

BULLYING AND VICTIMIZATION AMONG OUT-OF-HOME AND LGBT YOUTH

A Dissertation by

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Master of Arts, Wichita State University, 2008

Bachelor of Science, Kansas State University, 2003

Submitted to the Department of Psychology  
and the faculty of the Graduate School of  
Wichita State University  
in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

July 2012

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The following faculty have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Psychology.

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## DEDICATION

To my parents, my husband, my sister,  
my family, and my friends who have  
encouraged me to set my goals high and  
supported me throughout this process

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. James Snyder, my advisor, for all of his help and support throughout my years of graduate school. Without his guidance I would not be where I am today. He is a kind, caring person and has a wonderful way of making less-than-desirable tasks seem enjoyable. I will miss his sense of humor and his honesty. I would also like to thank the other professors at Wichita State University who have made a lasting impact on my education, including Dr. Helen Reiner, Dr. Darwin Dorr and Dr. Robert Zettle. I hope that I can match their passion for psychology through my work in the upcoming years, realizing that I have big shoes to fill. Additionally, I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee who have been extremely helpful during this process, including Dr. James Snyder, Dr. Robert Zettle, Dr. Darwin Dorr, Dr. Sabina Low, and Dr. Linnea Glen-Maye. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge all individuals who worked on the Dane County Youth Assessment, as I would not have a dissertation without your generosity!

## ABSTRACT

Peer bullying and victimization involving youth in out of home placement (OOH) and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth were investigated in this study, as well as how parenting, peer relationships, and school support affect a youth's bully or victim status. Participants were high school students enrolled in Dane County schools during the 2008-2009 school year. Total sample size was 16,766 with 560 (3%) identifying as OOH, 1539 (9%) identifying as LGBT, and 113 (1%) identifying as both OOH+LGBT. Results indicated higher levels of 30 day victimization and 30 day bullying for OOH youth as compared to non-OOH youth, LGBT youth as compared to non-LGBT youth, and OOH+LGBT youth as compared to OOH only or LGBT only youth. The impact of parenting, peer relationships, and school support on bullying and victimization was similar for all youth; however, OOH, LGBT, and OOH+LGBT youth reported significantly lower mean levels of positive support from each of these sources compared to their non-OOH and non-LGBT counterparts.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

School can be difficult for many children, both academically and socially. Fitting in with peers is a struggle that most children face from the time they enter kindergarten until they complete their education. A great amount of research has been done on the dynamics of peer relationships. While all children and young adults will struggle with navigating social relationships, some children and young adults face greater challenges in that they deliberately victimize or are victimized by peers. These aggressive peer relationships can make school an even more difficult experience. Additionally, bullying and victimization have been linked to several negative outcomes, including other problematic behaviors (i.e., smoking, drinking, and criminal behavior) and poor school adjustment for bullies; and depression, low self-esteem, poor social and emotional adjustment, greater difficulty making friends, poor peer relationships, and loneliness for victims (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Morton, & Scheidt, 2001; Olweus, 1995).

It is important to note that there is a difference between aggression and bullying. Aggression can be an act that occurs one time, while bullying is often characterized by repeated negative actions against another that intend to harm and in which there is an imbalance of power with a more powerful person attacking a less powerful individual (Hoover & Stenhjem, 2003; Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1995). These negative actions may include behaviors such as physical acts (i.e., pushing, hitting), verbal acts (i.e., name-calling), or psychological acts (i.e., rumors, intentionally excluding a peer from a group) (Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1995).

Researchers have spent years studying bullying in its more traditional, physical form or topography. Emerging bodies of literature have suggested that there is another more covert form

of bullying, that which is called relational bullying. While overt bullying usually comes to the attention of teachers or other adults, covert bullying does not. Relational bullying, which is often covert, seems to be more prevalent in females (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). While early studies emphasized a gender difference in bullying, it is now believed that both males and females display bullying behaviors, but that the ways in which they bully may be different. Males are thought to more frequently bully through physical or verbal means, while females more frequently bully through relational means (Crick et al., 1995; Nansel et al., 2001). Relational bullying can be defined as “behaviors that are intended to significantly damage another child’s friendships or feelings of inclusion by the peer group” (Crick et al., 1995, p.711). This study examines both physical bullying and relational bullying.

Research indicates that between 15% and 30% of students are bullies or victims, with physical bullying peaking in middle school and verbal bullying remaining constant throughout the school years (Cohn & Canter, 2003). The largest bullying study conducted in the United States included 15,686 students in grades six through ten who were enrolled in schools across the nation (Nansel et al., 2001). Results indicated that approximately 30% of students were involved in bullying, as a bully (13%), victim (11%), or both a bully and victim (6%). Males were more likely to be both perpetrators and victims of bullying (Nansel et al., 2001). Even higher rates were reported by Hoover, Oliver, and Hazler (1992) who found 81% of adolescent males and 72% of adolescent females surveyed reported that they were bullied at some point during their school years. Of the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students surveyed by Espelage, Bosworth, and Simon (2000), only 20% stated that they had not bullied their peers in the past 30 days. Although estimates of rates of bullying and victimization vary according to the studies from

which they are derived, it is clear from the research that bullying is a problem in American schools and we should do everything possible to address this serious issue.

Many youth can identify risks for susceptibility to victimization- that which is considered “weird” or “different.” For this reason, youth go to great lengths to wear socially acceptable clothing, act the “right” way, and befriend “cool” kids. As one can imagine, youth who do not abide by these social norms put themselves at risk for victimization. Alternately, youth who are considered to be powerful in the social setting are in a position to bully their peers. In a study by Hoover et al. (1992), the most common reason given by students for why they got bullied was because they “didn’t fit in.” Males also stated other reasons, including being physically weak, having a short temper, having certain friends in school, and wearing particular clothes. Other reasons cited by females included their facial appearance, crying or being emotional, being overweight, or having good grades (Hoover et al., 1992).

