

Influence of a Summer Wellness Program on Bullying Reduction Among School-Age Children

Mengyi Wei,¹ Kevin Andrew Richards,¹ Naiman A. Khan,¹ Amelia Mays Woods,¹
Dorothy L. Espelage,^{1,2} and Kim C. Graber¹

¹Department of Kinesiology and Community Health, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL, USA; ²School of Education, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC, USA

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to examine children's, camp counselors', and activity leaders' perceptions toward the effects of a 4-week teaching personal and social responsibility model-based summer learning and enrichment program and its ability to reduce bullying behaviors among school-age children. **Method:** Data collection included semistructured interviews with 30 children and eight camp staff. Child participants completed the following pre- and postsurveys: Personal and Social Responsibility Questionnaire and the Illinois Bullying Scale. In addition, daily observations over a 4-week period were recorded in a field notes log. Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations, and all observational and interview data were coded using inductive and deductive techniques. **Results:** The results indicated that the implementation of teaching personal and social responsibility model was perceived to be associated with reduction in the bullying. **Conclusion:** Findings from the present study suggested teaching personal and social responsibility facilitated social and emotional learning and improved children's personal and social responsibility.

Keywords: life skills, social and emotional learning, teaching personal and social responsibility

Bullying has become a major health issue for children in the United States. Approximately, 36% of school-age children reported being bullied during a 6- to 12-month period (Modecki et al., 2014). Bullying is defined as aggressive behavior that is intentionally and repeatedly carried out to hurt individuals who are less powerful than the perpetrator(s) (Hellström et al., 2021). When bullying is directly related to body size, physical ability, and/or appearance, it can trigger several mental and emotional health concerns connected to depression, social physique anxiety, and low levels of engagement in physical activity (Espelage & Holt, 2001; Tofi & Farrington, 2011). It is also one of the contributing factors related to high dropout rates in physical education (PE; Hurley & Mandigo, 2010) and increases in sedentary behaviors (Pengpid & Peltzer, 2019).

While bullying has risen to problematic levels in the United States, fostering social and emotional learning (SEL) among students has been shown to prevent school violence, including bullying behaviors (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning [CASEL], 2015; Jagers et al., 2015). At its core, SEL emphasizes competencies related to managing emotions, setting and achieving positive goals, making responsible decisions, and establishing and maintaining positive relationships (Durlak et al., 2011; Greenberg et al., 2003). A meta-analysis of 213 SEL-based programs found that delivering quality SEL knowledge could lead to increased social and emotional skills, attitudes, and academic performance (Durlak et al., 2011).

Espelage et al. (2015) demonstrated that improving children's SEL appears to be a promising approach for preventing and

reducing bullying behavior. Most programs, however, that have focused on students' SEL competence have been implemented in classroom environments rather than out-of-school experiences, such as summer programs that emphasize physical activity and wellness (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Ladd, 2016; Lawson et al., 2019). In the current study, we sought to extend the current literature related to SEL programming and bullying reduction into the outside of school space. This work was guided by the teaching personal and social responsibility (TPSR) model (Hellison, 2011) to better understand the relationship between TPSR and SEL and explore the potential of TPSR-guided programs in reducing bullying.

Promoting SEL Through the TPSR Model

The TPSR model provides a framework for teaching students SEL in physical activity settings through a responsibility-based framework. Its five primary goals address: (a) respect and self-control, (b) participation and effort, (c) self-direction, (d) helping others and leadership, and (e) transfer (Hellison, 2011). The first goals represent essential components for establishing a positive instructional environment where children learn self-control, self-motivation, empathy, and peaceful conflict resolution. The next two goals aim to encourage children to be independent in completing tasks, and they promote helping and leadership development. The final goal, transfer, is the most advanced and focuses on applying the first four goals in other settings that involve peer groups, schools, families, and/or communities (Hellison, 2011).

The CASEL identified five SEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (CASEL, 2015). While a growing body of research has documented the importance of SEL in terms of children's positive behavioral development (Nickerson et al., 2019; Smith & Low, 2013), several studies have made explicit connections between SEL and TPSR, in particular the affective domain (Gordon et al., 2016; Richards & Gordon, 2017). Wright

Richards  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3045-6001>

Khan  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6135-9389>

Woods  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5090-7116>

Espelage  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0658-2067>

Graber  <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6595-5172>

Wei (mengyiw2@illinois.edu) is corresponding author.

et al. (2021) provides further evidence that implementing of TPSR promotes children's cultivation of SEL competencies.

Research has demonstrated the positive effects of implementing TPSR in summer programs, after-school programs, and PE classes (Cryan & Martinek, 2017; Escartí et al., 2015; Hellison & Walsh, 2002). A systematic review of TPSR studies within PE indicated that the model improved conflict resolution, responsibility, self-control, self-confidence, and enjoyment among students (Pozo et al., 2018). Cryan and Martinek (2017) also found that implementing TPSR at an after-school soccer program significantly improved behaviors related to social responsibility, such as showing empathy, caring, and helping. Similarly, implementing the TPSR model in a summer camp was found to be positively associated with sport enjoyment, interest in sport, positive future expectations, and more positive program experiences (Watson et al., 2003). Effects such as increased physical activity engagement and improved capacity to assume responsible roles, including peer coaching, being a leader, and self-evaluation, have also been noted in the literature (Hellison, 2011; Jung & Wright, 2012). Many of these findings relate to enhancing students' prosocial behavior and establishing a positive learning environment—both of which play an essential role in reducing bullying (Espelage et al., 2015; Layous et al., 2012).

