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# Developmental Evaluation of a Gender Bullying and Sexualized Violence Prevention Program for Adolescent Males: Preliminary Lessons on Engaging Boys

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this developmental evaluation was to explore the unique challenges for facilitators implementing a grassroots gender bullying and sexualized prevention pilot program with males in early and middle adolescence. Data were collected from participants, facilitators, and the primary evaluator in the form of survey data, focus group and interview transcripts, and post-session notes compiled by the evaluator. These data were inputted into Dedoose, a cloud-based data analysis software used primarily for mixed-methods analyses. Open-coding was used to analyze each transcript, from which 9 root codes were derived: 1) Support All Male Setting, 2) Deconstructing Masculinity, 3) Program Recommendations, 4) Skill Development, 5) Teacher Involvement, 6) Increased Participation, 7) Decreased Participation, 8) Bystander Intervention, and 9) Bystander Non-Intervention. These codes were used to compare and contrast the experiences of participants at the elementary school level and the secondary school level, as well as the facilitators for each group. This analysis took the form of a case study, with males at the early adolescent developmental stage (ages 11-14) constituting one case, and male at the middle adolescent developmental stage (ages 16-17) constituting another. The findings were used to formulate recommendations for future programming of this nature targeting these populations. These recommendations pertain to group size, developmental stage or participants, facilitation strategies, group gender make-up, and facilitator gender.

*Key words:* Gender bullying, sexualized violence, developmental evaluation, early adolescence, middle adolescence

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## Developmental Evaluation of a Gender Bullying and Sexualized Violence Prevention Program for Adolescent Males: Preliminary Lessons on Engaging Boys

### **Introduction**

Bullying in schools is an area that has received widespread attention due to its ubiquitous nature and recognized role in the development of mental health issues among students (see Casey & Lindhorst, 2009; Casey & Nurius, 2006; and Espelage, Basile, & Hamburger, 2012). Bullying has been defined as “a form of aggressive behaviour that is intentional, repetitive, and causing harm, distress, or discomfort to someone else” (Olweus, 2013, in Maiano, Aime, Salvat, Morin & Normand, 2016). Studies indicate that there is a wide range of prevalence when it comes to reports of bullying and cyberbullying. Some studies indicate that approximately 22% of high school students have experienced cyberbullying (Calvete, Orue, Estevez, Villardon & Padilla, 2010), while others suggest rates of prevalence over 50% (Korenis & Billick, 2014). In a 2005 cross-sectional study of bullying victimization at ages 11, 13 and 15, Due et al. found that, in Canada, 17% of male students and 12.3% of female students reported being bullied in their previous term. However, in a 2008 study examining the results of the Health Behaviour of School-aged Children study, Due and Holstein found that 37% of males and 33.2% of females had reported being bullied in the previous few months.

The same trend of varying prevalence rates exists within gender bullying and sexualized violence. This form of aggression is distinguishable from other forms of bullying; it targets the victims’ sexual orientation and/or gender identity, and often involves unwelcomed and unwanted attention or physical contact (Casey & Nurius, 2006; O’Donohue, Downs, & Yeater, 1999). It is also important to note that gender bullying has been defined separately from sexual harassment. As Olweus described, bullying is

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a specific type of aggression in which (1) the behaviour is intended to harm or disturb, (2) the behaviour occurs repeatedly over time, and (3) there is an imbalance of power, with a more powerful person or group attacking a less powerful one. (cited in Gruber & Fineran, 2008, p. 2)

As Gruber and Fineran (2008, p. 2) note, the main difference between bullying and sexual harassment is that the latter is “more directly and clearly tied to hegemonic masculinity and therefore taps into potent structural and culturally-sanctioned roles and meanings that are central components of social stratification.” In other words, research on bullying has focused more on the personal and situational factors that allow and promote bullying, whereas sexual harassment literature has been more concerned with the societal influences that enable and support this highly gendered and sexualized behaviour. However, as Shute, Owens, and Slee (2008) argue, it may be problematic to consider these as two separate issues within the context of the school environment, as the constructs of gender bullying and sexualized violence incorporate aspects of both bullying and sexual harassment.

Within the context of bullying behaviours is the important concept of bystander intervention, which involves those individuals who witness harmful action taking some form of preventative measure against it. One common model of bystander intervention, postulated by Latane and Darley (1970), suggests that in order for a bystander to intervene in a potentially harmful situation, there are five events that must occur. First, bystanders must somehow witness the event. They must subsequently interpret the event as harmful or as an emergency. The third stage is arguably the most crucial, and requires the bystander to accept responsibility for acting. If the bystander, for whatever reason,



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fails to accept this responsibility, they will not feel sufficient obligation to take action against it. However, if the bystander does accept this responsibility, they then decide on the best course of action. Finally, after deciding how best to deal with the harmful situation, they must choose to act. This action could be a direct intervention, or could be more indirect by calling for or locating an authority figure, such as a teacher. In order to educate adolescents about effective intervention strategies, many bullying prevention programs have been created, including *The Gender Bullying Project*.

### **The Gender Bullying Project**

The catalyst for creating this program came with the discovery that a group of adolescent boys at a school in a school district in southwestern Ontario were engaging in repeated and systematic gender bullying and sexualized violence against their female classmates. The primary form of this bullying behaviour was the creation of a deck of cards cataloguing the female students at the school. These cards were passed between the boys, and were used as collectibles to represent a range of behaviours the boys had engaged in with these girls. When one female student came forward to school administration, it quickly became evident that this was a large issue within the school.

Rather than immediately punishing these students, it was decided that it would be more beneficial to understand their motivation and thought processes that resulted in their behaviour. When interviewed, it became evident that these adolescent males had not been properly educated around gender bullying and sexualized violence. One common theme from the boys that supports this finding was that they had never been told that this type of behaviour could be harmful to women. During their previous years at school, the boys reported that they had never explicitly been told that touching students without their

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permission, and bringing unwanted attention to their bodies and sexuality were forms of bullying and violence. Further investigation into other schools found that this was not an isolated incident, and that boys in numerous schools, both elementary and secondary, were engaging in similar abusive acts against their female classmates. It was then decided that an educational program should be implemented to address and prevent such behaviour.

In response to a these incidents of highly inappropriate sexualized behavior among adolescent boys in local schools, several organizations came together to create *The Gender Bullying Project*, with the goal of educating adolescent males about sexualized violence and gender bullying. Additionally, researchers and experts at the University of Toronto and the University of Western Ontario collaborated to help create and evaluate this curriculum and its implementation as a pilot project.

This program was designed to address attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs surrounding sexualized violence and gender bullying among adolescent males. The participants were recruited from local schools where the program was to take place. Facilitators led 5 1-hour sessions, each with a different focus. The topics covered in each session included defining sexualized violence and gender bullying and discussing how these can occur; exploration of masculinity as it relates to gendered violence; discussion of cyberbullying and its harmful and pervasive nature; and exploration regarding bystander intervention and upstander encouragement.

Male facilitators were brought in from outside of the school setting to present this information to the students. These facilitators all had a background in bullying and violence prevention, as well as group facilitation and public speaking. The facilitators

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were provided with a framework of what each session should cover, as well as a variety of exercises and resources they could use for each session. Beyond that, they were given considerable leeway to run the programs in a manner that they felt would be most effective and engaging. These facilitators utilized various exercises, games, role-playing activities, and media clips to make the sessions as engaging as possible. These facilitators were able to assess the specific needs of each group of students during the first sessions, and then determine how best to present the information in subsequent sessions to maximize engagement and participation.

### **Sexualized Violence**

Research and programming that target bullying have been quite abundant. However, this is not true when the focus shifts towards sexualized violence and gender bullying among adolescents, which have received far less attention, especially outside of the realm of dating and intimate partner violence. Due to the budding nature of this area of research, ongoing evaluation and program development are crucial components in the creation of an effective and accessible curriculum. Protocols and paradigms that guide traditional bullying prevention programs may not be as effective for sexualized violence and gender bullying awareness and prevention. In addition, if it is found that these programs are effective, documenting the challenges and key decision-making strategies will help to inform future program expansion and development. The current study takes the form of a case study, utilizing a developmental evaluation framework, and seeks to explore the specific processes and group dynamics of *The Gender Bullying Project* at both the primary and secondary school level. These school levels represent two different developmental stages for adolescents, which are early adolescence and middle

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adolescence (defined below). The purpose of this study will be to examine and compare the experiences of both facilitators and participants to determine how this program can be made more engaging for students in each developmental stage.

Sexualized violence is an inherently gendered act. These acts range from minor aggressions, such as making jokes with friends, to more extreme forms of violence, including rape and sexual assault. In a recent study, it was found that boys and girls at the grade 9 level experience gender bullying and sexualized violence at similar rates of 43% and 44%, respectively (Chiodo, Wolfe, Crooks, Hughes, & Jaffe, 2009). However, the form that this aggression takes is different for males and females. Girls tend to be targeted due to their bodies or perceived sexuality, and experience “more unwanted comments, gestures, and touch, and boys experienced more homosexual slurs and being shown or given unwanted sexual pictures, photos, messages, or notes” (Chiodo et al., 2009, p. 250). This study also found that a variety of negative health outcomes were associated with experiencing this type of victimization. These include suicidal thoughts, self-harm behaviours, early dating, and feeling unsafe at school, among others. Despite the high prevalence of this type of violence, and its negative impacts (Chiodo et al., 2009), it has been difficult to create one unified definition of sexualized violence that encompasses its wide range of behaviours and appeals to different theoretical orientations (McMaster, Connolly, Pepler & Craig, 2002).

The nature of this violence is to target the gender expression, perceived sexual activity, or physical body of the victim (Basile & Saltzman, 2002). Therefore, this form of bullying and aggression relies upon the expectations of youth behaviours and expressions regarding sexuality and gender. Typically, youth are targeted when they do

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not conform to normative behaviour, which could include a male being laughed at and made fun of for not being masculine enough, or a girl being labelled with hurtful names (e.g. slut, whore) based on her perceived engagement in sexual activity. Because of its gendered nature, exploring sexualized violence and gender bullying through a feminist perspective may help to explain the covert coercive and derogatory thought and behaviour patterns that ultimately lead to overt behaviours.

A feminist exploration of sexualized violence suggests that rape-supportive environments promote misogynistic thought patterns during adolescence, which contributes to the development of sexually violent behaviour (Messerschmidt, 2000). Furthermore, developing these thought patterns during adolescence may increase the likelihood of sexualized violence later in life (Tharp, DeGue, Valle, Brookmeyer, Masseti & Matjasko, 2013). Support for this perspective has come from research showing that bullying and homophobic teasing were significant predictors of sexualized violence perpetration over time (Espelage et al., 2012). These researchers examined the relationship between bullying victimization experiences, and sexualized violence perpetration among a sample (n = 1391) of students between the ages of 10-15. This study, as part of a larger three-year longitudinal study, found that bullying experience at wave one was a significant predictor of sexualized violence perpetration at wave two, which occurred six months later. This predictive pattern was similar for male and female students.

