Teasing and Bullying and Bullying Experienced by Children who Stutter

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Definition

• subtype of aggression that has three key elements:
  – an intent to harm,
  – repetition over time, and
  – a power differential in which children who are victims have difficulty defending themselves against a more powerful individual or group (Salmivalli & Peets, 2009).
Conceptualization of Bullying

• A paradigm change from
  – An event between an individual and a aggressor or group of aggressors
  – A relationship problem
  – A social and mental health problem
Bullying Trajectories

• Trajectories:
  – not bullied
  – Bullying that was low stable, medium stable, low increasing

• Social Health Indicators
  – Loneliness at school
  – Peer support
  – Connectedness to school
  – Safety at school

• Mental health indicators: depression and anxiety

Lester, Cross, Dooley, & Shaw, 2013
Trajectories: Findings

• Loneliness and connectedness was associated with stable and increasing levels of bullying
• Feeling safe at school was protective for males
• High peer support was protective for females
• All bullied children had higher levels of depression and anxiety at the end of Grade 9 than non-bullied children
A socio-ecological perspective

- Bullying affects the school climate
- Perceptions of the prevalence of teasing and bullying of students and teachers was associated with increased school dropout (Cornell, Gregory, Huang, & Fan, 2013)
Further Evidence of Negative Consequences

- Diminished psychological well-being (e.g., self-esteem)
- Poor social adjustment (e.g. absenteeism)
- Psychological distress (e.g. anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts)
- Physical symptoms (Cornell et al., 2013; Lester et al., 2013; Rigby, 2003)
- Hopelessness (Siyahhan, Aricak, Cayirdag-Acar, 2012).
Types of Bullying

• Verbal (includes hurtful teasing)
• Physical
• Relational (aka indirect bullying)

• Verbal was the most frequently reported followed by relational and physical bullying (Siyahhan, Aricak, Cayirdag-Acar 2012).

• Gender differences:
  – Girls – relational
  – Boys – physical and verbal
Cyberbullying

- The use of electronic mediums to habitually use fear or humiliation to intimidate a victim and demonstrate superiority (Dooley et al. 2009)

- 95% of students perceive their messages to be harmless acts of humor

- 5% reported intent to harm (Law, Shpka, Domene, & Gagne, 2012; Wingate et al., 2013).
Why is there little defending of victims in Cyberbullying?

- Diffusion of responsibility
- Pluralistic ignorance (see Wingate, 2013)
Bullying Participant Roles

- Bully
- Victims
- Dually involved (bully and are victims)
- Bystanders – including children who are defenders, reinforcers, and different categories of not involved
Predictors of bullying include social anxiety, peer rejection, and social withdrawal (Card & Hodeges, 2008; Cook et al., 2010; Salmivalli, 2010);

These characteristics define some of the children who stutter with whom we work;

Victims seemingly fill a “social role”
Bullying Achieves a Social Goal

• Children bully to gain and maintain social status within the peer group (Salmivalli & Peets, 2009; Salmivalli, 2010; Craig & Pepler, 2007).

• Children who bully are often perceived to be popular and cool, have high self-esteem, be leaders a school…but they are often not liked (Guerra et al., 2011; Craig & Pepler, 2007; Salmivalli, 2010).

• Some children who bully have difficulty with emotional regulation (Card & Hodges, 2008; Marini & Dane, 2008).
Bullying is Traumatic for Bystanders (witnesses)

• Witnesses may be caught in a dilemma, knowing that bullying is wrong (Salmivalli, 2010), but be hesitant to intervene
Frequency of Bullying

- Between 30% and 60% of children are bullied at some time
- Between 6% and 15% of children are bullied chronically (i.e., once a week or more often) (Card & Hodges, 2008)
Frequency of Bullying Experienced by CWS

- Langevin Bortnick Hammer & Wiebe 1998 compared to Langevin & Gervais, 2013
  - 1998 – 28 participants (7 – 14 years; 24 males)
  - 2013 – 31 participants (6 – 11 years; 29 males)

- TBQ (Teasing and Bullying Questionnaire)
CWS Victimization

• *Have you been teased/bullied about your stuttering at school:*
  – Response options = never, sometimes, often, very often

• 1998 – 59%
• 2103 – 68%
CWS - Victimization

- How often in the last (year, 1998) (6 months, 2013) have you been teased/bullied about your stuttering at school?
  - Response options: less than once a week; about once or twice a week; most days; everyday

- 1998 – 56% > 1/wk
- 2013 – 52%
CWS Victimization

- How much did the teasing/bullying about your stuttering bother or upset you?
- Response options: didn’t upset me at all, upset me some of the time, upset me most of the time, upset me all of the time
- 1998 – 81%
- 2013 – 100%
CWS: Teasing/bullying about Other Things

• Been teased: 69% in 1998 and 67% in 2013

• How often: 50% in 1998 and 55% in 2013

• Upset: 67% were upset in 1998 whereas 90% were upset in 2013
How many CWS did not reported being t/b’d

- Never teased: 19% in both samples

- Thus 81% in both samples were teased about stuttering, other things, or stuttering and other things

- In both samples the majority of children were teased about stuttering and others things
Types and Location of Bullying Experienced

- The majority of children reported that peers imitated or made fun of their stuttering (86%, and 82%, respectively in 2013).