Bullying

From a physical perspective, bullying as a direct action includes aggressive behaviors such as pushing/shoving, kicking/hitting, spitting, or exhibiting humiliating physical acts, but bullying can also be demonstrated through verbal aggression, including name-calling, teasing, and unpleasant facial expressions (Macklem, 2003). Additionally, it can also be observed in indirect actions that are typically more subversive and include relational/social aggression, such as rumor spreading, social ostracism, and exclusion (Van der Wal et al., 2003). Whereas cyberbullying (e.g., social media) receives increasing attention in schools, especially in classrooms when students are exposed to mobile devices (Modecki et al., 2014), traditional bullying (e.g., physical, verbal, social) is considered a critical concern in physical activity settings since it has been linked with decreased enjoyment and participation of physical activity (Scarpa et al., 2012) and impacts development of children's motor skill competence (Stodden et al., 2008). When any of these types of traditional bullying occurs, students are less likely to fully participate in physical activity, and this may negatively impact both mental and physical health (Wolke & Lereya, 2015). Youth surrounding bullying incidents can be classified as victims, bullies, bully-victims, and bystanders based on their involvement (Olweus, 2001).

Children who are *victims* represent those who are the recipients of the negative effects of bullying. Bullying victims demonstrate more negative psychosocial behaviors, including depression, being quiet, and/or feeling anxious (Li et al., 2008). They have reported having fewer social supports and were more likely to be rejected by peers (Holt & Espelage, 2007). *Bullies* are characterized as dominant, aggressive, and impulsive, and may possess a positive attitude toward violence (O'Connor & Graber, 2014). Studies suggest that bullies have the highest level of self-esteem and are typically well accepted by peers because of their high leadership skills (Perren & Alsaker, 2006; Olweus, 2001). Students who bully, however, frequently face difficulties in self-control, compliance with rules and caring for others, and encounter higher risks in later life, stemming from violence, and crime (Haynie et al., 2001; Wolke & Lereya, 2015).

Bully-victims are youth who participate in both bullying and victimization. They are typically characterized as antagonistic,

retaliatory, hyperactive, and attention-deficit (Olweus, 2001), have impulse control issues, and lack the social skills to respond appropriately to conflict situations (Fox & Boulton, 2005; Gini et al., 2008). The last group, *bystanders* are not directly involved in bullying incidents as bullies or victims in schools (Polanin et al., 2012). They may, however, reinforce detrimental behaviors by reacting (e.g., laughing, cheering) to bullies' aggressive acts (Salmivalli, 2014). Studies suggest that bystanders can be encouraged and trained to intervene during bullying episodes and are considered as a key component in antibullying interventions (Evans & Smokowski, 2015; Salmivalli, 2014).

Given the severity and prevalence of bullying, it is important to determine whether curricular approaches, such as TPSR, can reduce bullying behaviors in physical activity settings. Based on a review of literature, no study has directly investigated TPSR in relation to bullying behaviors. The purpose of this study was to examine children's, camp staff's perceptions toward the effects of a 4-week TPSR-based summer learning and enrichment program and its ability to reduce bullying behaviors among school-age children.

Method

The Illinois Physical Activity and Life Skill wellness program was developed to provide summer learning and enrichment experience for approximately 60 children aged 7–13 years old. The overall program was held Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for four consecutive weeks (20 camp days) during June and July so as to align with school summer breaks. The camp was divided into two sessions with data for the current study collected during the second 4-week experience. Children attending the program were divided into three groups based on their age and grade level (e.g., Group 1 ages 7–9, Group 2 ages 9–11, Group 3 ages 11–13).

Each week of the 4-week program was framed with a different TPSR goal (e.g., respect for Week 1, self-direction for Week 2, participation and effort for Week 3, and helping others and leadership for Week 4). The final level, transfer, is the most advanced goal and focuses on applying the first four goals in other settings that involve peer groups, schools, families, and/or communities (Hellison, 2011). Camp staff used different strategies to foster the transference of model goals, such as consistently providing real-life examples to promote children's understanding and awareness of applying skills beyond the camp.

The program applied the TPSR lesson plan format, including relational time (e.g., fostering interactions between camp staff and children), awareness talk (e.g., formally talking about responsibility), physical activity time (e.g., physical activities with embedded TPSR goals), group meeting (e.g., discussions of overall performance), and self-reflection time (e.g., assessing one's own responsibilities for the day). The five TPSR goals were used to frame each day's program and to address SEL as children rotated through six 45-min stations. Stations focused on physical activity, nutrition education, and academic achievement and were coordinated by trained activity leaders. Participants were not provided with any bullying-related training or sessions, and no attempts were made to explicitly influence students' bullying behaviors other than what is typical in a physical activity environment.

During a preprogram orientation over 2 days, the camp staff participants were introduced to and had opportunities to practice experiencing and planning for activities guided by TPSR. Lesson plans were also developed for the activity leaders at all six stations to incorporate TPSR and guide the overall program structure (Jacobs et al., 2022). An assistant program director provided

ongoing support to ensure the implementation of TPSR in all stations throughout the program.