### **Adolescence as a Window of Opportunity**

Theorists have suggested that behaviours taught and learned during adolescence are highly likely to be maintained through adulthood (Moffitt, 1993). Additionally,

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research indicates that preventative interventions timed during adolescence, compared with those that are used with adults, may have a greater likelihood of disrupting the development of coercive behaviours and their correlates, such as rape-supportive attitudes (Casey & Lindhorst, 2009). This developmental period is therefore a crucial stage in which youth develop either prosocial behaviours regarding violence and bullying, or coercive, destructive patterns of behaviour that may continue into adulthood.

This potential development of an emerging rape culture during adolescence is particularly troubling; these students are being socialized based on images in the media, older students, and role models to either acquiesce to or actively engage in this rape culture, at an age when they are being newly exposed to intimate relationships and sexual activity. Without healthy role models and opportunities to learn that support the development of healthy, respectful relationships, adolescent males are left to rely on problematic sources of influence that have the potential to skew their beliefs of what constitutes appropriate behaviour. It is important to remember that the socialization of gender occurs through various channels, including family, peer groups, the media, and school environment (Perry & Pauletti, 2011).

If there is a lack of healthy information provided through one channel, youth will be more likely to seek out alternative sources of information. For example, one study found that when peers spend an increasing amount of time with same-sex peers, as opposed to opposite-sex peers, they will become more likely to express gender-typed traits and interests (McHale, Kim, Dotterer, Crouter, & Booth, 2009). Similarly, “time in gendered social contexts generally showed to be associated with the development of more gender stereotyped qualities” (Steensma, Kreukels, de Vries & Cohen-Kettenis, 2013).

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This can become problematic if this peer group engages in antisocial activities. Capaldi, Dishion, Stoolmiller and Yoerger (2001) found that as male youth increasingly engage in disparaging comments about their female peers, they become increasingly likely to engage in relationship violence later on. In this longitudinal study, 206 boys were initially assessed between the ages of 9-10 for antisocial and delinquent behaviours, as well as deviant peer association. During late adolescence (ages 17-18) assessment was extended to include hostile talk with male peers about women, antisocial behaviour in late adolescence, and during early adulthood (ages 19-24), participants completed a measure of aggression towards a partner, with retention rates of 97-99% (Capaldi et al., 2001). The study found that aggression towards women in late adolescence and early adulthood is strongly associated with earlier delinquent behaviour and deviant peer association.

### **Adolescent Development**

Bullying and Sexualized violence has also been studied from a developmental perspective (Lerner & Simi, 2000; Pepler et al., 2006). This perspective has been used to analyze how behaviours develop over time, particularly during the adolescent years. This type of analysis also explores how ideas surrounding sexualized violence may change over time, and how environmental influences either support or condemn such abusive behaviour. There has also been research that shows an increase in sexualized violence perpetration throughout pubertal developmental for both males and females (McMaster et al., 2002). This study examined the sexual harassment behaviour of students between grades 6-8 (N = 1,213) from seven schools in a large Canadian city. The study found that as participant age increased, there was an associated increase in sexual harassment perpetration by both males and females against males and females (McMaster et al.,

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2002). In other words, regardless of the sex of the perpetrator or the victim, sexual harassment behaviours increase as adolescents get older. This trend of increasing sexualized violence perpetration can be described using both feminist and developmental frameworks: social cues and environmental support for sexually violent behaviours, coupled with the increasing focus on sexuality as youth enter puberty, results in an increase in problematic behaviours that are sexual in nature.

Both feminist and developmental contextual frameworks have particular value for preventative educational programming, as they provide a context to address the behaviours that are common and normalized among adolescents, such as sexist jokes and minor aggressions, along with those behaviours that are more universally recognized as problematic. Sexualized violence can be performed by males or females and can target anyone (Chiodo et al., 2009). This abusive behaviour can manifest within and between sexes, and tends to increase over time (McMaster et al., 2002), as described earlier.

However, clear patterns of delinquent behaviour have emerged among adolescents. Males are ridiculed and targeted when they do not adequately perform their masculinity (Meyer, 2009). Performance of masculinity includes engaging in behaviours that have been traditionally deemed masculine; masculinity is not a biological trait, but rather manifests through socially constructed behaviours that revolve around sex, sexuality, and gender. Sexualized violence against males often involves the humiliation and degradation of behaviours that can be classified as feminine; additionally, this violence is steeped in homophobic discourse (Young & Sweeting, 2004). Females, on the other hand, are more likely to be victims of physical sexualized violence, and are targeted based on their perceived sexual behaviours and interests (Meyer, 2009). In either



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scenario, adolescents who are victimized through sexualized violence are more likely to be victimized in the future, and in many cases are more likely to be perpetrators as well (Chiodo et al., 2009). Due to the gendered nature of sexualized violence, it is crucial to employ feminist and developmental ideologies to understand the development of thoughts and behaviours of students engaging in either the acts or the precursors of sexualized violence.

One purpose of the current study was to explore how the developmental stage of the participants affected both their and the facilitators' experiences working through the program curriculum. Of the students participating in the program, there were two clearly divided groups: elementary school students between the ages of 11 and 14, who could be categorized as going through early adolescence, and secondary school students between the ages of 16 and 17, categorized as going through middle adolescence. By chance, and due to the voluntary nature of this program, there were no students in either group who were 15 years of age.

**Early Adolescence.** Early adolescence marks the beginning or continuation of many important changes for young men. These changes occur across a range of areas, and have the potential to impact the child's behaviour, appearance, attitudes, and relationships with others. From a physical perspective, girls tend to mature faster than boys when going through pubertal changes. As Hill and Lynch note, the specific challenges that males face as they navigate through early adolescence may rekindle their juvenile beliefs about conforming to gender norms (1983). However, there still remains a large amount of variability in the growth rate of young men, where some boys tend to experience the changes of puberty at a much faster rate than others. For females, early

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maturation is associated with negative psychological outcomes, as they feel pressure to fit in and to look a certain way (Collins & Steinberg, 2006).

For males, however, early maturation is mostly associated with positive psychological outcomes. One rationale for this difference is that the traits that young men develop as they grow through puberty tend to be venerated among males; these include a deepening voice, increases in height, weight, and muscle mass, and the growth of facial and body hair. Because these traits tend to be associated with masculinity and strength, males who go through puberty faster are generally granted higher social standing. Conversely, adolescent males who experience a delay in their pubertal growth are more likely to experience negative social and health outcomes, including peer rejection and depression (Jormanainen, Frojd, Marttunen, & Kaltiala-Heino, 2014). This glorification of masculine traits ties in with the notion of Jock Insurance, which is a social phenomenon that lends power to those males who embody traits associated with traditional masculinity (Pascoe, 2003). This insurance grants “jocks” the power and space to say what they would like without fear of repercussion or judgment. For example, the captain of a sports team could express fear or insecurity without fear of peer rejection, because his masculinity has been “insured” through his sporting status. As Pascoe notes, “to be a jock is to be dominant and, in some ways, to naturalize this dominance” (2003). Even when these males do not hold certain positions on teams or organization, they may be granted higher social status as a result of their masculine characteristics. Closson (2009) examined the factors that are associated with popularity among males and females, and found that during early adolescence, the boys who are athletic, defiant, daring, and funny tend to be more popular.

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There are many cognitive changes that occur during early adolescence. During this stage, adolescents begin to move from concrete, logical forms of thinking to more abstract modes of thought and understanding. As with physical development, there is great variability among these developmental changes. While some early adolescents begin to build more sophisticated perspective-taking and appreciation for consequences of actions, others are unable to fully understand the consequences of action, particularly if this action is impulsive. This lack of perspective-taking may be related to the persistence of an egocentric point of view, which supports young adolescents' beliefs that they are invincible or invulnerable to negative events (Hill, Duggan, & Lapsley, 2012). Another aspect of this developing cognition is the beginning of a transition from absolute thinking to relative thinking. This may manifest as a propensity to question authority, a behaviour that becomes more prominent in early adolescence (Grotevant, 1983).

As youth begin to move through adolescence, there is a shift in the importance they place on their relationships. There is a tendency for youth to spend more time with their peers, and to begin to value these relationships more than their relationships with parents and other family members (Grotevant, 1983; Tuggle, Kerpelman, & Pittman, 2014). As a result of moderating these changing relationships, young adolescents become highly susceptible to group influences. For example, if a peer group or clique engages in antisocial behaviour, each member of that group will become more likely to exhibit antisocial behaviour in a group and on his own (Ezinga, Weerman, Westenberg, & Bijleveld, 2008; Batanova & Loukas, 2014). Because of this vulnerability to peer influence, it is important to provide youth with alternative sources through which they can model more prosocial and conscientious behaviour.

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**Middle Adolescence.** As youth transition from early into middle adolescence, there is a continuation of many of the changes that have already begun to manifest. These changes span across physical, behavioural, social, and cognitive realms and, as with youth in early adolescence, there is great variability in traits and changes among middle adolescents. One trend that demonstrates less variability than others is the tendency for youth in middle adolescence to begin to participate more and more in mixed-sex relationships, either socially or romantically (Brown, 2004; Montgomery, 2005). This involvement with female peers provides an opportunity for males to develop a greater awareness of female issues, which in turn may promote the further development of empathic thought and action towards women.

As with early adolescence, pubertal timing is associated with bullying behaviours in middle adolescence. Jormanainen et al. (2014) found that early-onset puberty in males was associated with a higher rate of bullying behaviours, while late-onset puberty was associated with greater rates of victimization during middle adolescence. Researchers explored the association between bullying involvement (as both perpetrator and victim) with the age of puberty in 2070 adolescents between the ages of 15-17. Of the participants,

those maturing early were more likely to be bullies, and those with late pubertal timing were more likely to be left alone against their wishes. Therefore, both maturing early and late was disadvantageous for boys, although in different ways. (Jormanainen et al., 2014, p. 154)

From a cognitive point of view, middle adolescents continue to develop the capacity for abstract thought. They also begin to engage in more hypothetical or “what if”

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thought processes. As their cognitive abilities develop, these youth are increasingly able to transfer knowledge and skills they learn in one domain to other facets of their life (Steinberg, 1993). This fluidity of thought allows these young men to consolidate information learned from multiple sources, which greatly enriches their critical thinking abilities. Additionally, higher order thinking and reasoning has been shown to be positively correlated with empathic thought and behaviour (Preston & de Waal, 2002).

