


# INFLUENCE OF CARING ON SOCIAL BEHAVIORS AND BULLYING IN PE


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## Acknowledgements

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## Bullying Behavior

- Repeated aggressive acts over time which
  - intend to harm another person and
  - are perpetrated by a person who has more power than the victim.

Olweus, 1993

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## Prevalence of Bullying Behavior

- Nearly 75% of adolescents experience some form of bullying during their K-12 experience (Eisenberg & Aalsma, 2005)
- 15% to 25% of students experience some level of bullying in a school semester (Nansel et al., 2001)
- Most frequent rates of bullying occurring during the middle school years (Nansel et al., 2001)

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## A Caring Environment

- A caring classroom:
  - creates feelings of connectedness with others
  - provides a sense of attachment and safety for students
  - Encourages students to work collaboratively and engage in positive social interactions
- Caring relations:
  - Teachers dialogue, model, and encourage caring which can lead the students to engage in their own caring behavior

Battistich, Watson, Solomon, Lewis, & Schaps, 1999; Noddings 1992, 1995

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## Empathy as a Mechanism

- “an emotional response that emanates from the emotional state of another individual, and although empathy is defined as a shared emotional response, it is contingent on cognitive as well as emotional factors” (Feshbach, 1997, p. 35).

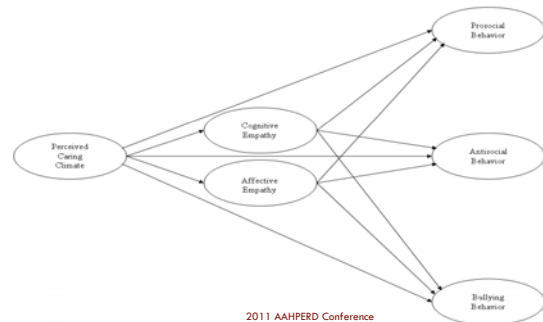
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## Purpose

- To explore the interrelationships between a perceived caring climate, empathy, social behaviors, and bullying in the middle school physical education (PE) classroom.
- Hypotheses
  - Perceptions of a caring climate would be positively associated with empathy and prosocial behaviors and negatively correlated with antisocial behaviors and bullying.
  - Empathy would partially mediate these relationships.

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## Hypothesized Model



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## Method

- 528 middle school (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade) PE students (287 females & 241 males)
- After approximately 6 weeks into the school year during a PE class students completed a survey



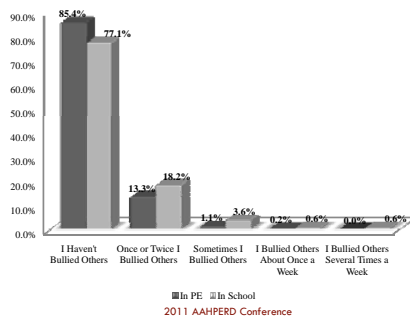
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## Method

- The survey took approximately 25 minutes to complete and included:
  - Caring Climate Scale (Newton, Fry et al., 2007)
    - In PE, students are treated with respect.
  - Basic Empathy Scale (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006)
    - I can often understand how people are feeling even before they tell me.
    - I get caught up in other people's feelings easily.
  - Child Social Behaviors Questionnaire (Warden et al., 2003)
    - In PE how often do you help another student with something?
    - In PE how often do you push or trip another student on purpose?
  - University of Illinois Bully Scale (Espelage & Holt, 2001)
    - In the last 30 days in PE, I teased other students.
    - In the last 30 days in PE, I was mean to someone when angry.
  - Prevalence of bullying items (Nansel et al., 2001)
    - How frequently do you bully others (or are bullied by others) in your physical education class (at school in general)?

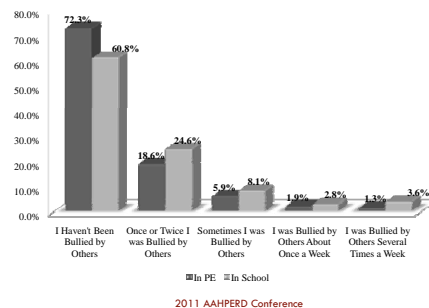
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## Prevalence of Bullying



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## Prevalence of Being Bullied



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## Preliminary Statistics

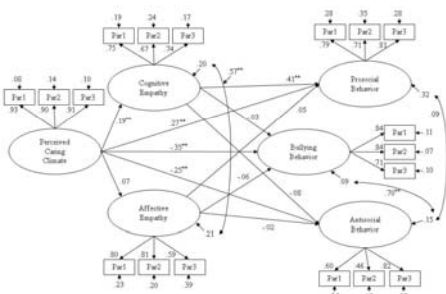
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Caring Climate	.94					
2. Cognitive Empathy	.15*	.75				
3. Affective Empathy	.07	.45*	.79			
4. Prosocial Behavior	.30*	.39*	.24*	.83		
5. Antisocial Behavior	-.22*	-.12*	-.06	-.10*	.72	
6. Bullying Behavior	-.33*	-.09*	-.08	-.19*	.56*	.86
Mean	4.04	4.01	3.38	3.23	1.17	1.30
(SD)	(.73)	(.53)	(.65)	(.75)	(.32)	(.45)

## Model Testing

- Measurement Models
  - Direct effects -  $\chi^2(48)=109.77$ , CFI=.98, TLI=.97, RMSEA=.05, SRMR=.04
  - Meditational -  $\chi^2(120)=245.24$ , CFI=.97, TLI=.96, RMSEA=.05, SRMR=.04
- Direct Effects Model
  - $\chi^2(49)=113.77$ , CFI=.98, TLI=.97, RMSEA=.05, SRMR=.04
- Constrained Model
  - $\chi^2(124)=330.14$ , CFI=.95, TLI=.94, RMSEA=.06, SRMR=.08
- Unconstrained Model
  - $\chi^2(121)=247.80$ , CFI=.97, TLI=.96, RMSEA=.04, SRMR=.04,  $\Delta\chi^2(3) = 82.34$ ,  $p = .01$

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## Partial Mediation Model



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## Conclusions

- Cognitive empathy mediated the relationship between caring and prosocial behavior
- No mediation effect between perceptions of caring and antisocial behavior / bullying

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## Conclusions

- When students perceived a higher caring climate they were more likely to:
  - indicate higher levels of cognitive empathy,
  - report higher levels of prosocial behavior,
  - report lower levels of antisocial behavior and bullying.
- Creating a caring climate is one tool that physical education teachers may be able to use to promote positive behavior.

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## Questions?

### Influence of Caring on Social Behaviors and Bullying in PE

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