childhood bullies, and could remember the feelings of anger and distress they experienced. Many of these participants chose their vocation due to a desire to help others. Coloroso (2001) makes the following statement in re-

gards to bullying intervention: "Breaking the cycle of violence involves more than merely identifying and stopping the bully. It requires that we examine why and how a child becomes a bully or a target of a bully as well as the role bystanders play in perpetuating the cycle" (p. xvi). This suggests that the areas of consideration when undertaking studies about bullying and career selections are multifaceted. In fact, Voors (2000) indicates in the following statement that society often portrays attitudes that lead to discriminatory tendencies: "Every child and adult deserves to be treated with respect. Yet every day our children absorb societal attitudes that not only minimize and deny but also sometimes embrace intolerance" (p. 13). It is important to recognize that the media, the home environment, pressure from peers, and other factors affect the perception of violence as an acceptable behavior.

Recommendations

Based on the data collected, it is evident that optimal environmental conditions that foster resiliency in individuals was possibly, for these participants, an important factor in reducing the long-term impact of childhood bullying. Consequently, bullying intervention and reconciliatory justice measures should comprise proficient conditions such as the ones found on the Resiliency Quiz in regards to providing students with opportunities to bond. They should also encompass teaching them positive life skills and conflict resolutions strategies, the provision of caring and support by teachers when they intervene in situations of bullying, the setting and communicating of high expectations from teachers and parents, as well as the creation of opportunities for meaningful participation. This could take the form of having the students participate in community charity events, fundraising, or helping the less fortunate through community service (Henderson, 2002). On the other hand, it is evident that, at times, it is difficult to remedy familial circumstances that hinder some individuals' ability to heal from being victimized by peers.

However, schools can alleviate this occurrence by acclimatizing after-school programs or opportunities for their students to contribute positively in

their environment. This could include the creation of peer support groups for victims of bullying, individual career counseling sessions with experts in the community integrated into schools, or even the creation of student and parent councils to provide input into effective bullying intervention strategies (Lynch, 2002, Paragraph 1). In addition, in light of the fact that victims of bullying are often reluctant to come forward (O'Moore & Minton, 2005) it could be beneficial to implement bullying reporting protocols where the students could feel more secure, for example, by having positive student leaders in charge of observing the schoolyards for incidents of bullying, and of reporting their observations to a designated figure of authority.

To continue, many of the participants in this study chose their occupations based on a desire to aid others. This suggests that schools can assist the perpetrators and victims of bullying by providing prospects for their student bodies to assist in the reduction of school violence. One example of this is the Safe Schools Ambassadors Program (Ontario Ministry of Education, n.d.), in which the students are trained by an outlying community organization to promote and utilize positive conflict resolution skills in their schools.

As a final point, the analysis of the data has shown that two of the participants utilized strategies provided by their parents or teachers to resolve conflicts in their future occupations. Some researchers have also indicated that children who are provided with positive conflict resolution strategies are more likely to have positive peer relationships (Coloroso, 2001; Patterson, 2005). This outlines the importance of implementing educational programming that promotes character education and positive character traits in their students. Many of the adaptations of later behaviors seem to be rooted in childhood. In addition, in light of the fact that many of the participants chose their current field due to a desire to help others, it would be of primary importance to provide students with information in regards to their post-secondary educational and career options. As such, scholars, parents, educators, and administrators should be provided with the necessary knowledge

and tools to ensure that the children are benefiting from the most proficient educational environment possible. This maximizes their chances for future academic and employment stability.

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