Therefore, as these youth traverse through middle adolescence and their cognitive abilities grow, they will have a greater ability to empathize with others, and to understand the consequences of their own and others' antisocial behaviours. It stands to reason that this continued development of empathy and understanding may at least partially account for the increase in responsible behaviours that youth exhibit during middle adolescence. While this proclivity towards adopting responsible behaviours tends to revolve around taking on more adult roles and duties, with training and education it may also serve to increase rates of bystander intervention. Paired with a decrease in egocentrism and a more accurate understanding of their own vulnerabilities, these youth are more able to find innovative ways of both preventing violence and intervening when it occurs, without putting themselves in direct harm (Abbott & Cameron, 2014).

As these cognitive abilities continue to develop, there are changes in social functioning and behaviours during middle adolescence. These youth are increasingly able to examine phenomena not as isolated events, but rather as consequences of larger societal functions and processes (Steinberg, 1993). These cognitive changes create a critical developmental stage to learn about the social processes and culture that operate to proliferate bullying and sexualized violence. This social awareness, as well as greater

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abilities across cognitive domains, allows youth to understand sexualized violence in a deeper, more profound way, while also provided them with the necessary resources to create new ways of addressing the issue.

### **Sexualized Violence Prevention Programs**

There are myriad bullying prevention programs in use today that encompass a wide range of populations, practices, and beliefs. However, despite its pervasive nature, there is a conspicuous lack of programming that targets sexualized violence during early adolescence outside of dyadic dating relationships. There are many sexualized violence prevention programs in use today, such as *Safe Dates*, *The Fourth R*, and *Expect Respect*. These programs have been shown to be effective when incorporated into the school curriculum during adolescence (Kerig, Volz, Moeddel, & Cuellar, 2010; Wolfe et al., 2009). Each of these programs, however, addresses sexualized violence within the context of intimate, dyadic dating relationships. *The Gender Bullying Project* does not specifically address relationship violence, but rather targets behaviours that occur in the school setting in a wide variety of forms. Exploring sexualized violence outside of the relationship context is a relatively new concept for sexualized violence prevention programming, and as such there is a distinct lack of literature pertaining to this area of study.

In order to create effective program in an emerging area, it is important to start by building off of existing knowledge in adjacent areas, and then implementing and testing programming based on this information. In terms of sexualized violence prevention programming, the bulk of research has focused on college-aged students. This research has found that “effective programs focus more on smaller groups in less formal settings,

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with multimedia presentations, role-playing, and other interactive methods, and less on didactic formats in classroom settings” (Clinton-Sherrod et al., 2009, p. 21S). Research also suggests that gender make-up and presentation format and their effects on program success need to be explored further, particularly with younger populations (see Kerig et al., 2010; Nation et al., 2003).

Clinton-Sherrod et al. (2009) conducted a pre- and post-test questionnaire of college-aged students enrolled in one of four different sexual violence prevention programs (*Men of Strength*; *Students Upholding Respect and Gender Equity*; *Safe Place*; and *The Metropolitan Organization to Counter Sexual Assault*) in order to determine what program factors most strongly predict program effectiveness. The program factors that these researchers were focusing on include the gender make-up of the intervention group (single-sexed vs. mixed), the teaching style of the program, and group size. Of the outcomes examined (understanding boundaries, relationship norms, sexual coercion), only understanding of sexual harassment and personal boundaries and positive dating relationship norms showed pre- to post-program change. Changes in these outcomes measures were dependent on a number of program factors. For males, participating in single-sexed groups allowed more freedom to ask questions and to actively engage in the prevention process without fear of judgment from female classmates.

*The Gender Bullying Project* was designed to address factors that influence bystander intervention, as this is a crucial component to any violence prevention program; in the school setting, students witness acts of bullying and sexual aggression on a regular basis (Gruber & Fineran, 2008). These researchers found that bullying occurs more frequently in the school setting than does sexual harassment, but the latter has more

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adverse effects across a range of health outcomes. In another study, Jones, Mitchell, and Turner examined a sample of 791 students between the ages of 10-12, and found that “bystander presence was common across all harassment types” at rates of about 80% (2015, p. 2308). It is important, in addressing sexualized violence, that students feel empowered to address these problematic behaviours successfully when they witness them. When bystanders do not intervene, their inactivity inadvertently supports the actions of the aggressor, and therefore contributes to the unsafe environment. In the immediate situation, the bully is supported and the victim ignored. However, this contributes to a more systemic approval of violent discourse and interaction, increasing the likelihood of subsequent violence. Evaluation of bystander education programs illustrates that they are quite effective, with attitudinal and behaviour changes lasting beyond the 12-month follow-up period (Banyard et al., 2007). Based on this research, as well as the systemic nature of school bullying, *The Gender Bullying Project* will seek to enable students to avoid becoming bystanders by intervening if/when they witness sexualized aggression. A focus on bystander intervention and empowerment will help to undermine the cyclic nature of sexualized violence in the school setting.

### **Developmental Evaluation**

In creating complex and dynamic programming for any purpose, ongoing evaluation is imperative. Traditionally, and particularly among health promotion programming, two approaches have been utilized: the formative evaluation and the summative evaluation (Fagen et al., 2011). Formative evaluation is performed during the creation of an innovation, and focuses on improving program design and delivery criteria. In contrast, summative evaluation examines outcome measures associated with such



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programming in order to target and improve program weaknesses. A third type, developmental evaluation, has emerged as another alternative. Michael Quinn Patton (1994) defined developmental evaluation as

“processes and activities that support program, project, product, personnel, and/or organizational development (usually the latter). The evaluator is part of a team whose members collaborate to conceptualize, design, and test new approaches in a long-term, on-going process of continuous improvement, adaptation, and intentional change.” (p. 317)

This form of evaluation, in essence, combines formative and summative methodologies in order to maximize evaluative scope and power. This type of evaluation has been shown to be particularly effective with programs that are in their early stages (Dickson & Saunders, 2014; Gamble, 2008). According to Fagen et al. (2011), performing a summative evaluation during these early stages may not produce favourable results based on outcome measures, which could lead to cuts in funding or program collapse.

In performing formative evaluations, the evaluator has traditionally functioned independently from the program. However, developmental evaluation requires the evaluator to play an integrated role in the program in order to increase exposure, foster better working relationships with other program facilitators, and ensure the evaluator's credibility in making their recommendations (Fagen et al., 2011). In this case, this author facilitated four of the groups, and was in this position of integrated researcher. Patton (2011) describes developmental evaluation as being appropriate for situations when both summative and formative evaluations do not meet the needs of the program evaluation criteria, as well as when innovation is still emerging. This need for multiple forms of

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evaluation applies to the current project, where a curriculum framework was piloted and examined, and opportunities for improvement of both curriculum and presentation were explored throughout the entire process. The curriculum itself was not fully established prior to the implementation of the program in order to allow facilitators some flexibility in meeting the specific needs of the students in their groups. This flexibility permitted the facilitators to tailor the language, mode of presentation, complexity of conversation, and type of activity to the perceived needs of each group of students.

### **Methods**

#### **Participants**

For this study, a total of 59 participants, all male, were recruited from five public schools throughout a southwestern Ontario city. Of these schools, three were elementary schools (n=34 students) and two were secondary schools (n=15 students). Before the academic year began, administrators from these schools agreed to host the project as an after-school program. The average age of the elementary students was 12.4 years (SD = 1.2), with ages ranging from 11 to 14 years; the average age of the high school students was 16.3 years (SD = 0.3), with ages ranging from 16 to 17 years. The students did not report their ethnicity, although facilitators and the evaluator identified a large majority of participants as Caucasian.

#### **Procedure**

Once school administrators had agreed to host the program, representatives of the project travelled to each of these schools to recruit students. These representatives provided information about the details of the program, including length (five weekly sessions each lasting one hour); general overview (gender bullying and sexualized violence); session topics (gender roles, bullying and violence, cyberbullying, bystander

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intervention); and compensation (pizza and \$5.00 gift cards to various local businesses provided for each participant for every session they attended). The representatives also labeled participants as student ambassadors in order to foster a sense of active engagement and student efficacy.

Those students who were interested in participating received a letter of information and consent form that they were required to have their parent or legal guardian sign. These consent forms provided information about the program content, provided a rationale for collection of student data and feedback, and iterated that participation was voluntary rather than compulsory. It was also noted that participation in the program did not require participation in the research aspect of the project (i.e., students could attend the sessions and receive compensation without completing any surveys or taking part in any recorded focus groups). Once these consent forms were given to students, enrollment was granted on a first-come, first-served basis, as space within the program was described as limited. Despite an initial intention to cap each group at 12 students, all those who were interested and attained parental consent were allowed to participate. As a result, group sizes ranged widely, including 9-17 for elementary groups, and 4-11 at the secondary level.

### **Measures**

During the first session, pre-intervention surveys were given to all students to gain an understanding of their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours as they pertain to gender bullying and sexualized violence (see Appendix A). These surveys were utilized both for this developmental evaluation, as well as for an outcome measure of the efficacy of the program. Because multiple studies were conducted using the same measure, the current

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study did not utilize all of the information collected from the surveys. The information utilized in this project is summarized below.

**Demographic Data.** The demographic data that was collected included grade, age, and gender

**Response to Bullying Scenarios.** As a group, the students watched one of two videos that portrayed different types of sexualized violence and gender bullying, and were asked to report who in the video they felt was responsible for the behaviour, as well as if and how they would respond if they witness such an interaction. For example, one of the videos portrayed a male student (Danny) harassing a female student, making jokes about her appearance as well as physical advances while two of his male friends watched and laughed. As this transpired, a female student wearing a red sweater walked by, took a picture of the compromising scene, and uttered the word “whore” as she walked away smiling. After watching this video, the students provided written answers to several questions (e.g. “What type of sexualized violence did you see in this scenario, if there was any?” and “What actions, if any, could you have taken to intervene in this situation?”). They also completed a rating scale to indicate how responsible each person in the video was for what was happening (e.g. “How responsible is Danny for causing this situation?” and “How responsible is the girl in red for intervening in this situation?”). Finally, they indicated, using a Likert-type scale, how likely they would be to intervene in this scenario. The other scenario is provided in Appendix A.

**Acceptance of Bullying Behaviour.** The students rated 9 statements based on how much they agreed with each one, ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Examples of these statements include “Most sexual bullying is just having fun;” “Girls lie

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about being raped just to get back at their dates;” and “I can help prevent bullying at my school.”

