

Bullying victimization and engagement in bullying among autistic adolescents

Preliminary Results

Collaborators

- Carolyn DiGuseppi
- Kristi Bartholomay
- Brady Holst
- Patrick Powell
- Nuri Reyes
- Sarah Schmiede
- Lisa Wiggins

What is bullying?

Intentional, repeated aggressive behavior towards another person

Kids who bully use their power (bigger, more popular) to control or harm others

Verbal, physical, social or property

Face-to-face or online



By @sewebster

Potential short- and long-term consequences

- Physical injury
- Social and emotional distress
- Aggressive behavior
- Sleep difficulties
- Academic problems
- Substance use
- Depression and anxiety



By @sewebster

Bullying in autism

- Nearly half of autistic people have been bullied
- Autistic people about three times as likely to be bullied compared to peers without autism
- May be due to challenges in social communication and interaction, fewer friendships, or other characteristics associated with autism
- Few studies on different types of victimization or on engagement in bullying

Aims

Among adolescents identified in early childhood as having autism:

1. How often have they been bullied? In what ways?
2. How often have they engaged in bullying themselves?
3. How does this compare to adolescents from the general population?

Methods

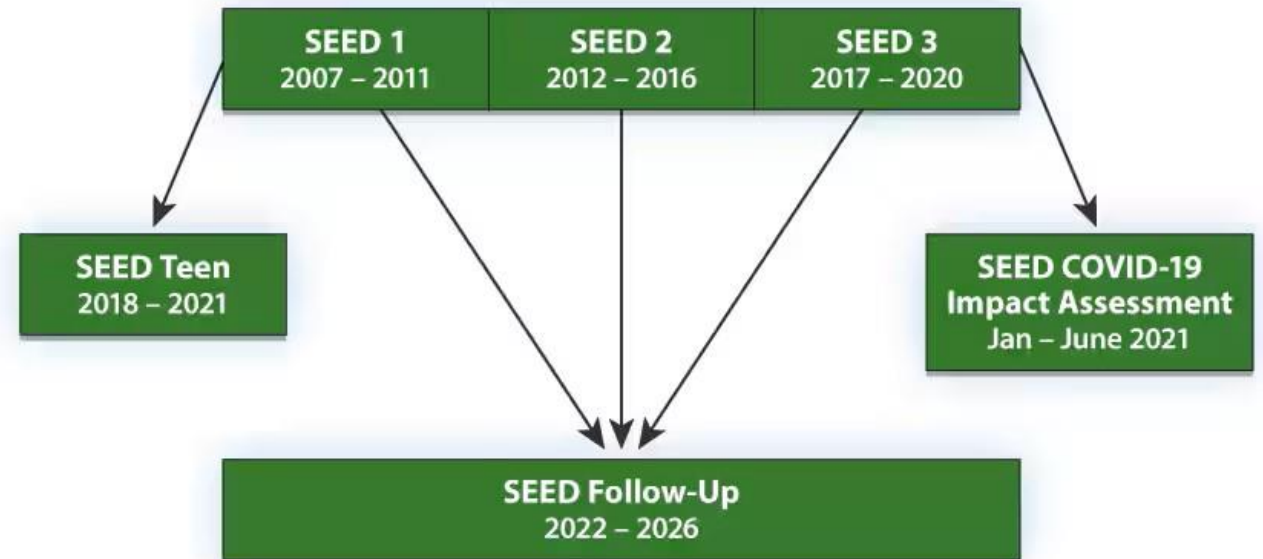
SEED Study Design

SEED: Enrolled children ages 2-5 years to look at risk factors for and characteristics of autism

Children examined and classified with autism or without autism

SEED Teen: teens ages 12-16 years who had been enrolled in SEED 1

Overview of Activities Study to Explore Early Development (SEED)