Participant Recruitment and Participants

Parents received letters, approved by the institutional review board at the investigators' academic institution, informing them about the purpose of the study when they registered their children for the program. Parents were asked to provide consent, and children who enrolled in the program were asked to provide assent. Twelve university students were hired from relevant programs and majors (e.g., PE, kinesiology, elementary education) to serve as camp counselors and activity leaders. These 12 university students were invited to participate in the study and to sign relevant consent documents. The overall program was supervised by a faculty member who taught a variety of kinesiology courses throughout the academic year.

In total, 30 children and eight camp staff were recruited to participate in the current study. Specifically, a total of 27 child participants aged 7–13 years old (18 boys, nine girls) completed the pre- and postsurveys. In-depth interviews were conducted with 30 child participants (21 boys, nine girls) and eight camp staff participants (two males, six females).

Data Collection

Children participants were asked to complete surveys twice, during the first and the final week of the 4-week session of the program, including the Personal and Social Responsibility Questionnaire (PSRQ), and the Illinois Bullying Scale (IBS). A semistructured interview was then conducted with both children participants and camp staff participants during the final week of the 4-week session of the program. In addition, researchers observed 4 weeks of the camp to take field notes. In addition, to ensure the fidelity of the implementation of TPSR, an implementation checklist regarding the TPSR goal and teacher behavior component of the Tool for Assessing Responsibility-Based Education (TARE, version 2.0) was employed.

Surveys

The PSQR is a valid and reliable self-report instrument designed to measure student perceptions of personal and social responsibility related to TPSR goals (Li et al., 2008). IBS was used to assess the incidence and prevalence of bullying behaviors (Espelage & Holt, 2001). Numerous studies have supported the reliability and validity of the IBS on assessing bullying behavior (Akbari Balootbangan & Talepasand, 2015; Rose et al., 2015).

Interviews

A semistructured, individual interview lasting 45–60 min was conducted with all child participants and eight camp staff during the last week of the program. Researchers conducting the semistructured interviews asked predetermined questions and follow-up questions will be asked based on participants' responses (Patton, 2015). Predetermined interview questions focused on participants' perceptions of (a) bullying within the program, (b) TPSR implementation, and (c) what they learned through the program about SEL. All interviews were conducted in a semiprivate space and were audio-recorded for transcription.

Field Notes

The researcher observed 4 weeks of the camp and took extensive field notes related to camp staff and student behaviors. Observations

focused on capturing participants' behaviors and reactions to bullying. A total of 62 fieldnote logs were documented for further analysis. Direct nonparticipant observations at the site allowed the researcher to record events, actions, and conversations that were critical for qualitative inquiry (Woods & Graber, 2016). Within the field notes log, one section was designed to address all of observations, and the other section addressed emerging theories and methodological changes.

Fidelity of the TPSR Implementation

The checklist, developed by Wright et al. (2021), was used routinely as a guide for self-reflection and to monitor the implementation fidelity of the TPSR model. Camp staff participants were encouraged to make comments on the checklist to indicate their perceptions of implementing TPSR and children's performance during the day. Moreover, TARE (version 2.0), a systematic observation instrument for evaluating responsibility-based instruction (Escartí et al., 2015), was conducted at all five stations by the researchers, once a week for 4 weeks to record behaviors of camp staff and children every 3 min during activities.

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

Data collected from the IBS and PSQR were analyzed using descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations to measure both the magnitude of the variables and their associations. Further, a paired samples *t* test was used to evaluate changes in study variables over time. The TARE data were analyzed descriptively as a check for TPSR fidelity (Escartí et al., 2015). All interview audio files were recorded and transcribed for analysis. Open and axial coding techniques (Patton, 2015) were used to analyze interview transcriptions, field notes, and commentary from checklists during multiple readings. Coded data were analyzed using inductive analysis and the constant comparative method (Patton, 2015).

In relation to trustworthiness, multiple sources of qualitative data—including student interviews, instructor interviews, and observations—were compared and triangulated. The research team included individuals with experience and expertise conducting qualitative research to serve as peer debriefers during all stages of data collection and analysis. A negative case analysis was also conducted to search for instances of inconsistencies between the data and emerging themes, and to account for, and explain, their existence (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Results

A descriptive analysis for TARE (version 2.0) was employed and summarized in Table 1. Survey data were analyzed using bivariate correlations and paired samples *t* test (Tables 2 and 3). Four themes emerged from the qualitative data (e.g., interviews, observations, commentaries) that describe children and camp staff perceptions of the effects of the TPSR content infusion during the program on bullying reduction: (a) participants perceived an SEL focus in the program culture, (b) increased awareness of the TPSR goals promotes positive behaviors, (c) defending strategies equip children to respond to bullying, and (d) respect has a prominent role in reducing and preventing bullying. Quotes were used to support the themes, and all participants were assigned pseudonyms.