The survey included 40 questions and took approximately 30 minutes for participants to complete. All participants completed this same survey during the final session, although the demographic data section was omitted. During the final session, students also participated in small focus groups consisting of a semi-structured focus group facilitated by a researcher. These groups consisted of 3-5 boys each, and took approximately five to ten minutes to complete, which depended on group size and the complexity of the responses given. The students were asked questions pertaining to the content of the curriculum (i.e. “What was the most valuable thing you learned from this program?”), questions pertaining to the delivery of the program (i.e. “If you could change something about one of the sessions, which session would you change and why?”), and questions pertaining to the effects of the program (i.e. “Now that you’ve completed the program, how will your behaviour change when you see bullying occur?”). These sessions were audio recorded, although names and other identifying information were not recorded. See Appendix B for a complete list of questions the students were asked. To avoid biased responses from participants, facilitators who had been involved with the project did not participate in the focus group interviews. Data from the initial surveys and from the semi-structured focus group interviews were utilized in this developmental evaluation. As an additional source of data, notes prepared by the evaluator after each session and after meeting with other facilitators was used to mine for examples of supporting data for the major themes.

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### Data Analysis

A multiple case study approach was utilized to organize and analyze the data for this project. Initially, it was intended that each school would act as an individual case. However, once the initial data were collected and the project began at several schools simultaneously, it became apparent that there were considerable differences between each school (see table 1). Due to the relatively small number of participants, it was likely that any meaningful differences between these cases could be attributed to demographic variables. To avoid this obfuscation, participants from each age group were pooled together; all of the students at the elementary level were treated as a single case, and all of the students at the secondary level were treated as a single case. Pooling data in this manner also better safeguards the confidentiality of individual participants, given the small numbers at some schools.

Table 1

Participant School Breakdown

School	Group Size	School Size	Number of Facilitators	Overall Fraser Institute Rank (2014 -2015)	Standardized Testing Scores (% Below Standard)
Elementary School 1	17	456	2	2.6/10	57.8
Elementary School 2	16	334	2	1.0/10	71.4
Elementary School 3	11	389	2	5.9/10	35.1
High School 1	4	1906	1	4.6/10	38.5
High School 2	11	766	2	3.0/10	57.2

Several sources of data were used in defining and examining each case. One set of data came from the post-intervention semi-structured focus group transcripts. These data were

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used to examine the participants' experiences of the program. Another set of data was contributed by the facilitators of the project in the form of survey data collected halfway through the project (See Appendix C), and a semi-structured interview conducted by the evaluator after the pilot was complete. The facilitator questionnaires were completed after the first round of sessions, and consisted of 20 questions relating to the facilitators' experiences and recommendations for future programming. Sample questions include "Were there any characteristics of the groups that you felt facilitated the program?" and "Do you think that an after-school program was the proper way to deliver the content of this program?" These data were used to analyze the facilitators' experiences at both the elementary and secondary school level. The final set of data used was derived from the evaluator's notes taken after each session was run. These notes included information on specific group interactions, barriers in presenting the curriculum to the students, and suggestions for future sessions.

A multiple case study design was chosen based on work by Robert Yin (2013). In his book *Case Study Research: Design and Methodology*, Yin posits that using a case study methodology is appropriate when a "how' or 'why' question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control" (p. 101). In this study, the focus of the research is on how developmental stage accounts for meaningful differences experienced by both facilitators and participants in a gender bullying prevention program. This project utilized contemporary data in the form of observation during each session, written facilitator feedback collected after the first wave of sessions, as well as data collected via the pre- and post-intervention measures. Rather than trying to control or predict participant behaviour, the facilitators encouraged students

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to provide information they felt was relevant, and to actively participate in the pilot program in order to inform future programming needs. In this way, the students were placed in positions of power; their voices were to be heard, and these messages would result in meaningful and significant differences in the program curriculum and facilitation.

Each set of transcripts was uploaded to the cloud-based program Dedoose for analysis. Dedoose has the advantage of facilitating mixed methods research in that qualitative data can be coded, but also grouped by quantitative moderators. For example, each transcript was categorized both by educational level (elementary vs. secondary) and by source (participant vs. facilitator vs. evaluator), in order to look at qualitative responses within and between those groups.

Once these transcripts were uploaded, qualitative content analysis was utilized to examine the data. The framework for this analysis was adapted from work by Marsh and White (2006). Rather than beginning with a specific hypothesis, this methodology allows for inductive examination of data pre-empted by a research question; however, there is flexibility to alter this question as patterns and themes emerge from the analysis. This fit most harmoniously with the moving-target design of a developmental evaluation.

In order to explore these data in a systematic fashion, a research question first had to be determined. For this study, the research seeks to explore how the developmental stage of participants impacts the experiences of both facilitators and participants of a gender bullying prevention program in primary and secondary school settings. Once this research question was derived and the data was entered, open coding was used to develop a set of codes based upon relevance and frequency. This coding scheme was “developed



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in the process of close, iterative reading to identify significant concepts and patterns” (Marsh & White, 2006). From these initial root codes, parent and child codes were developed to elucidate upon the data provided by the participants, facilitators, and evaluator. Memos were used throughout the coding process in order to document the procedures used and the perceptions of the evaluator. This process allowed for the continual evaluation and modification of the evaluator’s interpretation.

### **Results**

Nine root codes were derived from the various data sources. These root codes and sample quotes are provided in table 2.

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Table 2

Root Codes with Sample Quotes

Root Code	Sample Quotes	
	Students	Facilitators
Support All Male Setting	<i>"I don't think it would work as well."</i>	<i>"...like 100%, because there was a women in the class, the kids acted 100% differently."</i>
Deconstructing Masculinity	<i>"...that video really opened up my eyes and showed me that boys and girls are more alike, and you shouldn't bully girls as a lesser person."</i>	<i>"They started talking about how fathers have to be emotional towards their sons and their daughters..."</i>
Program Recommendations	<i>"Maybe more acting out scenarios, not full on acting them out, but a little more hands-on."</i>	<i>"You definitely need to cap the groups, especially the younger students, because they became completely disorganized."</i>
Skill Development	<i>"They gave us a lot of realistic events and we talked about it. And we all have seen stuff like this happen and now we know for next time what you could do."</i>	<i>"We're trying to move away from these socially desirable responses and talk about what skills these guys need to have."</i>
Teacher Involvement	<i>"Teachers wouldn't be as fun to act around and really, if a teacher was in here... it would make me double think about what I was going to say."</i>	<i>"A lot of time teachers will have already type-casted you."</i>
Increased Participation	<i>"We weren't doing seatwork quietly, we were allowed to talk out loud and share our feelings."</i>	<i>"Yeah, that definitely worked with the elementary crowd, for sure."</i>
Decreased Participation	<i>"I am not too fond of the surveys."</i>	<i>"...it was hard to get the conversation going, because they were stuck on the idea of rape."</i>
Bystander Intervention	<i>"Yeah, teachers aren't going to help, so you have to do it yourself."</i>	<i>"The high school students were more creative about ending conflict without making the situation worse."</i>
Bystander Intervention	Non- <i>"Yeah, I don't think I would have the courage to stand up to someone."</i>	N/A

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Throughout the data analysis, particular attention was paid to the similarities and differences in experience between the two developmental groups: early adolescence and middle adolescence. Table 3 illustrates the rate and frequency of the root codes associated with each group. The frequencies were derived by measuring the total number of times a root code was utilized, and compares how often the code was found in focus group transcripts with elementary school students and with secondary school students. In the following section, interview themes are discussed first for the early adolescent group followed by the mid adolescent group, with observations from session notes added as relevant to each theme.

Table 3

Root Code Rate and Percentage Breakdown

Root Code	Early Adolescence		Middle Adolescence	
	Code Rate	% By Age Group	Code Rate	% By Age Group
Support All Male Setting	34	69.4	15	30.6
Deconstructing Masculinity	4	50.0	4	50.0
Bullying Experiences	8	100	0	0
Participant Learning	36	68.1	15	31.9
Program Recommendations	8	32.0	17	68.0
Skill Development	38	86.4	6	13.6
Teacher Involvement	13	41.9	18	58.1
Increased Participation	34	81.0	8	19.0
Decreased Participation	11	78.6	3	21.4
Bystander Intervention	21	56.8	17	43.2
Bystander Non-Intervention	1	33.3	2	66.6

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### **Early Adolescence (Ages 11 – 14)**

Of the total sample, 34 students were between the ages of 11 and 14, and could be categorized as going through early adolescence.

**All Male Setting.** Throughout the entire pilot process, students at the elementary level supported the all male setting, which was evident in the rate of responses regarding the male-only environment (n = 43 references). Of these references, 34 responses indicated that the students felt that the male-only setting was appropriate, and that running the group with both males and females would not be effective. Rationale for this preference included discomfort talking about certain topics in the presence of female classmates: “if there was a girl there you wouldn’t feel comfortable talking about certain stuff”; a belief that females would be offended by the program material and the boys’ responses: “we wouldn’t be saying as much as we did ‘cause we don’t want to hurt their feelings”; and a belief that conflict would arise due to the mixed-gender environment: “everyone would be arguing... the girls would pretty much tell the boys to shut up.”

Despite the majority of responses indicating a preference for a male-only environment, a few students (n = 3 references) indicated that they were open to the idea of a mixed-gender environment: “I guess it would be fine if girls joined in.” A more popular suggestion (n = 8 references) was for girls to have a similar program run separately: “If we had the same program at the same time we should be in different rooms.” The boys indicated that they believed their female classmates would benefit from such a program, but were, for the most part, uncomfortable with the idea of discussing these sensitive issues as a collective, mixed-gender group.

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**Bullying Experience.** During the focus group interviews with the early adolescent students, several of the participants (n = 8 references) referred to their own experiences with bullying. Six of these references refer specifically to experience as a victim: “I have been bullied before, and cyberbullied and everything.” These responses were most often given when the students were asked about strategies for bystander intervention. One student made a spontaneous disclosure of victimization when asked about his favourite session. He reported that his favourite session involved listing out derogatory terms, and that having the space to use these words allowed him to express his anger. He then continued, without prompting, to discuss his experiences being bullied in the past year.

I’m just kidding, I am just kidding. Just letting my anger out and stuff, you know? When I said it there, it was... I said that everyone was bullying me and I had like three people stand up and say that they would stick up for me, cause like, the teachers here really don’t do anything about what has been going on.

These references to the students’ own experiences with bullying may indicate that they are less able to speak in abstract or theoretical terms, and instead rely on lived experience to inform their responses. It may also suggest that these students were open to expressing vulnerability with their peers.

**Bystander Intervention.** Throughout the focus groups, students in the early adolescent group made 22 references to bystander intervention. These were most often responses to the question: *What are some ways you learned about to get involved or intervene without pulling the focus on yourself when you see gender bullying happening?*

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Of these responses, the vast majority (n = 21 references) involved students discussing ways that they felt they could intervene when they saw bullying occur. These responses ranged from privately telling a teacher or authority figure to standing up for the victim and even directly challenging the bully.

I think if you don't really want to get into it because, um, because I know I wouldn't want to get into that situation I would most likely tell a teacher, like, anonymously... so nobody would know that it was me, but it would get the job done. Or something like that.

