

## PRESENTING AUTHOR'S NAME & RESEARCH TITLE

Aida Midgett, EdD, MA

Development, Acceptability, and Short-Term Outcomes of a Parent Module for a Brief, Bullying Bystander Intervention for Middle School Students in Rural, Low-Income Communities

## PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

Bullying is a significant problem for youth that is associated with a wide-range of negative consequences. Youth in rural communities are at higher risk for bullying, with 23.8% of students reporting being a target of bullying compared to 19.9% in urban areas (U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Providing students who witness bullying as bystanders with intervention strategies to act as “defenders” can reduce bullying and the negative associated outcomes for both targets and bystanders. Educating parents about bullying and training them to support their children to intervene as “defenders” may increase the efficacy of bullying bystander programs, as parental knowledge of bullying, beliefs about victimization, including blame attributions, and perceived self- efficacy in managing bullying are inversely related to bullying. Few comprehensive, school-wide interventions include parent education and the resources required for implementation of those that do pose significant barriers for schools, particularly in rural communities. Online programming can increase access and scalability, but require participant buy-in for adoption. The aim of this project was through a mixed-methods design to develop the STAC Parent Module, a companion training to a brief, bullying bystander intervention (STAC-T) and assess the need, feasibility, acceptability, delivery format preference and immediate outcomes (e.g., knowledge, attitudes, self-efficacy, and behavioral intentions) of the Parent Module. STAC is an acronym for a brief, bullying program that stands for the four bystander intervention strategies, “Stealing the Show,” “Turning it Over,” “Accompanying Others,” and “Coaching Compassion.”

## MATERIALS & METHODS

A sample of 20 parents recruited from three Title 1 middle schools in rural, low-income communities completed pre- and post-training surveys assessing immediate outcomes (i.e., knowledge, confidence, comfort, and self-efficacy in managing bullying), intention to use the program strategies, and program acceptability and relevance. A subset of 12 parents participated in a follow-up focus group to obtain feedback regarding program appropriateness, feasibility, content, perception of need, and desire for an online training. Descriptive statistics, linear mixed modeling, and consensual qualitative research were used to analyze the data.

## RESULTS

Assessment of pre- and post-training surveys indicated an increase in knowledge and confidence to support “defenders,” confidence and comfort intervening, parental role, bullying and communication self-efficacy, and attitudes. The majority of participants reported they were likely or very likely to use the STAC strategies to support their children who intervene in bullying in the future. Both quantitative and qualitative data revealed parents found the training easy to use, useful, interesting, relevant, and appropriate, while qualitative data provided feedback on ways to improve the program, including a need for a Spanish version of the Module. Participants indicated the most significant barriers are cost and time, internet access at home, language barriers, and the importance of buy-in for rural communities. Finally, participants shared strengths of an online program, especially being able to use their phone to complete the Module.

## DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

This project demonstrates acceptability and effectiveness of the STAC Parent Module in increasing desired immediate outcomes for parents, providing support for the development of the STAC-T Parent Module, including key information for considerations for online translation.