TPSR Fidelity Checks and Youth Survey Results

The implementation checklist was completed by eight camp staff participants for 20 camp days, with over 90% of items being

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for Teacher Behavior Component of Tool for Assessing Responsibility-Based Education (Version 2.0; $n = 8$)

	Mia and Daisy <i>M (SD)</i>	John and Olivia <i>M (SD)</i>	Ann <i>M (SD)</i>	Philip <i>M (SD)</i>	Mary <i>M (SD)</i>	Linda <i>M (SD)</i>
Modeling respect	3.60 (0.08)	3.43 (0.08)	3.07 (0.09)	3.35 (0.10)	3.62 (0.03)	3.45 (0.14)
Setting expectations	3.37 (0.06)	3.27 (0.16)	2.67 (0.05)	3.33 (0.05)	3.47 (0.11)	3.33 (0.14)
Opportunity for success	2.97 (0.11)	3.23 (0.17)	2.88 (0.06)	3.08 (0.04)	3.63 (0.06)	3.43 (0.22)
Fostering social interaction	3.65 (0.06)	3.28 (0.07)	2.60 (0.09)	3.07 (0.09)	3.03 (0.08)	3.30 (0.06)
Assigning tasks	0.55 (0.03)	0.62 (0.07)	0.57 (0.03)	0.57 (0.03)	0.62 (0.03)	0.63 (0.06)
Leadership	0.45 (0.08)	0.68 (0.07)	0.50 (0.03)	0.65 (0.06)	0.53 (0.02)	0.77 (0.03)
Giving choice and voices	0.90 (0.03)	1.25 (0.08)	0.68 (0.02)	0.57 (0.06)	0.97 (0.06)	1.00 (0.00)
Role in assessment	0.47 (0.07)	0.68 (0.06)	0.53 (0.05)	0.35 (0.03)	0.70 (0.06)	0.78 (0.04)
Transfer	0.77 (0.03)	0.67 (0.05)	0.70 (0.10)	0.52 (0.02)	0.80 (0.00)	0.70 (0.06)

Table 2 Bivariate Corrections for Study Variables ($n = 27$)

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Postbully	—				
2. Postvictim	.193	—			
3. Postfight	.206	.000	—		
4. Postpersonal	-.578**	-.251	-.104	—	
5. Postsocial	-.608**	-.243	-.149	.689*	—

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

addressed each day, indicating that camp staff promoted the TPSR goals and perceived a good implementation of TPSR in the camp. The descriptive analysis of TARE (version 2.0) revealed that the mean score for all variables was above zero. Four variables, including respect, expectations, opportunities, and interaction, were greater than three (Table 1). Consistent with the implementation checklist from the camp staff, TARE indicated a moderately high degree of fidelity, which provided the study with confidence in implementing the TPSR model.

As illustrated in Table 2, researchers extracted personal and social responsibility variables from the PSRQ survey and bullying and victimization from the IBS survey. Bivariate correlations revealed negative associations between posttest bullying behavior and both personal ($r = -.578$, $p < .01$) and social responsibility ($r = -.607$, $p < .01$), indicating that greater personal and social responsibility were associated with fewer bullying behaviors. No significant correlations were found between the PSRQ variables and victimization ($p > .05$). Paired samples t test results (Table 3) showed a significant decrease ($t = 16.192$, $p < .01$) in bullying behaviors between pretest ($M = 6.85$, $SD = 1.791$) and posttest ($M = 2.04$, $SD = 2.752$) indicating that child participants engaged in less bullying behaviors at the end of the camp.

Theme 1: Participants Perceived an SEL Focus in the Program Culture

When camp staff participants were asked how they perceived the relationship between the TPSR model and SEL, all participants identified a strong alignment and could articulate this connection and the meaning it brought. For example, Ms. Mary embedded the goals of SEL into her first year of teaching. As a result of this previous experience with SEL, she emphasized the potential of the

TPSR by stating, “What I’ve done with social and emotional or anything, yeah, I definitely feel like TPSR would work.” Mr. Philip indicated that children were making good progress in improving their relationship and conflict resolution skills:

It definitely aligns well. TPSR has those main concepts that are big ones in social emotional learning. I feel like for the kids some of the concepts definitely helped them to work on their social skills, like how to play better with others. In my classes, something that we worked a lot on was conflict resolution and how to avoid escalating situations. They started to get that because then more toward the end, they were getting better at it where they would have a problem with somebody, and come talk to me before they responded to it. I think that really helped them. I think that’s something that’s an everyday skill.

Further, camp staff discussed the alignment between the TPSR model and SEL and highlighted its benefits for children, including fostering social interaction and social skills. For example, Mr. John stated:

I think SEL aligns well with all those components/goals that are in the TPSR. I think it’s important that at a young age, you learn that you need to become good at interacting with others socially because you’re going to be doing that your whole life.

Ms. Daisy also emphasized that teaching SEL through the TPSR model in the camp was important and fostered social interactions among children. She stated, “Teaching students about social emotional learning through this model is really important no matter where you are. It’s important whenever you deal with anybody, people, anything around you. It’s really beneficial just socially because you do foster this social interaction.”