Only one student indicated that he would not feel comfortable intervening if he were to witness bullying, stating that if he were to try and stand up to a bully, he would "be called stupid."

**Group Dynamics.** In general, the elementary groups were larger than the secondary school groups. Based on facilitator feedback, attendance at the elementary school level ranged from eleven students in the smallest group to seventeen students in the largest group. It was noted by this evaluator, and supported by the group facilitators and student responses, that when a group of early adolescent males exceeded ten students, it became much more difficult to keep students engaged and prevent disruptive behaviours. In certain cases, this unruly dynamic resulted in students completely disengaging from the material and acting out within the classroom setting: "I didn't like how people were fighting in the back of the classroom" or "...especially how people are screaming and yelling." These effects were most visible in schools where group size was considerably higher than the initial proposed cap of 12 students. However, facilitators noted that there were significant behavioural differences between the different schools

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involved in the project. Therefore, it may be difficult to ascertain whether the unruly dynamic in the larger groups was due to their group size, the general conduct of the students involved, or some mix of the two.

Within the elementary school setting, one exercise that unanimously engaged all students was the activity where students created a list of inappropriate words that are used to shame, embarrass, or otherwise harass people; they created a list that targets males, and a separate list that targets females. During this exercise, students were allowed to use language that they were forbidden from using in the classroom setting. While it was noted that some students simply took the opportunity to yell out obscenities, it provided a space for others to express themselves. One student reported that “it let me get out my anger,” and this opportunity further set the tone that the students would not be judged or punished for their responses: “we felt like we could just be free.” Despite the excitement that using this language provoked, this exercise led into an important discussion about why certain words are used to target women, and why others are used to target men. The students were able to discuss the language they witness and use on a daily basis in a way that they had never before considered. Facilitators noted that this was one of the most powerful exercises in the entire program, as it examines daily student behaviour in an entirely new way.

**Jock Insurance.** It was noted by this evaluator, and supported by all facilitators, that at the elementary school level certain students were given more space to talk than others. This power differential seemed to rely on a previously established social structure, which in turn seemed to rely on adherence to certain gender stereotypes. In particular, it was noted that students who were physically larger in size and/or who played on at least

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one sports team for the school were given more space to talk than other students. For this age group especially, the facilitators had to moderate the discussions to allow everyone to speak and be heard. It was also noted that those students with *jock insurance* were rarely, if ever, challenged in what they had to say. In contrast, comments made by those students with less social capital were often challenged. While this process enabled the more masculine students more control over the conversation, it also promoted critical thinking and occasional debate about important topics. However, these group conversations were notably less egalitarian and less productive than those had by the older students. Through these differing social processes, the early adolescent students interacted in a manner in which they preserved the status quo of the group, even when discussing such topics as masculinity, popularity, and bullying behaviours. For example, the students would engage in behaviours that celebrate and reinforce traditional masculinity while discussing the harms of such practices. This may represent a difficulty in translating theoretical conceptualizations of violence and hegemonic masculinity into a real-world setting, which in turn may represent the still developing nature of abstract thought that is evident within this age group.

**Deconstructing Masculinity.** Students going through early adolescence were, for the most part, able to dissect the images of masculinity they had been taught, and to explore the nature and origin of these stereotypes. With prompting, they were able to understand that even though gender stereotypes tend to glorify masculinity, these gender expectations can be oppressive to those who do not fit this role. Within this group, there were drastic differences in the levels of understanding that the students displayed. In one group, a facilitator commented that a male student in grade 7 was able to use and define



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the word misogyny without prompting. Other students challenged gender stereotypes, and expressed an understanding that traditionally masculine characteristics are not possessed by all men; as one student stated, “we’re not all action heroes and body builders.” Another student emphasized that this does not detract from their status as men, and that we should “just respect them for who they are.” Yet other students were able to identify sources of these stereotypes, but still seemed to subscribe to traditional notions of gender, which was displayed by their idolization of famous athletes and action heroes like LeBron James and Jason Statham, respectively. Even though these students expressed understanding that these stereotypes can be oppressive and damaging, the messages seemed to be so deeply ingrained and accepted that dislodging them was not possible within the confines of this program, given its short duration.

One heartening note was that across age groups, within and between schools, all students expressed the opinion that engaging in overt acts of violence against women was not a trait associated with masculinity. However, this belief was only firmly held when discussed in the context of physical abuse. During discussions of sexual harassment and gender bullying, the younger students were less clear about what constituted inappropriate behaviour, and were less likely to categorize typically masculine behaviours and identities (i.e. being a player) as potentially harmful.

### **Middle Adolescence (Ages 16 – 17)**

Of the total sample, 15 students were between the ages of 16-17, and could be categorized as going through middle adolescence.

**All Male Setting.** As with their younger counterparts, students going through middle adolescence largely endorsed participation in male-only groups (n = 13 of 17

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references). The rationale for wanting the male-only group included feeling less comfortable discussing sensitive topics with female students present. As one student stated, “I don’t think that guys would be as open about it and same with girls.” Other student emphasized freedom from judgment by their peers: “we’ve just got these guys in here and they seem a lot... open to everything and stuff... there are not going to be any repercussions... a lot more like free, free speaking.” And yet other students suggested that the mixed-gender groups would be more likely to result in arguments stating that “there would be a lot of arguing.” Of the 17 total references to the gender make-up of the group, several (n = 4 references) suggested that during the initial phase of the program, there should be gender segregation. However, these students also expressed interest in combining the groups in a later phase, to “have separate groups and then maybe bring them together” and “they could add their ideas.” Of the fifteen high school students, only one supported the notion of having a more diverse group, and suggested that this diversity might inspire a more educated or insightful discussion, and that groups “...definitely would get more variety of answers and attitudes.”

**Bullying Experience.** Unlike the younger students, none of the high school students relied on personal examples when discussing concepts of bullying, such as bystander intervention. The younger students offered personal anecdotes about their experiences with bullying in order to answer questions about bystander intervention or discussing what bullying looks like in different situations. One possible explanation for this lack of personal disclosure could be that these older students did not feel comfortable disclosing information about their own experiences, that this would create vulnerability amongst their peers that they were not ready for. However, it is likely that these students

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were simply able to discuss these issues in a more abstract manner, to express empathy for hypothetical victims of bullying while also discussing motives for perpetrators to act the way they do. They were better able to situate bullying behaviour as a social phenomenon, and to understand the powers and influences that promote such behaviour. In conceptualizing bullying as a social phenomenon, these students were able to explore issues from overt sexualized violence to subtle and covert behaviours that promote the development of rape culture. As one facilitator noted,

With [High School name] I feel like we had a great group, like literally they would get in there, they had a fabulous definition off the cuff... they understood where we were coming from. It was a slightly different experience with the elementary school... they went straight to rape or the unwanted touching kind of thing. But to me, [High School name] they got it right away... they got the issue.

**Bystander Intervention.** During the focus groups, there were 19 references made to bystander intervention. Of these, 17 references related to participants providing some form of intervention. Of particular note was difference in opinion between early and middle adolescents about going to teachers and authority figures. The students in elementary school seemed to rely on these authority figures to intervene, and expected that if they sought help from teachers, they would receive it. The high school students, in contrast, expressed the idea that it is pointless to involve teachers because they cannot stop bullying from happening: “teachers aren’t going to help, so you have to do it yourself” and “everyone wants to believe that teachers will help, but it’s mostly up to the students.” These opinions may hint at disillusionment that teachers have control over

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student behaviour. However, it may also be a realization that bullying behaviours persist beyond the school environment, and that by relying on teachers to intervene, the students would leave themselves vulnerable when there are no teachers present. As one student put it, "...you get it around the school, when you go home, March break... teachers can't help on weekends and after school."

Regardless of the basis of these beliefs that students are responsible to take action themselves, this idea seems to have prompted the development of more creative intervention strategies. These interventions involved making a diversion and removing the victim from the environment, using humour to disarm the situation, using subtle body language to indicate that what is happening is not acceptable, or even engaging other students and creating a movement against the behaviour. In these examples, the high school students were able to understand the dangers of getting directly involved when intervening with bullying behaviours, and as a result had developed ways of helping victims of bullying without overtly putting a target on their own backs.

**Group Dynamics.** In general, the sizes of the high school classes were smaller, with the smallest attendance of four students, and the largest of eleven students. However, the number of students present did not have as great an effect on the group dynamics as it had with the younger students. Even in a larger group, the high school students were able to moderate their own conversation, to allow space for everyone to speak, and were more respectful of each others' ideas and opinions. Where the younger students required constant stimulation through videos and activities the older students were able to engage in longer conversations about bullying behaviours, and were able to engage with the material with much less prompting from the facilitators because "we

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weren't doing seatwork, quietly, we were allowed to talk out loud and share our feelings." Not only were the students encouraged to participate, they thrived on being able to speak openly and honestly while discussing topics where they ordinarily would feel pressure to censor themselves.

**Deconstructing Masculinity.** The high school students were able to discuss masculinity in a very open, direct manner. They were able to identify stereotypes as well as their origins, explore the ways that traditional masculinity both empowers and oppresses men, and explore the power differential that traditional beliefs about men and women create. Unlike their younger counterparts, the high school students were able to conceptualize men and women as having the power to take the role of victim and/or bully, rather than subscribing to the idea that bullies are strictly men and victims are strictly women, and that "girls and boys are still equal but boys can be affected as much as girls can... it's not a one way thing." These boys were able to discuss the different ways that both men and women can perpetuate an atmosphere and cycle of violence. They also described differences between men and women in terms of bystander intervention. For example, during one of the sessions, one of the students expressed trepidation about intervening against either a male or female perpetrator, and expressed his belief that it is more socially acceptable for physical violence to occur when a man is the target. In other words, if he tried to prevent a bully from targeting someone, he would more likely to be physically targeted than if a female student tried to intervene. In this sense, he is moving away from traditional notions of males as perpetrators and females as victims, and even suggests ways through which his male privilege could be a source of weakness.

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**Reconstructing Masculinity.** In addition to deconstructing traditional notions of masculinity, the older students seemed to be engaging in a process of reconstructing masculinity. This was particularly evident during one activity where students create two lists of gender stereotypes, one for men and one for women, after these lists are complete, the headings of the lists are reversed, so that the list generated for men now applied to women, and vice versa. Students at the elementary level had trouble with this activity, and despite an ability to critically analyze traditional masculinity, they expressed discomfort in ascribing traditionally feminine traits to men. These traits including things like nurturing, loving, homemaker, tender, emotional, submissive, etc. When the older students were faced with the same task, they were able to quickly, and with relative ease, provide evidence to support the ideas that men can possess any of the stereotypically feminine characteristics without compromising his status as a man. In fact, they were able to creatively explore avenues through which men are celebrated for assuming these traditionally female roles. For example, in most team sports there is a captain or leader figure who assumes the dominant role, and all other players submit to their direction and leadership. Even though these athletes embody the traditionally feminine trait of being submissive, they are not seen as lesser men for it. These students were able to provide examples where men and women are not only challenging traditional gender roles, but also redefining the very way we conceptualize gender.