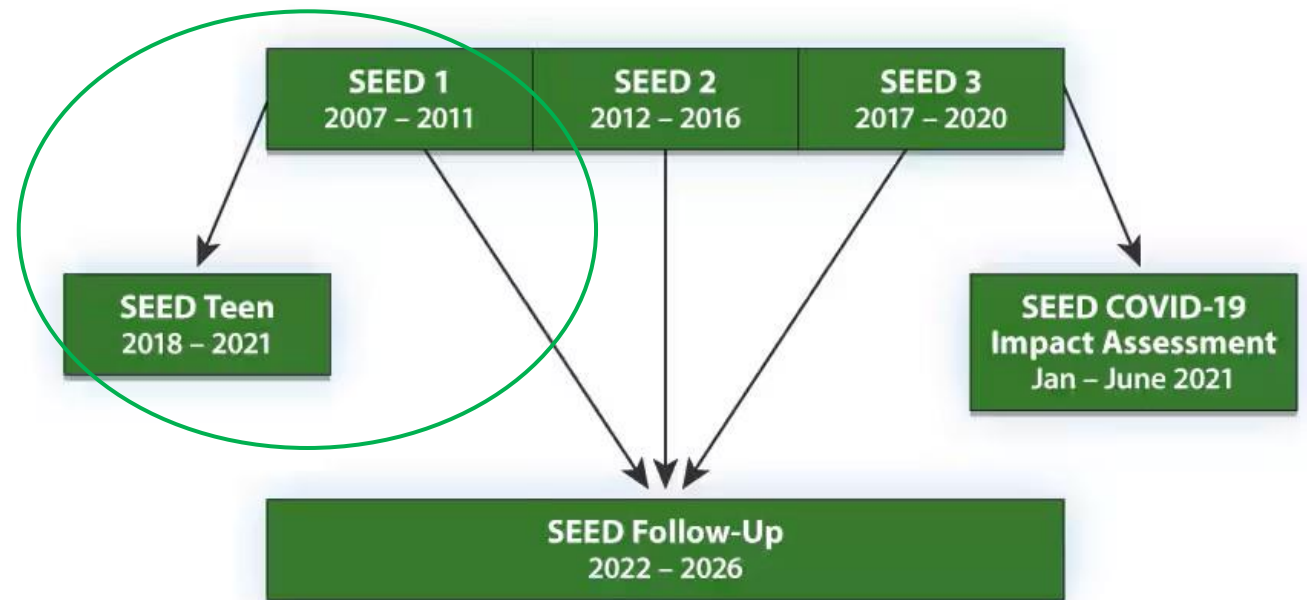
This Analysis

SEED Teen participants who were enrolled in SEED 1 in early childhood (age 2-5)

Autism Group: teens identified with autism in early childhood

Comparison Group: teens from the general population without autism in early childhood

Overview of Activities Study to Explore Early Development (SEED)



Bullying questions for parent or caregiver

1) Has this child EVER been bullied by another child? If YES:

2) During the past 12 months, has this child been bullied by another child? If YES:

- a) Physical: *Pushed or shoved; hit, slapped or kicked*
- b) Verbal: *Called bad names; threatened that they would be hurt or hit; teased, picked on, or made fun of*
- c) Social: *Rumors or lies spread about them; ignored or left out of things on purpose*
- d) Cyber: *Someone texted, emailed, or posted something hurtful about him/her on the internet (e.g., social media)*

3) Has this child EVER bullied another child?

Results

Who does this study include?

- 174 teens with autism
- 296 teens without autism
- Average age: 14¾ years
- Male: 60%
- Regular classroom some/all the time: 81%