Ms. Linda indicated that learning SEL through the TPSR model was even more prominent in competitive settings where children experience winning and losing. She stated the model helps children better handle their emotions in the games during the camp with these words: “TPSR model is super important to help them learn how to handle those emotional things within a structure like sports or fitness where they’re winning, losing, everything in between.” Furthermore, Rose (eight, girl) provided an example of how the program shaped her perceptions by stating, “I learned that we need to be nice to someone. It can mean like not laughing at someone when they tried do something and failed or lose a game.” Meanwhile, William (10, boy)’s group focused on “sportsmanship and respect the first 2 weeks” during the awareness talk, and he

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics and Paired *t* Test for Study Variables (*n* = 27)

Variable	Pretest <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Posttest <i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)	Correlation	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Bully subscale score	6.85 (1.79)	2.04 (2.75)	.85	16.19	<.001
Victim subscale score	2.95 (4.15)	4.15 (4.11)	.98	-4.63	<.001
Fight subscale	2.26 (2.30)	.59 (1.19)	-.45	3.22	.823
PSRQ personal	5.28 (.60)	5.12 (.58)	.77	2.11	<.001
PSRQ social	4.69 (.54)	4.75 (0.47)	.60	-.66	.001

Note. PSRQ = Personal and Social Responsibility Questionnaire.

found that “it helps when play games” by stating, “it’s like telling the other person, ‘I respect you, and I’ll follow the orders and game rules, and we will have a good game.’” A child participant, Sean (nine, boy), perceived a safe and inclusive environment where camp staff promoted children’s empathy and understanding toward children who are not skilled. He stated:

We don’t want to lose the game. I feel kind of frustrated. But they are trying their hardest at the sport, even though they might not be the best at some sports. Even though they’re probably good at other things, they might not be good at this thing. And just like me, I’m not good at some things, but I’m really good at some things as well. So, I think the counselors seem to be doing a good job to keep us safe.

Moreover, children participants perceived improvements in managing emotions and solving problems during the camp. For example, Richard (10, boy) indicated, “I have learned how to try and stay happy most of the time.” Bob (nine, boy) reported that he could control this temper better at the camp compared with when he was at school. He said, “At school, I would kind of just let out my anger and different ways that would be disrupting the class sometimes. But here, I don’t do that so it’s really helped me stop doing that.” Another child participant, Joseph (12, boy), further added that yoga practices helped him with emotion management, “We did yoga, and meditation, and that helped with the anger or some bad feelings.” In addition, children participants indicated that they were prepared to solve the problems. Logan (13, boy) stated, “I’ve learned like in certain situations, to solve the problems, and fixing the problem use another solution.” Betty (10, girl) talked about the support she received from the camp staff in problem solving and said:

I would get there and be like, “This person is being mean to me.” And I’d ask her [camp staff] how I could solve it because I was kind of like I don’t know how to solve this because they wouldn’t stop. And she gave me some advice on how to solve it.

Additionally, field notes indicated that children were encouraged to cooperate and help others during badminton games. Children in Group 2 were assigned to smaller groups playing 2v2 badminton. A child participant, Denny (10, boy), taught his partner, Bob (nine, boy), how to serve. The other two children (their opponents) continually provided advice to Bob when he failed to serve or return the shuttlecock. They cheered, “Good job! Almost there, Bob” to encourage him. In addition, children demonstrated positive behavior even when they were exposed to a competitive game environment. Field notes indicated that Mason (12, boy) apologized for tagging Frank (11, boy) too hard. He said, “I’m sorry, I really didn’t mean to do it.”

Theme 2: Increased Awareness of the TPSR Goals Promotes Positive Behaviors

Children showed increased awareness of the TPSR goals as the camp progressed. Specifically, children were more respectful toward each other while practicing physical skills, better at self-direction, and more willing to help others. One of the camp staff, Ms. Mia perceived children became better listeners as they gained more awareness for respect. She stated, “I think the camp makes them more aware. The more we talk about respect and stuff, the more willing they are to listen.” Ms. Ann also indicated that children were being more physically active and respectful as they received more reminders from the group leaders. She stated:

I always remind them to be physically active and respectful, and they were paying a lot more attention to it. It’s kind of like “Hey! I’m being active! I should probably also be respectful.” Then, especially with the little ones, talking about that stuff, I think they’re aware of what’s going on now and what they’re doing, and they weren’t acting as crazy.

She further elaborated her observations and thoughts on how addressing respect among children helped increase their self-awareness about their ultimate behaviors when she expressed:

Some kids, they don’t really understand how to treat other people yet necessarily. I think it’s just helping them We talk about how to treat people, how to just focus on yourself. Then, they figured out how to treat people with basic respect, how to stay on task, how to focus on yourself, and how to be motivated and find enjoyment in it.

As children gained greater awareness of their behavior, they were more likely to stop themselves from doing something inappropriate. For example, Ms. Olivia stated: “Kids in the younger groups, they get it. They respond If we say, ‘We’re talking. That’s not very respectful.’ They just, ‘Oh, sorry,’ and they correct themselves.”

Child participants also described that their peers became more aware of responsible behavior and started realizing the difference between acceptable behavior and inappropriate behavior. For example, Elena (10, girl) observed positive behavioral changes among his student peers and stated, “It changed a lot, they are better and do not get into trouble.” Bob (nine, boy) also expressed that he felt the camp improved children’s awareness of making wise decisions. Specifically, he learned to develop goals and direct himself to a more positive direction when bullying occurred. He stated:

Most of the time without the group awareness time, everybody would just go around, not knowing what good things to do.

But, then after group time, we know what we're supposed to focus on and make goals, so we can do it and not bully each other.