### **Discussion**

The purpose of the current study was to explore the factors associated with implementing bullying prevention and bystander intervention programming aimed at male students at the early and middle adolescent level. This program sought to further

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explore the youth's experiences and beliefs around bullying and sexualized violence, as well as to address any perceived barriers to recognizing how certain behaviours are problematic and when bystander intervention is appropriate. There was a particular emphasis on the different needs of the target populations, and on determining how best to present a curriculum framework to either group. It was acknowledged from the start that there would likely need to be different facilitation strategies for each age group, as they would have different needs, but it was unclear exactly what those differences would be. In comparing the experiences of students and facilitators to the literature around adolescent development, several themes emerged. For reader clarity, they have been separated by developmental stage.

### **Early Adolescent Participants**

When working with the early adolescent boys, there was great variability in participants' cognitive, behavioural, and social development. One of the first issues faced with this group was the language used in the pre-intervention questionnaires. These questionnaires had been designed specifically for this program, and were written in fairly plain, unassuming language. However, it quickly became evident that many of the younger students could not connect with the language that was being used. Specific examples include words like intervene, perpetrator, and scenario. This informed the data collectors, as well as the facilitators, that the language of the program would have to be tailored to the participants' comprehension level.

Throughout the program, one common theme among the early adolescent boys was to discuss their own personal experiences with bullying and bystander intervention. When asked to discuss hypothetical situations, these boys would often resort to examples

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from their lived experience. Of course, there were students within these groups who were able to speak in hypothetical and abstract ways, but the majority of students were restricted to their own concrete experiences. This falls in line with research on the cognitive development of early adolescents, which suggests that during this stage adolescents begin to develop the capacity for abstract thought (Ezinga et al., 2008).

However, more concrete cognitive abilities of the younger participants made some of the material challenging for them, as they had not seemed to develop a strong sense of empathy for others, particularly in regards to perspective-taking for hypothetical non-known individuals. This lack of empathy became particularly evident when the discussion turned to matters of cyberbullying and other forms of aggression that do not take place face-to-face. Many of the students had difficulty connecting the actions of an aggressor with the unseen consequences against the victim. This finding was demonstrated in their minimization of the effects of cyberbullying, especially when compared physical violence. It should be noted, however, that many of the students in this age group reported that they did not possess cell phones, and also were not connected to social media sites. As a result, the majority of their time online was spent gaming, either online or via Internet-connected consoles. The vast majority of these games contain themes of war, violence, and domination. These students were able to identify instances of cyberbullying, but because they were paired with games that glorify violence, or perhaps because such online behaviour has become the norm, they did not identify these experiences as cyberbullying.

Students at the early adolescent development stage seemed to be particularly affected by group dynamics and peer relationships. Throughout the sessions, these



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students engaged in group discussion fairly regularly, although these had to be moderated by facilitators for several reasons. One of the reasons is that these students would rarely disagree with one another, particularly if they belonged to the same group or clique. Once one student made a comment, other students were very likely to agree and to add on, rather than to challenge and go against their peer. One of the reasons for this could be that the students were not very familiar with the subject matter that was being discussed, and so did not want to risk presenting an argument and being challenged. It may also be the case that these students had an inflated idea of the consequences of challenging their peers, and were afraid that being challenged would lead to their exclusion. This was evident in sessions when students would continually monitor the actions and reactions of their peers when making a comment, and would occasionally backpedal if they made too absolute a statement.

One exception to this tendency to agree with one's peers was evident in the form of jock insurance. As described earlier, jock insurance is a form of social capital that allows students who embody certain characteristics of masculinity and athleticism more room to present and discuss their ideas (Pascoe, 2003). In each of the groups, there seemed to be one or two students who were granted this leverage over control of the conversation. These students were generally the only ones who would challenge their peers directly, and would change the flow of the conversation. However, this may also be a manifestation of a social hierarchy that exists outside of the program environment, rather than specific traits associated with masculinity. Rather than exploring adherence to gender roles, it may be more important to look at the students' positions within the larger

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social context of the school itself, which rely on more than just gender role expectations (Garbarino, 2002).

Research into adolescent behaviour has found that males tend to engage in more physically aggressive behaviours than their female counterparts (Perry & Pauletti, 2011). This proclivity towards physically aggressive behaviour was evident in several of the sessions with the younger population. In one of the schools, there was a large open area at the back of the classroom. Throughout these sessions, which consisted of about 17 students each, at any given moment 4-7 students would be wrestling in this open area. They would completely disengage from the group, and rather than chat amongst themselves or otherwise ignore what was going on, they would engage in highly disruptive behaviours that interfered with the other students who were trying to pay attention. It was interesting to note that with these students, they would engage in physically aggressive behaviours, as well as verbally aggressive forms of communication. However, they still exhibited a tendency not to challenge the ideas and opinions of their peers, even if they would challenge the peers in other ways. This may indicate that these students were more comfortable or confident in their physical abilities than they were in their ability to defend their viewpoint or to challenge their peers on an intellectual level. Of course, it may also be possible that this tendency may be the result of forms of socialization that teach these students that physical altercations are the appropriate response to conflict.

### **Middle Adolescent Participants**

When working with the students at the high school level, it was apparent that, as with their younger counterparts, there was a wide range in terms of the boys' cognitive,

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behavioural, and social development. In one of the groups, there was a student whose native language was not English, and presented with considerable difficulties connecting to the language and the program in general. However, this was an isolated case, as the remainder of the participants had little difficulty understanding the language used both by the facilitators, as well as that included in the pre- and post-interventions surveys and focus groups.

One theme that emerged with the older students was their ability to easily speak in hypothetical terms and engage in abstract thought. This allowed them to step outside of their own experience with bullying and bystander intervention, and to consider the experiences and perspectives of others. This perspective-taking ability allowed these students to consider the ways in which certain language and behaviour can affect women. This became clearly evident when these students engaged in the activity that involved using derogatory language aimed at males and females. These students were better able to understand how using this language, even when directed at males and used in jest, reinforces the idea that women are inferior to men. These students were better able to consider what it might be like for their female classmates to hear these derogatory words and names being used on a daily basis.

Another theme that emerged with the middle adolescent boys was a greater ability to situate gender bullying and sexualized violence as a systemic, societal issue. Rather than focusing only on how these behaviours manifest in the school setting, they were able to explore how these behaviours are promoted in subtle ways, especially through the media. As one student noted, the presence of women in the media has always been problematic, and has generally portrayed them as submissive, inferior, and weak.

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However, he commented that recently there has been a notable increasing in the hypersexualization of women, to the extent that their presence as sexual objects dominates their media existence. This prompted a compelling discussion where students commented that as women are sexualized and objectified, they are simultaneously dehumanized, and therefore treating them in violent and misogynistic ways becomes more socially acceptable. This brought about conversations where students discussed the nature of these messages, and some students even discussed the ways they themselves proliferate these messages, and how they could begin to challenge this harmful rhetoric.

One of the themes that was consistent across age groups was the perceived need of participants for groups to include only males. This theme extended beyond the desire for all participants to be male; many participants indicated, throughout the sessions and during the focus groups, that they would prefer to have the group led only by males as well. This falls in line with the work of Crooks, Goodall, Hughes, Jaffe, and Baker, who suggest that “engaging men as mentors to boys is a natural avenue for challenging dominant theories of masculinity” (2006, p. 224). Indeed, engaging men as leaders in this group may represent a breaking down of a cycle of sexualized violence against women, and may instead begin a new cycle of preventing violence against girls and women. This falls in line with the work of Kaufman, who suggests that “supportive organizations, support groups, and informal ties of intimacy and support among men” may be a required component to analyzing and challenging sexism and homophobia in men (1999, p. 79)

### **Limitations**

Although this study provides insight into the feasibility of engaging adolescent males in gender bullying prevention programming, as well as some of the considerations

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for working with early versus mid-adolescent boys, there were a number of limitations. One of the primary limitations was the self-report nature of both the pre- and post-intervention surveys, as well as the focus groups. It was noted by data collectors that it was somewhat difficult to elicit thoughtful or reflective answers from the participants during the focus groups. Participants tended to answer both primary and prompting questions with single-word responses, and required encouragement to provide reasoning or evidence for their responses. Because of this tendency for short answers, it is possible that the youth did not adequately convey the entirety of their thoughts, or that some of the meaning behind their answers was lost in transcription.

Another limitation of the current study was the relatively small sample sizes. Due to the small number of schools who participated in the program, and the relatively small number of total participants, it may be difficult to generalize the findings towards the larger adolescent population.

The lack of a post-intervention follow-up assessment can be considered another limitation of this study. This study did not aim to assess the efficacy of the program, and therefore a follow-up assessment may have been of limited value if it had not been used as an outcome measure. However, the participants may have been able to provide important information about how they felt the program had influenced their thought patterns and/or their behaviour. Given adequate time to explore what they had learned, participants would also be able to comment on any gaps in their learning, such as specific strategies for bystander intervention, which could be used to further improve both the curriculum and the presentation of the program.

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Another limitation of the current study is the short-term nature of the program being developed. Within the confines of a 5-week program, it may be impossible to sufficiently deliver a curriculum that involves such important and personal topics, especially for an audience that is not used to discussing issues of such a nature. It is possible that, given more time with each group of students, facilitators would be able to gain more insight into the ways in which group members interact, the specific needs to each group and how they relate to the population in general, and what specific changes could be made to the curriculum to address these group needs more fully. As demonstrated by the WiseGuyz program, a similar program implemented in a school board in Alberta, longer-term programming is likely necessary in order to explore and challenge the attitudes and beliefs of participants, and for any changes to persist after the program has ended.

Finally, the nature of data collection in the study may be problematic in generalizing the findings. The dual role of the evaluator is a necessary component of any developmental evaluation framework, and allows the evaluator to gain specific insight into group dynamics, program needs, and challenges and obstacles to program implementation. In fact, this dual role allows the evaluator to collect information that may otherwise prove impossible to attain. However, it is important to note that this dual role also leaves the data collection and interpretation open to evaluator bias. The specific needs and dynamics of the groups in which the evaluator participated may not provide an accurate representation of the entire population, or even the entire sample in the study. In order to combat this bias, extensive notes were taken from each session, facilitators were given multiple opportunities to provide their own insight into program needs, and memos

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were used throughout the data analysis process. Regardless of these measures, it is possible that the data collection, analysis, and interpretation remain open to evaluator bias.