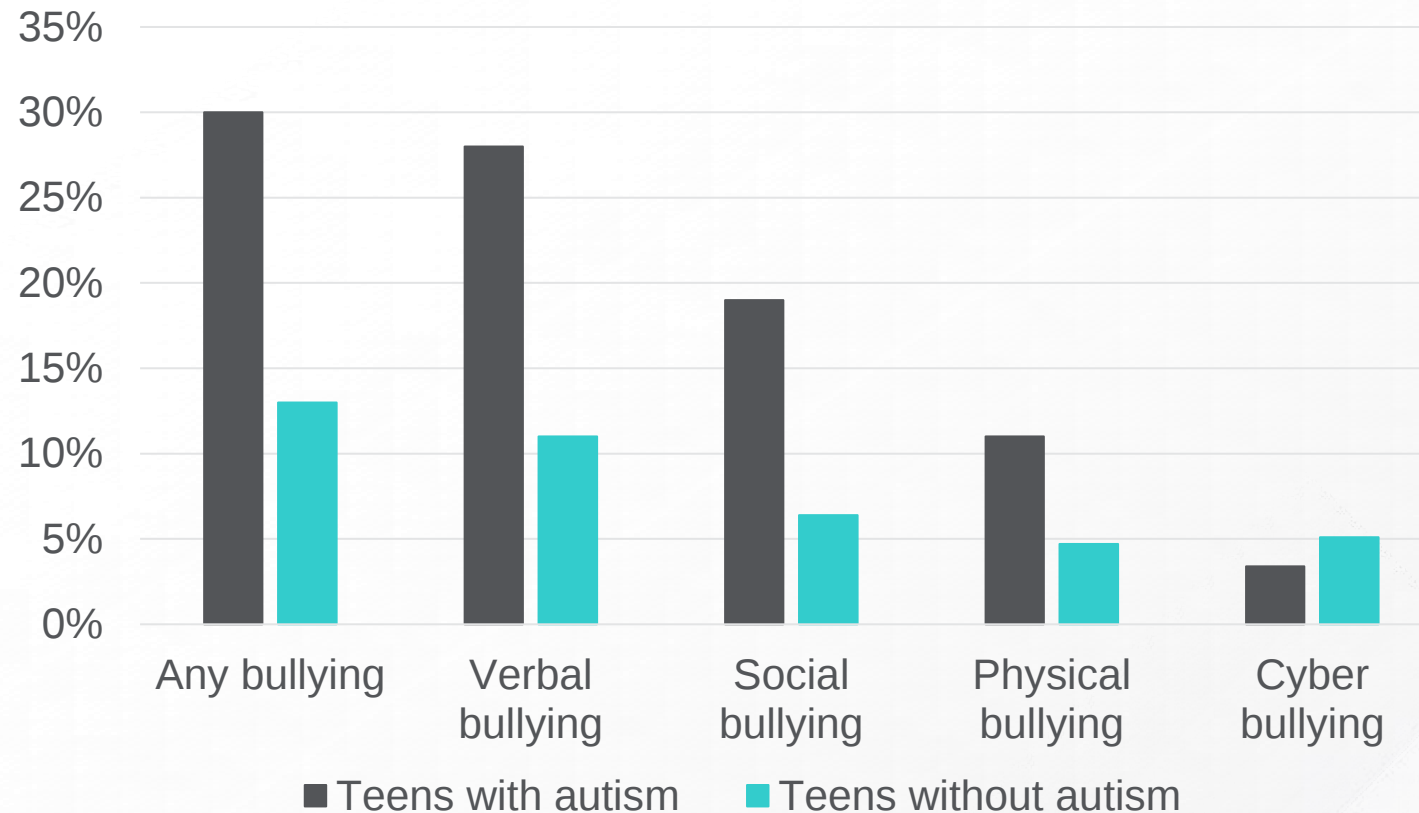
Teens bullied in past 12 months

More often male

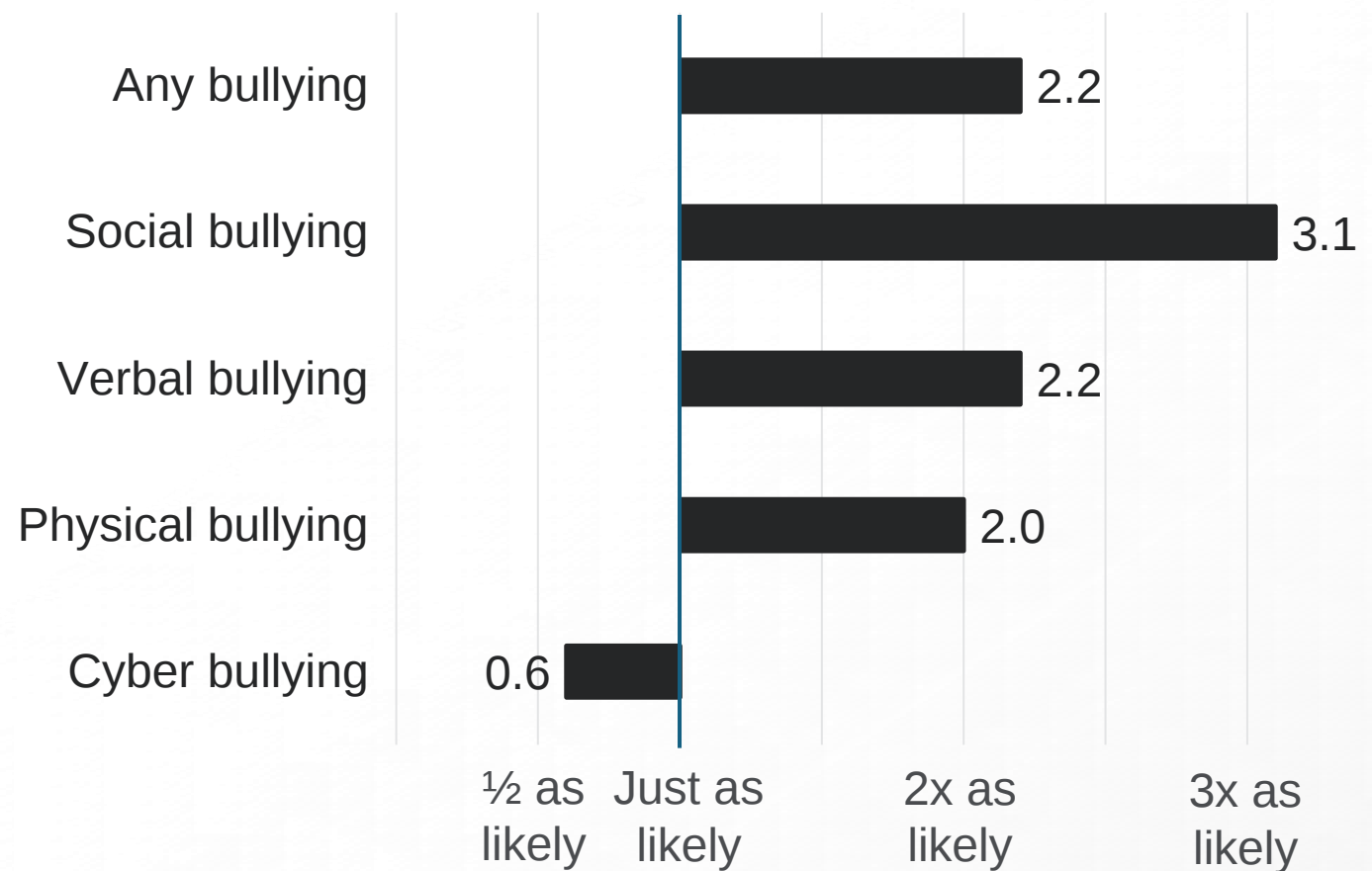
Slightly younger age at time of survey

No differences by mother's age or education, household income, child race/ethnicity, or type of classroom