Similarly, child participant, Sofia, a 10-year-old girl, described how she learned to calm her peers who were mad or emotional with the following statement:

Okay. Well, what I learned here, I really like helping people, and I'd probably be more helpful to people here when they get mad, and I would help them be like, "Hey, just calm down, and you don't need to get so mad. Just tell me what's wrong."

Ms. Linda perceived the improved behavior among children and noted such in the third week's TPSR implementation checklist with these words: "Today went really well. I feel that by introducing and implementing different levels/goals, the kids show better behaviors. I'm definitely seeing improvement and more positive conversations from children."

Children's positive behaviors related to increased SEL were also documented in commentary from the TPSR implementation checklists. For example, Ms. Mia noted the following in her last day checklist: "I noticed a lot of the students commenting (on) positive things, such as 'that's okay, you'll get it next time.' When someone messed up. I noticed kids leading more and guiding the group when moving from station to station."

Theme 3: Defending Strategies Equip Children to Respond to Bullying

Verbal bullying was the most common type of victimization reported by child participants in the camp. When they were asked at the end of the camp how to respond when they were bullied or when they detected bullying incidents, the majority reported that they had acquired strategies to stop bullying. Strategies included not fighting back, seeking help from adults and friends, and avoiding bullies. Charles, a child participant (seven, boy), who had experienced verbal bullying at the beginning of the camp, said, "Jack (bully) called me names and would always call me gay." He further discussed how TPSR, especially the goal of self-direction, encouraged him to respond to bullying positively. He stated, "You make your own choices. If somebody is bullying you, don't bully back at him. Just tell the teacher that someone is bullying you." Gary (seven, boy), who's the same age as Charles, said he learned to distance himself from bullies rather than engaging with them:

I just be silent to Tyler (9, boy, bully), and Tyler stopped doing anything to me, so that's a way I can sneak best. Because if I don't learn self . . . self-direction, like these life skills, I may not be able to make Tyler stop bullying me.

Directly asking a bully to walk away was one of the effective strategies that Grace (nine, girl) used to "rescue" herself from a bully. She stated: "I've actually seen bullying. And . . . it was actually someone from here. I leaned over, and I told him, 'Just walk away, and stop.' Then, it stopped. Like a couple words said, and he walked away, and it was fine."

Child participants who had not experienced bullying in the camp discussed what they would do if bullying happened around them during the interview. The majority indicated reporting the bullying incident to campus leaders was a primary strategy. For instance, Logan, a 13-year-old boy stated, "Probably tell the person bullying them to stop or tell the teacher or something." Benjamin (12, boy) also suggested that he would ask for help from the teacher

and split bullies and victims up before circumstances led to physical bullying. He said, "I'd react by getting a teacher (to) try and split them up if they were trying to get like physical and stuff." Child participants' defending behaviors were not limited to the camp but was reported to have occurred outside as well. For example, Austin (seven, boy) and Charles (seven, boy) reported that they would stand up for their friends (outside the camp) and offer help when needed. Austin said, "Like (when) someone needs help like my friend needs help, I can go and help him." And, Charles stated, "I can help my friends. If someone tripped, I can cheer them up or help them." However, some children expressed that they would not intervene out of a concern of being bullied themselves. For example, Mark (9, boy) stated, "I think . . . I will just walk away because I don't want to be bullied."

Early in the camp (Week 1 of the second 4-week session), field notes captured two children spreading rumors about child participant Gary (seven, boy) and Jean (eight, girl) in Group 1 during the lacrosse activity. Gary argued with and started pushing another child until the instructor stopped them. After the activity, when asked what happened, Gary said, "They laughed at us. She is not my girlfriend." Jean also expressed, "It's so embarrassing." Afterward, Gary and Jean were observed sitting on the bench and walking around the gym when others were participating in activities. After 3 weeks of participation in the camp, field notes indicated that Gary and Jean actively participated in the group activities when two children made fun of them by saying, "They are together. They are dating." Gary and Jean responded by ignoring and walking away from the bullies. When they found no one was paying attention to them, their behaviors decreased.

Theme 4: Respect Has a Prominent Role in Reducing and Preventing Bullying

When camp staff participants were asked what factors led to decreased bullying behavior, Ms. Mary stated:

I do think the talking about respect and everything like that is helpful to reduce the bullying because, I mean when you remind kids, you just want to treat people how you want to be treated, you don't want to be mean to anyone. It's really not that funny. I say it all the time. Just worry about yourself, and you can only control yourself, I can't control how you feel or how you act and so why are you even worrying about that other person?

Learning how to respect differences in others was also emphasized by camp staff and children as a primary way to prevent bullying among children. Ms. Olivia highlighted this by saying: "I think learning how to be respectful would help prevent bullying just because they're learning how to respect other people's differences . . . It's basically how to be respectful." Ms. Daisy also provided evidence of learning to respect differences as an important factor to prevent bullying:

They learn to be more respectful of each other. Like being more open to the differences that everyone has, no matter if it's a difference like physical ability or mental ability and that everyone can learn, and everybody's willing to help each other out. So, prevent bullying. Yea, it's really important in that way.