- Places: Most bully occurred on the playground followed by in the classroom.
Comparative Studies of Victimization

Blood, Blood, Tramontana, Syliva, Boyle, and Motzko, 2011

The risk for being bullied (2004, 2007) and reports of being bullied (2011) ranged from 43% to 61% for youth who stutter compared to the range of 11% to 26.9% of their matched fluent peers.
Davis, Howell, and Cooke (2002)

- 37.5% of the children who stuttered compared to 10.6% of fluent children were nominated as being victims of bullying.
Children who Stutter Bully

Blood et al. 2011
• 2 cws compared to 8 non-stuttering children bullied

Davis, Howell, and Cooke (2002)
• 12.5% of children who stutter were nominated as being perpetrators of bullying compared to 13.18% of fluent children.
Social and Mental Health Consequences
Hugh-Jones and Smith (1999)

- Short-term consequences affecting mental and social health and academic performance
  - Loss of self-confidence, low self-esteem, withdrawing, feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, frustration, and depression, difficulty making friends, negative effects on school-work, and increased stuttering
Bullying and Anxiety

Blood and Blood (2007)

• found that children who were at greater risk for bullying were more likely to have higher anxiety scores.
Bullying Self-Esteem, Optimism, & Life Satisfaction

Blood and Blood (2004) and Blood et al. (2011)

• found that children who stutter who were at risk for bullying or who were victimized had poorer levels of self-esteem than children who stutter who were not bullied.

• They also found the same results for measures of optimism and life satisfaction.
Supporting – Helping Children who Stutter

- Universal interventions: target the population of school children
- Client-centered: interventions with specific children
A Universal Intervention Study: Methods

Langevin & Prasad, 2012

• Teasing and Bullying: Unacceptable Behaviour (TAB) (Langevin, 2000)
  – Participants: 608 3rd- to 6th grade children
  – Peer Attitudes Toward Children who Stuttering Scale (Langevin, 2009; Langevin & Hagler, 2004; Langevin, Kleitman, Packman & Onslow, 2009)
A Universal Intervention Study: Findings

• TAB has the potential to be effective in improving attitudes toward CWS in students in general, and in particular, in children who did not know someone who stutters.

• After participating in TAB children appeared to be
  – More inclined to associated with cws
  – Resist social pressure to isolate and reject cws
  – Expect to experience less frustration in verbal interactions
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Client-centered Interventions

• Descriptive case reports
  – Murphy, Yaruss, & Quesal, 2007
  – Turnbull, 2006

• Aims: problem solve ways to respond to bullying that are appropriate for the child and the situation and educate classmates about stuttering.

• Positive results were reported.
CWS Coping Responses

van Kuik Fast, Langevin, Given, & Volden, 2010; 2011
• Telling someone about the bullying✔
• Verbal counter-aggression ✔ NOT RECOMMENDED
• Physical counter-aggression ✔ NOT RECOMMENDED
• Stood up (assertiveness) ✔
• Joked (use humor) ✔
• Revenge ✗
• Distraction ✗
• Nothing ✔ WALKING AWAY, AVOIDING
• Ignored ✔
• Got Help ✔
• Other ✔ GET SPEECH THERAPY
Recommendations for Parents

• Take action
• Provide emotional support
• Assist with problem solving
• Arrange stuttering therapy
• Trust and Open Communication is important
Gender Differences

- Girls are more likely to seek help or tell someone (Craig et al. 2007) and to use assertiveness (Comedeca et al., 2005)

- Boys are more likely to react with physical aggression, revenge, or humour (Craig et al.)
Age Differences

- Younger children preferred nonchalance (Comedeca et al., 2005)
- As children age they more often opt for counter-aggression (Comedeca et al., Craig et al.) but older children were still more likely to report ignoring and doing nothing (Craig et al., 2007).
Children Who Bully: The challenge

- In contrast to victims and children with other participant roles, children who bully thought that retaliation was the best way to stop bullying.

- Descriptive case study:
    - Participatory Culture-Specific Intervention Model
Take Home Message

- Stuttering attracts teasing and bullying

- What works for one child in one context may not work for the same child in another context and may or may not work for another child …it depends…Individual differences prevail….my job is to provide ideas and options…and facilitate and support my clients in their growth …
FUTURE CLINICAL AND RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

LETS TALK.....

THANK YOU!