Bullied in past 12 months among teens classified as having autism or not having autism in early childhood



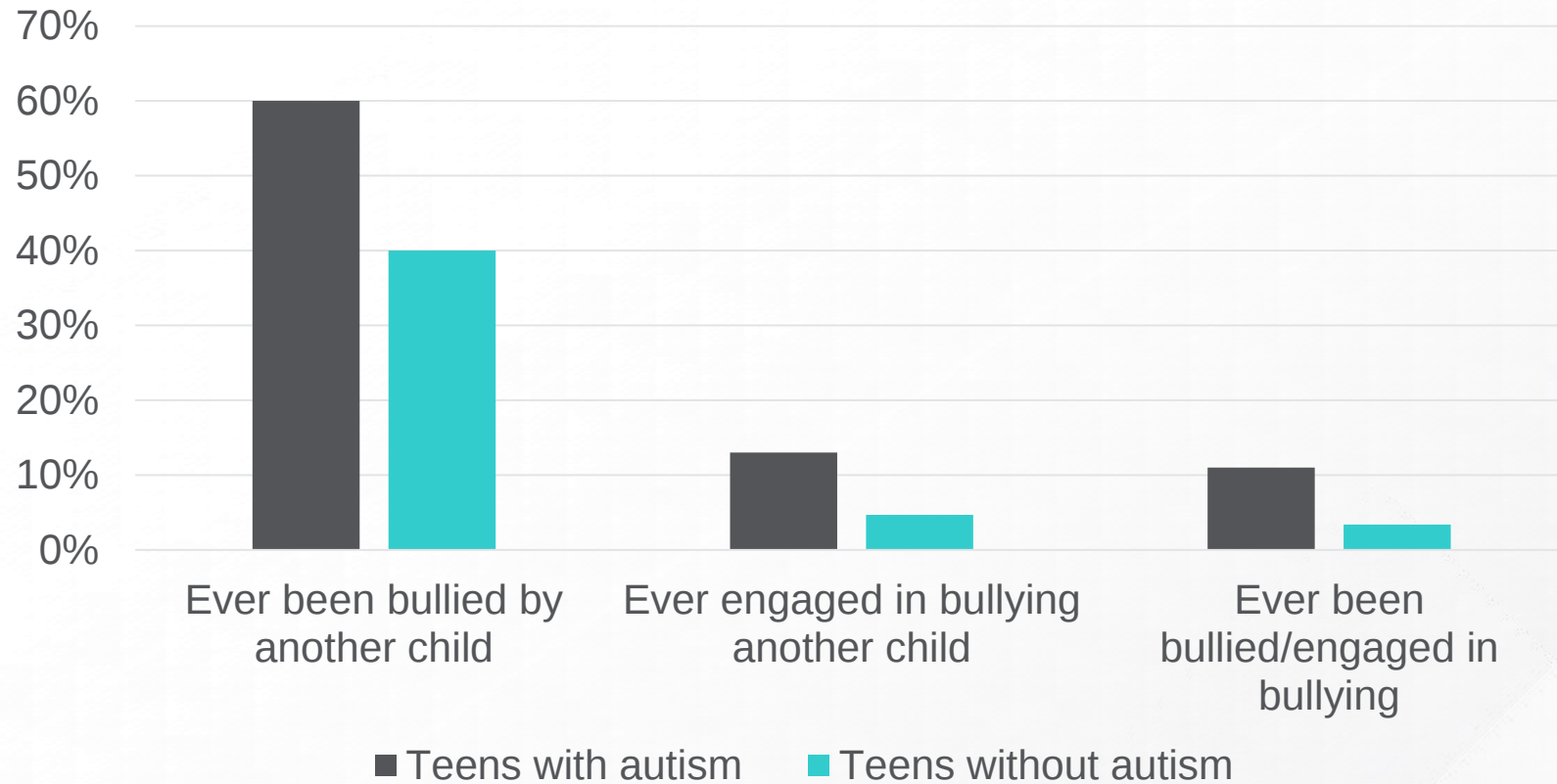
BULLIED IN PAST 12 MONTHS, OVERALL AND BY TYPE
Teens with autism compared to teens without autism