Furthermore, learning to be respectful from the TPSR model can transfer to the family environment, which can promote better

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parent-child relationships and reduce sibling conflicts. For example, Richard (10, boy) described how he used respect to avoid sibling conflicts at home. He stated, "I'm using my respectfulness at my home, to a point where me and my sister aren't literally screaming and fighting at each other." Joseph (12, boy), a child participant, talked about how he could potentially transfer the goals of respect and participation to their upcoming school lives. He said, "I would listen when other people are talking in school or other group activities and stuff. And then, for participation, I wouldn't sit out for anything." Ethan (nine, boy) stated, "Treat others how you want to be treated." He added, "Being a leader is important to the school, to our school."

A child participant, Betty (10, girl), recognized the differences among individuals and emphasized the importance of respecting others, including their privacy and property in preventing bullying. She stated, "We all are different, and you're supposed to respect everybody and like privacy and their property, and don't do what others are doing. That's wrong and then, they would listen the first time and like stop being mean." Furthermore, several participants described the difference between the first and second 4-week session by emphasizing they observed fewer incidents of bullying behaviors after the program was implemented during the second 4-week session. Richard (10, boy) described his feelings when addressing respect:

Because in last session there were a lot of bullies, and a lot of people were getting hurt, it's changed a lot in session two because now there's not many bullies, and a lot of people are respecting each other more and having fun.

When asked specifically if they perceived the changes in bullying behavior after the implementation of the TPSR model, most camp staff participants reported that they perceived fewer issues. Mr. Philip stated, "I think that there was definitely less of a problem with bullying than in the first class." Mr. John reported, "I definitely think I see a lot less bullying." One camp staff participant, however, did not perceive fewer bullying incidents and reported that children did not recognize the importance of the awareness talk, "I think it's probably stayed about the same. I don't think it's gone down or gotten higher because . . . not everybody cared about the group time. They actually didn't realize how important the group time or the talking is." Similarly, Ms. Ann expressed that children from Group 3 (the oldest group) seemed to be uninterested during the awareness talk:

I think some of the kids took it as a joke a little bit. If we talked about it with Group Three, in particular, they would just kind of . . . in one ear and out the other, and they didn't really listen to us. They didn't really take it in.

Children from Group 3 also revealed that some of their peers lacked attention and engagement and even made jokes about the goals of the TPSR model. Jay stated, "Some kids, I mean after those talks, they don't really pay attention. They just keep doing what they're doing. They don't really care. Yeah, I'm not sure it's that effective at reducing bullying."

Field notes also indicated that children in Group 3 were not as physically engaged as the other two groups and exhibited more inappropriate behavior. For example, during one session notes in the field log stated: "Group One and Group Two are sitting closely with their counselor discussing the goal of helping others and leadership. Group Three is sitting a bit away from the counselor, whispering and laughing with one another when the counselor is speaking."

The purpose of this study was to examine children's, camp counselors', and activity leaders' perceptions toward the effects of a 4-week TPSR-based summer learning and enrichment program and its ability to reduce bullying behaviors among school-age children. This study demonstrated that participants perceived there was a strong alignment between the TPSR model and SEL and suggest that the TPSR model improved children's awareness of personal and social responsibility behaviors and played a role in preventing and reducing bullying behaviors among school-age children.

Existing SEL programs have demonstrated impacts on reducing aggressive-disruptive behavior problems (Espelage et al., 2013; Nickerson et al., 2019). In particular, programs can be targeted to increase children's social behavior and help children become more self-aware, build social skills (empathy, social responsibility, respect for diversity), maintain positive relationships, and develop problem-solving skills in an inclusive environment (Smith & Low, 2013). Evidence from the present study suggests that children's SEL can be improved when the TPSR model is implemented, thereby providing a mechanism for bullying reduction.

Further, camp staff perceived children gained awareness of responsibilities through active learning experiences. This finding is supported by Hellison (2011), who discovered that the TPSR model provides a series of experiences whereby children begin with irresponsible behavior and move toward respect, caring, support, and helping others. Consistent with research on other proactive bullying reduction programs, positive behaviors were evidenced as awareness of each goal of the TPSR model increased (Busch & Lavay, 2012). Moreover, the goal of transfer was to help children build interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers outside of the camp (Gordon, 2010; Schilling, 2001). Child participants in this study were able to point to examples of when they could transfer the life skills they learned in the camp to other contexts, including home, school, and elsewhere, and apply the life skills to their future lives. These findings are consistent with a growing body of literature on TPSR that has been implemented in PE and sports camps (Cryan & Martinek, 2017; Hellison, 2011).

The current study discussed the potential of TPSR in reducing and preventing bullying. The previous literature has shown that the school-wide positive behavioral intervention program has had positive effects, which is similar to the effects of TPSR interventions. School-wide positive behavioral intervention focuses on bullying reduction by reinforcing desired student behaviors and providing supports to improve social, emotional, and behavioral development for all students (Bear, 2020). Approving students' positive behaviors is a technique that has been emphasized by the school-wide positive behavioral intervention program (Öğülmüş & Vuran, 2016) and is consistent with the TPSR approach. Additionally, more evidence was found that supports the findings of the current study. For example, programs that emphasized teaching students how to respect and help others have shown a decrease in bullying behavior among students (Letendre et al., 2016; Nese et al., 2014). In other words, reinforcing students' sense of responsibility plays a role in reducing and preventing bullying (Frey et al., 2009).