### **Implications for Future Research and Programming**

In analyzing previous research on bullying prevention programs and group dynamics, as well as exploring the experiences of both facilitators and students who participated in this pilot program, several themes emerged pertaining to increasing group participation and program implementation success.

For the early adolescent group, the primary factor in determining whether or not the program implementation process would be successful seemed to be the size of the group. Once the groups exceeded 12 students, which also represented a ratio of 6 students per facilitator, it became increasingly difficult to moderate the conversation and to keep the group engaged in the curriculum. These younger students seemed highly distractible, even during highly engaging activities that they later, during their exit interviews, described as being exciting and engaging. The original intention of this program had been to cap the group size at 12 students. However, when students responded in greater numbers, it was decided that increasing the size of the group would increase the effect and outreach of the program by directly impacting more students. However, it seemed that the opposite occurred, and that by including more than 12 students, the overall quality of group participation and engagement decreased.

Another factor that influenced the success of program implementation was the language used by facilitators. During the first session of the pilot process, the students had trouble navigating the vocabulary used in the pre-intervention surveys. While these

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surveys will not be used in future sessions, it seemed to set an expectation for some students that the language used by facilitators would not be accessible. As a result, facilitators had to constantly monitor the language they used in order to ensure that their message was being tailored to the audience.

In each of the early adolescent groups, the vast majority of participants agreed, quite adamantly, that inviting their female classmates to participate in the program would not be a good idea. For the younger students, the issues with involving girls in the setting were that the male students would be less comfortable sharing what they thought, the female students would be offended by the material, and this would result in conflict between the sexes. When queried further, the adolescents agreed that female students would benefit from this program only if they were given their own separate, all-female arena in which to discuss these issues.

In a similar manner, all of the younger students agreed that if a teacher had led the sessions, they would have been less comfortable discussing certain issues and participating in some of the activities. As the current curriculum stands, it is likely that this program will be incorporated into the classroom setting, and as a result will necessitate facilitation by a teacher. This does not necessarily mean that the students would not be open to discussing such issues with their teachers, but certain assurances must be granted for these students to feel comfortable participating. First, teachers must assure students that what is said within the group will remain within the group, and will not be shared with other students or staff. Second, teachers will have to assure students that what they say during the group will not impact their grades or their relationship with the teacher outside of the group setting. This dual relationship may be, at best, difficult to



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navigate and at worst, impossible for student participants to accept. An additional challenge will be group size, in that the ideal size appeared to be 4-6 students per facilitator, which is a ratio unlikely to be found in any classroom. Finally, students will have to be assured that if they use certain language or discuss certain sensitive issues, that they will not be treated, or rather disciplined, the same as they would in a typical classroom setting. Being allowed to use and explore “inappropriate” language was one of the factors that most greatly increased student engagement, as this illustrated to the students that they were allowed to say certain things without fear of being punished. Within this context, however, it is important to note that students were not permitted to use this language in a hostile or derogatory way towards their peers, but rather to explore why this language is used and how it is harmful. Again, such a dual relationship with the students may be quite difficult for a teacher to navigate, as such an exploration within a classroom setting may be misinterpreted as the promotion of abusive or derogatory language.

Finally, throughout the sessions the younger students had been able to engage in a process of deconstructing masculinity. Inherent to this process is the recognition that masculinity is a construction, rather than an absolute or universal concept. The students were able to grasp this idea with relative ease, and to understand how stereotypes surrounding gender roles can be damaging to both men and women. This program helped to build upon these ideas, to promote critical thinking about the messages that these students have been sent from many different sources: the media, their parents, the school setting, etc. This program offers an opportunity for the students to explore these notions of gender roles in a more critical way than has previously been permitted, especially

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when considering the social nature of the group. It will be important for facilitators and/or teachers to encourage this critical thinking, and to promote the development of alternative ideas around gender roles and norms.

For the high school students, there were emergent themes as well, though they differed somewhat from their younger peers. For the students going through middle adolescence, there was little need to monitor or moderate the flow of the conversation. These students thrived on being able to challenge one another, to participate in critical thinking, and to share ideas with one another. They did not require activities to be specifically presented in certain ways that would make them more appealing. For example, the younger students participated in an activity that rated the appropriateness of certain actions using a red light, yellow light, and green light system. For the older students, they were able to discuss these issues without using visual metaphors or props, and were still able to approach the activity with interest and enthusiasm. Therefore, for older students, allowing them to moderate the flow of their conversation may be an important way to encourage active participation. This would solidify the group as being different from a classroom setting, where students are required to raise their hand to contribute ideas and the teacher is seen as the authority. Granting students this status and responsibility may help to foster their participation.

It was also noted that group size was not an issue for these older students, though this may only pertain to the range of group sizes within this study. They were able to engage in the material in an appropriate manner, and when they were disinterested in participating, they resorted to more silent, non-disruptive activities. This suggests that, compared to the early adolescent population, larger group sizes of middle adolescents

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may be easier to facilitate without compromising the quality of the program or its reception. However, in previous research on the topic of group dynamics for intervention programs related to bullying and sexualized violence, it has been suggested that group size may have an impact on the quality of the program. While the majority of these studies have examined these impacts on programs presented to college-level students, it is likely that this trend will persist among the middle adolescent population if group size is significantly larger than what was evident in this study. Therefore, more research may be required on the impact of group size for intervention programs aimed at this population.

Throughout the sessions, the students at the high school level engaged in the same process of gender deconstruction. They were familiar with the idea that gender is a construction, and that the way gender had been presented through various outlets has been problematic for men and for women. However, these students were able to move one step beyond that deconstruction, and were beginning to reconstruct their notions of masculinity, as described earlier. This suggests that they are able to engage in abstract thought processes in creative and innovative ways. Therefore, it will be important to foster this type of thinking, rather than inhibit it. Future facilitators must encourage these students to engage in unconventional methods of thought and interaction to stimulate this creativity. This will further separate the program from the classroom setting, where more emphasis is placed on convention and following guidelines. If the creativity and imagination of these students is fostered and encouraged, it is impossible to say what they would be able to develop or create. As Garbarino argues, utilizing teenagers own solutions may be a crucial component of developing bullying prevention measures, and that adult-created interventions are often “insufficiently attentive to the school as a social

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system” (2002, p. XIV). Therefore, allowing these youth the time and space to explore their own creative solutions may reflect a crucial component to programs such as *The Gender Bullying Project*.

### **Conclusion**

For a variety of reasons, early and middle adolescence may represent a critical and crucial time period during which education and prevention programs around sexualized violence and gender bullying can be utilized (Clinton-Sherrod et al., 2009; Meyer, 2009). Males in these developmental stages are highly susceptible to influence from their peer group, are at a stage where they are beginning to engage in mixed-sex interactions and relationships, are working through a process of developing specific moral guidelines, and are beginning to think in abstract and multiple dimensions (Ezinga et al., 2008). These attributes indicate that these youth are at an age where intervention may be most effective in reducing gender based bullying and sexualized violence, before these forms of aggression become too entrenched. However, it is not sufficient to simply present these youth with information relating to these topic areas. This information must be provided in a developmentally appropriate manner that is engaging, accessible, and empowering to these youth. In this regard, it is important to listen to what adolescent males have to say in regard to such programs. Based on *The Gender Bullying Project*, there are several crucial factors to successfully implementing a sexualized violence prevention program. These programs may be easier to facilitate if they consist of all male students, as well as if male facilitators present them. Students should be allowed to speak openly and freely, albeit respectfully, without fear of persecution or judgment by their peers, teachers, and/or facilitators; this may prove to be particularly challenging if the

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program is run by teachers. The language, activities, and depth of information presented must be appropriate for the developmental stage of the participants to prevent confusion, ambiguity, and disengagement. And finally, facilitators must be able to adapt to a dynamic environment, assessing group needs and altering curriculum and activities as needed. If planned and implemented accordingly, programs such as *The Gender Bullying Project* have a unique potential to engage students in meaningful conversations about gender bullying and sexualized violence among the early and middle adolescent population.

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# EVALUATION OF THE GENDER BULLYING PROJECT

## Appendix A: Participant Questionnaire

**What grade are you in?** 7 8 9 10

**How old are you?** 11 12 13 14 15 16

**What Gender do you identify with?** Male Female Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Do you own a cell phone and/or a personal wireless communication device (i.e., iPod Touch, Cell phone)?

YES NO

If yes, how many times a day do you send or receive messages (i.e. texts, Facetime, FB message)?

- 1-5 Times
- 6-10 Times
- 11-20 Times
- 21-30 Times
- 31-40 Times
- 41-50 Times
- 50+ Times

Do you have a computer at home? : YES NO

If yes, on an average *weekday* how many hours a day do you spend on your computer?

- Less than an hour
- 1-2 Hours
- 3-4 Hours
- 5-6 Hours
- 7-8 Hours
- 9-10 Hours
- 11-12 Hours
- 12+ Hours

If yes, on an average *weekend* how many hours a day do you spend on your computer?

- Less than an hour
- 1-2 Hours
- 3-4 Hours
- 5-6 Hours
- 7-8 Hours
- 9-10 Hours
- 11-12 Hours
- 12+ Hours

## EVALUATION OF THE GENDER BULLYING PROJECT

**Note:** In this questionnaire, we are asking about bullying that is sexual in nature. Sexual bullying is unwanted and unwelcomed sexual behaviour that interferes with someone's life. Sexual bullying is NOT behaviours that a person likes or wants or is agreed to between two people (for example, kissing, touching, or flirting that you both agree to).

### Video Scenario

After watching this scenario, please answer the following questions

1. What type of sexualized violence did you see in this scenario, if there was any?

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2. Please evaluate the following

A) *Danny*

i) How responsible is Danny for causing this situation?

Not Responsible at all      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10      Totally Responsible

B) *The Blond Girl*

i) How responsible is the Blonde Girl for causing this situation?

Not Responsible at all      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10      Totally Responsible

C) *The Girl in Red*

i) How responsible is the girl in the red for intervening in this situation?

Not Responsible at all      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10      Totally Responsible

ii) What actions, if any, could you have taken to intervene in this situation?

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3. If you walked by and overheard what was happening, how likely would you have been to "step in"?

Not Likely      Somewhat Likely      Likely      Very Likely      Always Likely

## EVALUATION OF THE GENDER BULLYING PROJECT

4. A) What would you do if you stepped into this situation?

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B) What would prevent you from engaging in this situation?

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### Scenario

You are passing by a group of boys in the computer lab. One boy, Roger, is telling his friends that he is creating a “Katie is a Whore” group on Facebook, where he plans on posting photos and rumors about her because Katie refused to go out with him.