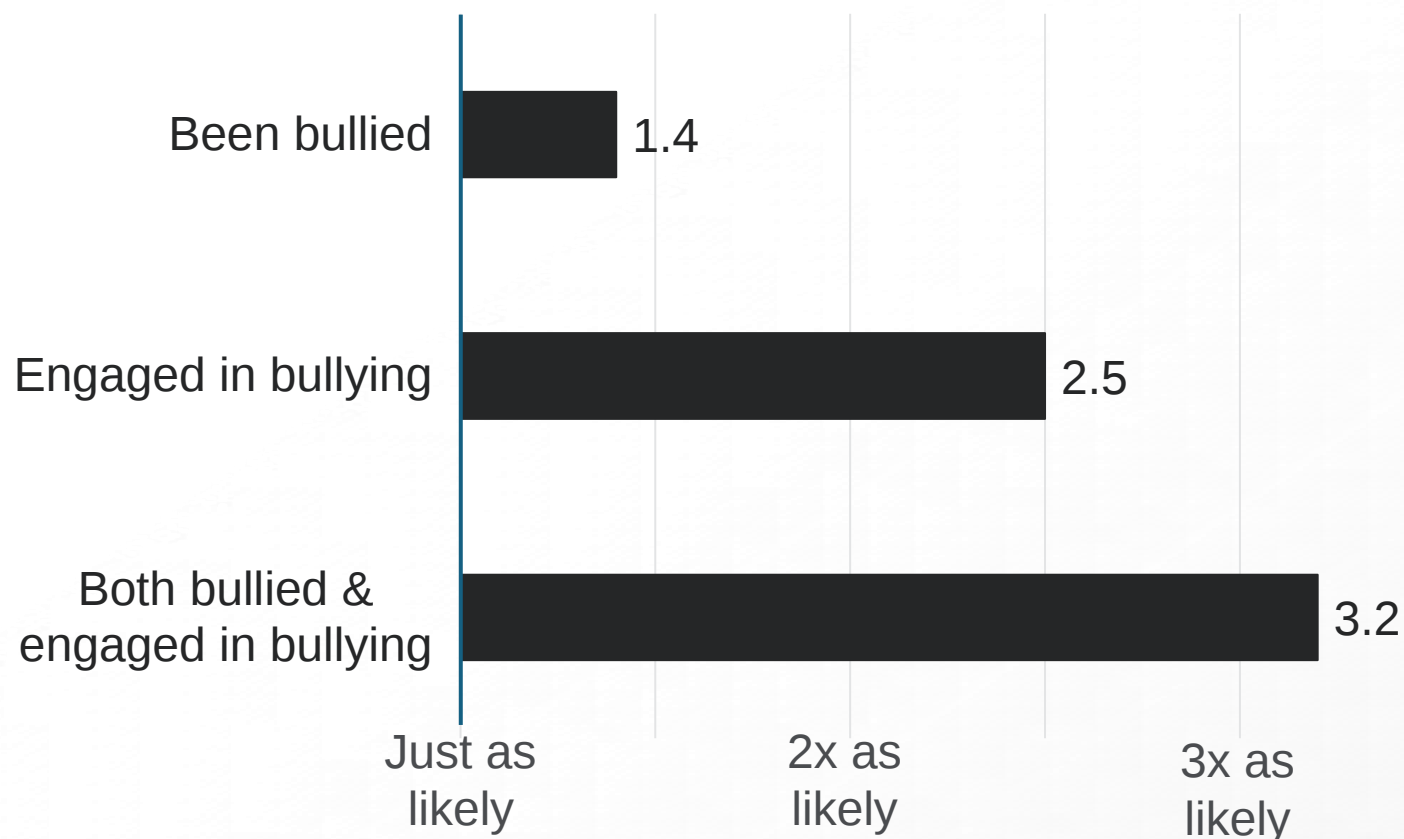
**Autistic teens
more likely to
experience:**