Strong associations between effective defending bullying strategies and the goals of the TPSR model were identified among participants. These included seeking help, assertive responding, and reporting bullying to the teacher. Successful bullying prevention programs have implemented similar strategies for achieving

positive outcomes (Frey et al., 2009). Smith and Shu (2000), for example, found that more than half of victims viewed seeking help to be the most effective strategy to improve the situation. The use of these strategies minimized the harm of bullying and reflected the value of self-direction in which children were encouraged to resist peer pressure and make decisions that appropriately express their thoughts (Hellison, 2011).

It is also notable that children acquired social skills to appropriately respond to and make positive changes toward bullying. Child participants, especially victims and bystanders, reported bullying to teachers when they were involved in bullying or detected bullying incidents. It is conceivable that the TPSR model increases children's prosocial behaviors, such that bystanders become more likely to support and defend victims (Evans & Smokowski, 2015; Gini et al., 2008). Jenkins and Fredrick (2017) surveyed 299 students in middle school about their social capital (social support and social skills) and prosocial behaviors. Results indicated that promoting social skills can be considered a factor in bullying prevention, while the findings also emphasized the significance of prosocial bystanders for preventing and reducing bullying (Jenkins & Fredrick, 2017). While the goals of respect and helping promote children's proactive solutions that reduce and prevent bullying (Busch & Lavay, 2012), Wright and Burton (2008) indicated that self-direction could help children avoid pitfalls of "bad people," "gossiping people," and peer pressure. If children are taught to be responsible for appropriate self-direction, they are less likely to become bullies (Mariani et al., 2015). Findings from this study suggested that the TPSR model integrated into a summer camp setting provided both proactive (e.g., creating a positive environment) and reactive solutions (e.g., effective strategies) for managing bullying.

The present study employed surveys to examine child participants' bullying behaviors (IBS) and personal and social responsibility (PSRQ). A significant negative correlation between postpersonal and social responsibility and postbullying behavior supported the findings from the qualitative data. Previous research has indicated that good emotional and social skills predict less involvement in bullying and violence (Polan et al., 2010).

Participants in this study reported less engagement in physical activities when they were bullied. Instructors, such as PE teachers, need to be aware of the bullying incidences due to the impacts of bullying on students' overall performance in PE (Bejerot et al., 2013). While studies argued that PE may facilitate a culture of bullying when teachers lack awareness and antibullying strategies (Jacobsen and Bauman, 2007; O'Connor and Graber, 2014), TPSR could be a helpful pedagogical model for PE teachers to promote children's personal and social responsibility and reduce bullying. Studies that examine the effects of TPSR on bullying reduction in PE are warranted.

Furthermore, survey data indicated that the camp was effective in reducing bullying behavior, which is consistent with the qualitative data that participants observed less aggressive behavior. However, children reported more victimization as more than 70% of child participants considered themselves as bully-victims at the end of the camp, for what appears to be a direct contradiction. One explanation for the increased victimization is that child participants were less aware of what constitutes bullying at the beginning of the study. After completing the first survey that characterized three forms of bullying, child participants may have started recognizing bullying with greater awareness, which leads to a higher probability of admitting victimization (Baldry & Farrington, 2004). Another explanation could be that younger children may benefit less from the interventions. A systematic

review of school-based antibullying interventions indicated that younger children demonstrated fewer positive effects and reported increased victimization after the intervention (Vreeman & Carroll, 2007). Discrepancies may also suggest limitations of the study, particularly given the relatively small sample size ($n = 27$). Further antibullying intervention studies may consider implementing a session that increases students' knowledge about bullying and adapting different approaches to measure the changes of bullying behavior to increase the reliability and validity of the outcomes.

Relative to the implementation of TPSR, the majority of the studies that have successfully implemented the model in the physical activity field have been conducted in PE classes, sports clubs, and after-school programs at the elementary (Richards et al., 2019) and middle school levels (Cryan & Martinek, 2017), not at the high school level. Overall, there exists, a lack of evidence related to which strategies are most effective in each of the different age groups. Even in the present study, differences in the effectiveness of the TPSR model based on age were apparent. It appeared that the older group of children was more resistant to embracing bullying prevention strategies, and that may have been the result of how strategies were perceived by this age group as they were promoted and reinforced by camp staff. Limited evidence showed that age could be a factor that influence the effectiveness of TPSR interventions (Garcia-Garcia et al., 2020). Therefore, more evidence about how to better engage adolescents and whether age varies the effectiveness of TPSR interventions are needed. Moreover, factors such as gender, students' personality, and physical activity background, which may influence children's engagement in TPSR interventions (Toivonen et al., 2021), need to be investigated in further studies.

Future studies should also examine the duration and intensity of bullying intervention programs. Although students were only exposed to TPSR for 4 weeks during the camp, it was an intense experience in which students received bullying reduction strategies throughout the day, for five consecutive days, and over a 4-week time span. This may have contributed to the effectiveness evidenced in this study. Instructors, such as PE teachers, could have more difficulty in successfully promoting bullying reduction strategies using the TPSR model if they only have access to students for a few hours each week. Finally, future research should consider interventions where students simultaneously receive bullying prevention messages in all settings within their environment (home, school, and peer settings). Adults with whom they interact would require training and education related to bullying prevention. In the end, when individuals at all levels of the social system come together to address the problem of bullying, the likelihood of success will be fostered.

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