*How likely are you to say to do something to try to stop Roger from doing this if...*

a) Roger is your good friend

Not Likely      Somewhat Likely      Likely      Very Likely      Always Likely

b) Roger is not your friend

Not Likely      Somewhat Likely      Likely      Very Likely      Always Likely

c) Katie is your good friend

Not Likely      Somewhat Likely      Likely      Very Likely      Always Likely

d) Katie is not your friend

Not Likely      Somewhat Likely      Likely      Very Likely      Always Likely

## EVALUATION OF THE GENDER BULLYING PROJECT

5. Have you been with someone who was bullied in a sexual manner (for example being grabbed in an inappropriate way, being called a whore/manwhore) in the last two months?

- I haven't been with anyone being bullied in a sexual manner in the last two months
- It has only happened once or twice
- Two or three times a month
- About once a week
- Several times a week or more

If yes, was it...

- Almost always in person
- Mostly in person
- About equally in person and online
- Mostly online
- Almost always online

If you have been with someone who was being bullied in a sexual manner, what did you do?

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6. Have you been with someone who was *bullying someone else* in a sexual manner in the last two months?

- I haven't been with someone who was bullying someone else in a sexual manner in the last 2 months
- It has only happened once or twice
- Two or three times a month
- About once a week
- Several times a week or more

If yes, was it...

- Almost always in person
- Mostly in person
- About equally in person and online
- Mostly online
- Almost always online

If you have been with someone bullying others in a sexual manner, what did you do?

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## EVALUATION OF THE GENDER BULLYING PROJECT

### Rate how strongly you agree with each of these statements (Circle one)

7. Sexual bullying isn't a serious problem in school since it only affects a few people.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Not Sure      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
8. Most sexual bullying is just having fun.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Not Sure      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
9. Girls are asking to be sexually harassed when they wear short skirts and tight clothes.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Not Sure      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
10. Girls lie about being raped just to get back at their dates.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Not Sure      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
11. I would tell a group of my male friends about their sexist language or behaviours (for example, telling a girl she should get back into the kitchen) if I hear it or see it.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Not Sure      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
12. I have the skills to support a friend who is being disrespected.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Not Sure      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
13. I would tell a group of my female friends about their sexist language or behaviours (for example such as saying that only men can be firefighters) if I hear it or see it.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Not Sure      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
14. I know how to educate my friends about how to stop bullying of a sexual nature.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Not Sure      Disagree      Strongly Disagree
15. I can help prevent sexual bullying at my school.  
Strongly Agree      Agree      Not Sure      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

## EVALUATION OF THE GENDER BULLYING PROJECT

### Prevalence Questionnaire

1. Have you been bullied in a sexual manner in the last two months?
  - I haven't been bullied in a sexual manner in the last two months
  - It has only happened once or twice
  - Two or three times a month
  - About once a week
  - Several times a week or more
  
- If YES what did you experience? (Check all that apply)
  - Someone making a sexual joke directed at you
  - Someone showing, giving, or leaving you sexual photographs, messages, or notes
  - Someone spreading sexual rumors about you
  - Someone spying on you as you dressed or showered at school
  - Someone flashing or mooning you
  - Someone pulling your clothes in a sexual way
  - Someone touching, grabbing or pinching you in a sexual way
  - Someone pulling your clothing off or down
  - I was sexually bullied through emails
  - I was sexually bullied in chat rooms
  - I was sexually bullied through instant messages
  - I was sexually bullied through social networking websites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
  - I was sexually bullied through file sharing websites (YouTube, Flickr, etc.)
  - I was sexually bullied through a blog (blogger, blogspot, LiVEJOURNAL, etc.)
  - Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. If you have been bullied in a sexual manner was it...
  - Almost always in person
  - Mostly in person
  - About equally in person and online
  - Mostly online
  - Almost always online
  - I have NEVER been bullied in a sexual manner



## EVALUATION OF THE GENDER BULLYING PROJECT

3. How do you feel when someone bullied you in a sexual manner in the last two months?

(Check all that apply)

- I haven't been bullied in a sexual manner in the last two months
- Embarrassed
- Worried
- Upset
- Afraid and scared
- Alone and isolated
- Defenseless, no one can do anything about it
- Depressed
- Stressed
- It doesn't bother me
- Angry
- Other (Please Write Here)\_\_\_\_\_

4. How long did the sexualized bullying last?

- I haven't been sexually bullied in the last two months
- It lasted one or two weeks
- It lasted about a month
- It has lasted about six months
- It has lasted about a year
- It has gone on for several years

5. What have you done if someone bullied you in a sexual manner in the last two months?

(For this question you can check all that apply)

- I haven't been bullied in a sexual manner in the last two months
- I felt helpless
- I ignored what was happening, hoping it would stop
- I stopped using the Internet
- I told a friend
- I told a teacher
- I told a parent
- I asked the person directly to stop bullying me
- I blocked the person who was bullying me
- I contacted an internet server and reported the bully
- I tried to do to them what they had done to me
- Other (Please write here)\_\_\_\_\_

## EVALUATION OF THE GENDER BULLYING PROJECT

### **Appendix B: Semi-Structured Focus Group Questions**

1. What was your favourite exercise or session of this program and why?
2. What was your least favourite exercise or session and why?
3. Are there any aspects of the program you think could be done in a different way?
4. What was the most important thing you learned about gender bullying from this program?
5. What are some ways you learned about to get involved or intervene without putting the focus on yourself when you see gender bullying happening?
6. We did this group with all boys. What do you think would happen if guys and girls were taking part in this group at the same time?

# EVALUATION OF THE GENDER BULLYING PROJECT

## Appendix C: Facilitator Questionnaire

### General Questions

How many groups did you teach?

At which schools were you a facilitator?

How many participants in each group?

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1. What was the most surprising thing that you learned from facilitating this program?
  - a. Will this thing impact the way you deliver the program next time (if you are a facilitator)? How will it impact it?
  
2. Do you think that an after-school program was the proper way to deliver the content of this program? Why or Why not?
  - a. Is there another feasible format for this program to be delivered?
  
3. What do you think was the best session for the participants?
  - a. Why do you think this?
  
4. What session do you think could be improved?
  - a. How would you improve it?

## EVALUATION OF THE GENDER BULLYING PROJECT

5. Were there any characteristics of the groups that you felt facilitated the program?
  - a. Why do you think that was the case?
  
6. Were there any characteristics of the groups that you felt was a barrier to the delivery of the program?
  - a. Why do you think that was the case?
  
  - b. What could be done in order to mitigate this barrier in the future?
  
7. Did you feel that this program achieved its goal of changing knowledge, attitudes and beliefs on sexualized violence and gender bullying in this population?
  - a. What do you think was the most important thing that the youths took away from the program?
  
  - b. Is there anything else you wish the youth took away from the program but didn't?
  
8. What would you like to see happen during the next wave?

# EVALUATION OF THE GENDER BULLYING PROJECT

**Matthew B. Gillespie**

## **Curriculum Vitae**

### **Education**

**Master of Arts: Counselling Psychology**  
University of Western Ontario  
September 2014 – April 2016

**Bachelor of Science with Honours: Dbl. Major Psychology and Kinesiology**  
York University  
September 2008 – April 2013

### **Scholarships and Honours**

**York University: 2011 - 2013**  
- Member of the Golden Key Society at York University

**York University: 2009 - 2013**  
- Dean's Honour List

**York University: 2009 - 2010**  
- York Undergraduate Scholarship (1-year duration)

**York University: 2009 - 2011**  
- Tim Horton's Undergraduate Scholarship (3-year duration)

### **Research Experience**

March 2012 – October 2012: Ryerson University  
- **Research Assistant:** HIV Prevention Lab  
- Supervisor: Dr. Trevor Hart

March 2012 – January 2013: York University  
- **Research Assistant:** Research in Emerging Adults, Adolescents and Children (REACH) Lab  
- Supervisor: Dr. Jennine Rawana  
Clinical Experience

**Intern Counsellor**  
Student Development Centre, Western University  
September 2014 – Present

**Relief Mental Health Worker**

## EVALUATION OF THE GENDER BULLYING PROJECT

Canadian Mental Health Association  
September 2015 – Present

### **Summer Student Addictions Worker**

Canadian Mental Health Association  
May 2015 – August 2015

### **Academic and Community Experience**

September 2014 – Present: Changing Ways, London

- **Program Facilitator/Evaluator:** The Gender Bullying Project

- Work with adolescent boys in grades 7-10 to explore issues of sexualized violence and gender bullying prevention. Work dynamically to engage groups ranging in size from 4 to 18 students in active discussion and examination surrounding issues of gender-based violence, and to explore the overt and covert mechanisms that allow and promote these harmful thoughts, behaviours, and actions.

April 2009 – April 2013: York University

- **Peer Counsellor and Health Educator:** Health Education and Promotion at York University

- Peer-to-Peer Counselling: Engaged with undergraduate and graduate students in a safe environment to discuss issues they had been facing in and out of the school environment. This peer counselling took place on both a one-on-one basis and in a group setting, with and without supervision. Key topic areas included alcohol and other drug use, sexual health, and general mental health, with a focus on inclusivity and judgment-free space.
  - Training Received In: Sensitivity, Diversity, Creating Safe Space, Mindfulness, Confidentiality and its Limits, Crisis Management, Conflict Resolution, Suicide Prevention (ASIST), Stress Management, Relaxation and Meditation Techniques, Active Listening, Empathic Responding, Effective Communication in One-on-One and Group Settings, and Harm Reduction Strategies.
- Health Educator: Created, organized, and ran programming to educate students on important areas of healthy living and stress management. Information was presented in a nonjudgmental, inclusive manner, with students encouraged to make their own informed decisions. Key topic areas included mental health and stress management, sexual health, pleasure and consent, alcohol and other drug use, active living, and proper nutrition.

September 2011 – April 2013: York University

## EVALUATION OF THE GENDER BULLYING PROJECT

- **General Member:** Active Minds Organization
  - Student-run organization focused on educating students about and reducing stigma surrounding mental health and mental illness.
- **Conference Participant:** The White Ribbon Campaign
  - Participated in a conference for men, led by men, dealing with preventing violence against women
- **Conference Participant:** The Jack Project Pilot
  - Represented York University in an Ontario-wide conference aimed at educating students about depression and suicide and providing resources for students in need. This program focused especially on students transitioning to University from work or high school.
- **Conference Participant:** Mobilizing Minds conference
  - Toronto-based initiative to disseminate academic information and develop innovative means of distributing this knowledge to the general public
- **Student Leader:** YU Lead Program Facilitator
  - New program developed by Student Community and Leadership Development aimed at providing student leaders with knowledge and skills to create positive change both within and outside of the University
- **Health Coach:** York University Health Coaching Certification Pilot Program
  - Received training in Motivational Interviewing, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Interpersonal Therapy and Emotion-Focused Therapy with the goal of behaviour change towards a healthier lifestyle