- Any
- Social
- Verbal
- Physical

EVER experienced or engaged in bullying among adolescents classified as having or not having autism in early childhood



EVER EXPERIENCED / ENGAGED IN BULLYING
Teens with autism compared to teens without autism



Autistic teens more likely to have:

- Ever been bullied
- Ever engaged in bullying
- Ever been bullied and engaged in bullying (both)

Summary of Findings

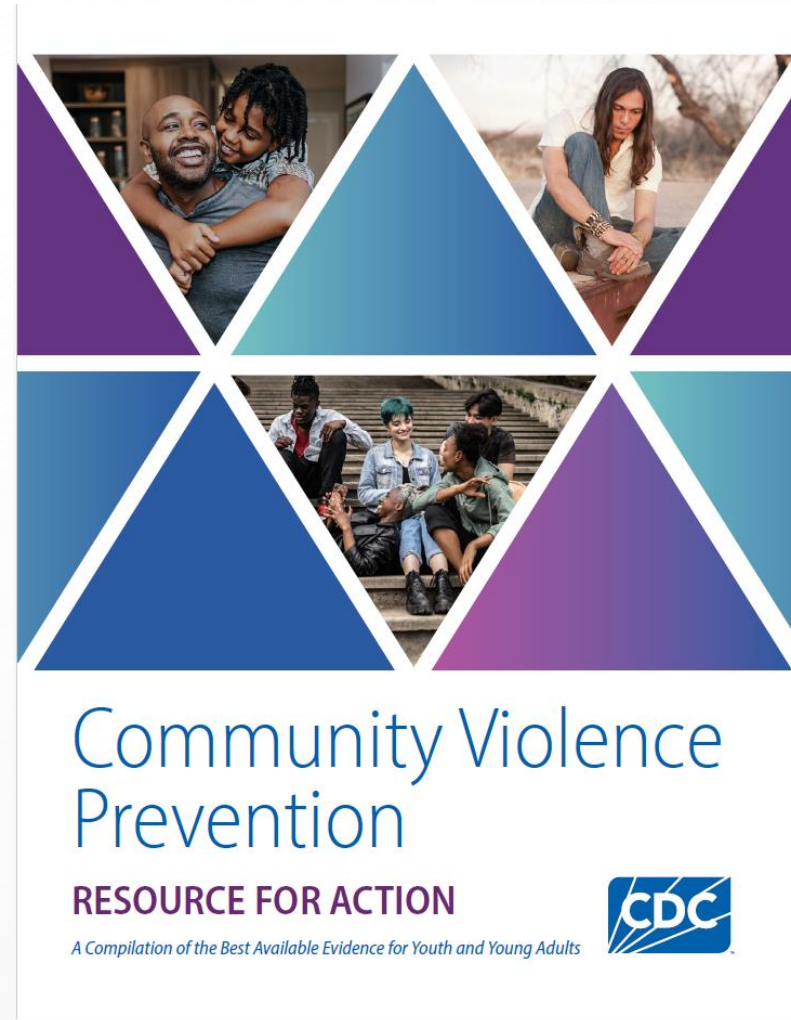
- Autistic teens more likely to have experienced recent verbal, social and physical bullying (not cyber bullying)
- Autistic teens more likely to have ever engaged in bullying behavior
- Autistic teens more likely to have both ever been bullied and ever engaged in bullying behavior



By @sewebster

Preventing Bullying & Violence

Evidence-Based Programs



Strategies and Approaches

to prevent community violence

STRATEGY

APPROACH



Strengthen Economic Security

- Tax credits
- Income support policies
- Social insurance programs
- Investment accounts



Provide Quality Education

- Preschool enrichment with family engagement
- Equitable educational attainment for youth and young adults



Create Protective Environments

- Modify the physical home environment
- Modify the physical and social community environment
- Reduce exposure to harmful community conditions



Promote Healthy Family Relationships

- Early childhood home visitation programs
- Parenting skills and family relationship programs



Strengthen Youths' and Young Adults' Skills

- School-based skill building programs
- Job training and employment programs



Connect Young People to Caring Adults and Activities

- Mentoring programs
- After-school programs



Intervene to Lessen Harms and Prevent Future Risk

- Treatment to lessen the harms of violence
- Treatment to prevent problem behaviors and further experiences with violence
- Hospital-based violence intervention programs
- Street outreach and community norm change
- Community-justice partnerships



Promote Healthy Family Relationships

- Early childhood home visitation programs
- Parenting skills and family relationship programs



Strengthen Youths' and Young Adults' Skills

- School-based skill building programs
- Job training and employment programs



Connect Young People to Caring Adults and Activities

- Mentoring programs
- After-school programs

Parenting Skills and Family Relationship Programs

- Provide caregivers with support; teach communication, problem-solving and child behavior monitoring and management skills
- Potential Outcomes
 - Increases in healthy social development and behavior
 - Reductions in behavior problems, physical fighting and aggressive behaviors

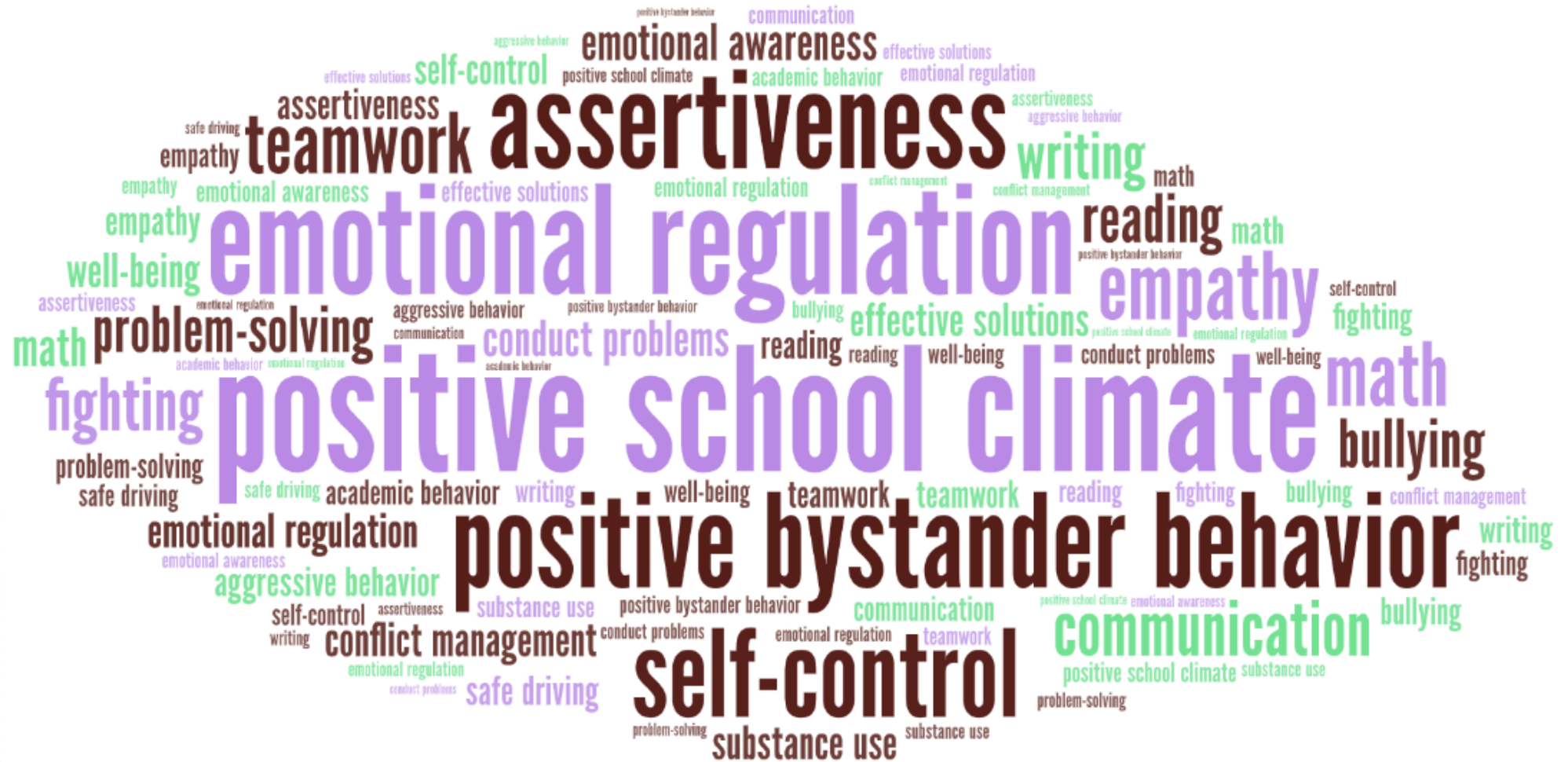
Parenting Skills & Family Relationships Programs: Examples

Program	Ages	Effects on Child Behavior	Other Effects
The Incredible Years® (parents + teachers)	<13	↑ prosocial behaviors ↓ disruptive behavior	↑ parent-child connection ↑ positive parenting ↓ parent stress
GenerationPTMO (parent training)	2-17	↑ social skills ↓ behavior problems ↓ delinquent behaviors ↓ arrests	↑ academic performance ↑ parenting skills ↓ anxiety
Coping Power (cognitive-behavioral)	10-17 (behavior problems)	↓ aggressive behaviors	↑ parent support ↓ substance use

School-Based Skill Building Programs

- Enhance interpersonal and emotional skills, including communication and problem-solving, empathy, emotional awareness and regulation, conflict management, teamwork
- Give information about violence and opportunities to practice and reinforce skills
- Includes guidance for teachers on building skills, monitoring and management behavior, building a positive school climate

School-Based Skill Building Programs: Potential Benefits



School-Based Skill Building Programs: Examples

Program	Grade	Effects on Child Behavior	Other Effects
Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies	Elementary school (general and special ed.)	↑ emotional regulation ↑ developing effective solutions ↓ aggressive responses to conflict ↓ conduct problems	↑ reading, math and writing proficiency ↑ psychological well-being
Positive Action (+ families & communities)	Elementary school	↓ carrying/using weapon ↓ bullying behaviors ↓ self-reported violence-related behaviors	↑ academic behavior ↓ substance use
Life Skills Training	Middle school	↑ social skills (assertiveness, self-control) ↓ fighting ↓ property damage & stealing ↓ aggressive behaviors	↓ substance use ↓ unsafe driving

Connect Youth to Caring Adults & Activities

- Mentoring Programs
 - Pair youth with a community volunteer or group mentoring approach to foster a relationship that contributes to youth's personal growth, skill development and academic success
- After-School Programs
 - Opportunities to strengthen social and academic skills, be involved in school and community activities; practice leadership, decision-making, social problem-solving
- Potential Outcomes
 - Improved academic performance, positive relationships with supportive adults, parents and teachers
 - Reductions in fighting, arrests, truancy, community violence

Connecting Youth: Examples

Program	Type	Ages	Effects on Child Behavior	Other Effects
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (school- or community-based)	Mentoring	Children and teens	↑ positive behaviors ↓ physical fighting ↓ problem behaviors ↓ arrests	↑ academic performance ↓ truancy ↓ substance use ↓ depression
Becoming a Man (BAM)	Mentoring	7 th and 10 th grade males	↓ arrests ↓ violent-crime arrests	↑ school engagement ↑ graduation rates
Los Angeles' Better Educated Students for Tomorrow (LA's BEST)	After School	Youth	↓ violent crimes ↓ arrests	↑ academic achievement ↓ drug arrests
After School Matters (ASM) (apprenticeship experiences)	After School	High school students	↑ self-regulation ↓ participation in group-involved violence	↑ graduation rates ↑ school engagement ↓ truancy

Community Violence Prevention: Resource for Action

www.cdc.gov/violence-prevention/media/pdf/resources-for-action/CV-Prevention-Resource-for-Action_508.pdf

Conclusions & Public Health Implications

- Autistic teens more likely to experience recent verbal, social and physical bullying, and to have ever engaged in bullying
- Bullying victimization may exacerbate existing challenges in social interaction and establishing friendships
- School-based programs that build social skills and promote prosocial behavior could reduce peer antisocial behaviors that disproportionately impact autistic youth, while also helping autistic teens with their social challenges



Thank you