This research examined bullying by and victimization of youth in out of home placement and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth. While the connection between these two groups may not be readily apparent, when further examined, it is likely that both groups may have obtained the label of “weird” in school. Additionally, there are data to show that having obtained the label of “weird” puts individuals at a greater risk for victimization. Some researchers have found support for the idea that being a particular race or being the minority in a school puts one at greater risk for victimization (Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Hanish et al., 2000). This may depend on the ethnic makeup of the school, the age of the children, and many other factors. This may be partially explained by an “in-group” bias, which states that people tend to prefer other individuals with characteristics similar to themselves, such as ethnicity (Hanish et al., 2000).

There are also data to show that children with learning disabilities are victimized more frequently than children without learning disabilities, as well as higher rates of victimization of children with a comorbid psychiatric diagnosis as compared to those without such disorders (Baumeister, Storch, & Geffken, 2008). Although causality cannot be inferred from these descriptive and correlational studies, it can be argued that separating children from the regular classroom or giving them extra teacher attention within the classroom spotlights them as “different” from the rest of their peers. This may make them more vulnerable to victimization.

Using these same arguments, the social status of out of home placement or LGBT youth may set them apart from their peers, and so may also put them at a greater risk for victimization. The potential association of the perpetration of bullying by youth in out of home placement and who identify as LGBT is less clear. Peer bullying and victimization experienced by youth in out of home placement and LGBT youth relative to youth without these characteristics is examined in further detail in this research.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Youth in OOH Placement

This study focuses on a group of individuals who are often labeled as “different” and who are frequently misunderstood by both peers and adults- children in out of home placement, often referred to as “OOH” youth. Many people have heard of foster care but very few actually know how children end up in foster care or what this entails. Furthermore, many people are unaware of other populations that also fall under the umbrella of out of home placement. Therefore, it is useful to consider how children end up in out of home placement and what this implies for their adjustment and peer relationships.

Not all children are lucky enough to be raised in a warm, loving home with people who support their development. Sadly, some children are faced with serious issues at a young age, such as poverty, exposure to drugs, abuse, and other criminal activity. Many children spend their entire lives being raised in a home with these problems, but others are removed from the home if these problems are discovered and deemed serious enough. Children may be removed from their caregiver’s home for various reasons, including psychological maltreatment/emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007; World Report on Violence and Health, 2002).

A national study conducted by Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, and Hamby (2005) found child maltreatment rates to be as high as 1 in 8 youth. Using substantiated physical abuse as the standard, the rate of child maltreatment was still 124 youth for every 1,000 (approximately 12%), with physical abuse the highest among teenagers and neglect the most equivalent across all age groups (Finkelhor et al., 2005).

In 2007, approximately 5.8 million children were referred to Child Protection Services in the United States for concerns of abuse, and 794,000 of these children were determined to be victims (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007). What is of the utmost concern is the safety of these children. Statistics show that in the year 2007, approximately 1,760 children died from abuse or neglect (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007). To safeguard the health and well-being of victimized children, many are placed into foster care upon discovery of the abuse or neglect to minimize child endangerment and deaths.

In 2007, it was estimated that, of the families under investigation, 21% of child victims and 4% of nonvictims (i.e., siblings of the victims) were removed from the home and placed into foster care (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2007). A term often used to define these situations is “out of home placement” or “OOH.” Out of home youth can include the children placed in foster care as a result of abuse or neglect, but it may also include youth in the Juvenile Justice system, also known as “JJA,” youth living in group homes, or children who are homeless or runaways. Therefore, youth may live outside of the home due to poor parenting, but may also live outside of the home as a result of the youth’s own behaviors such as persistent truancy and serious criminal activity. Studying these OOH youth is a difficult task because of the variety of reasons for out of home status. For example, children who have been physically abused may display very different behaviors and interactions with peers than children who have been neglected. Youth in out of home placement as a result of their own antisocial and disruptive behavior may be different than those who experienced abuse or neglect. However, all of these groups of children are often in OOH placement and both may be studied in research under this label. This study examined the link between OOH youth who endorsed having lived

in foster care or a residential facility and the levels of these youths' involvement in peer bullying and victimization among these youth, recognizing the heterogeneity of youth in OOH placement.

Much of the research connecting parental abuse to child bullying or victimization involves studies of children still residing in their parents' home. Some of this research argues that harsh parenting styles lead to bullying behaviors by children (Knutson, DeGarmo, Koeppi, & Reid, 2005), while other research points out that the child's aggressive behavior may occur first, making them more susceptible to harsh parenting or abuse by parents (DiLillo, Perry, & Fortier, 2006; Duncan, 2004). Knutson et al. (2005) indicate that harsh parenting can include anything from yelling and scolding to abusive physical punishment. For these reasons, it is difficult to generalize findings on harsh parenting styles to actions sufficiently extreme to result in children being placed OOH. Additionally, children are placed OOH for many reasons, not just physical abuse. Children who have been neglected may have behavioral characteristics much different than children who have been exposed to serious physical or sexual abuse. Abused and neglected children may also interact differently with their peers, even though both are in OOH placement. As such, children in out of home placement are not likely to be a homogeneous group, and their increased risk for involvement in peer victimization and bullying may reflect the social experiences leading to out of home placement, or the "social address" and social experiences consequent to out of home placement.

Knutson et al. (2005) found that both harsh punitive discipline and parental neglect significantly predicted child aggression. This research did not include children who were known to be sexually abused or children who had been in out of home placement, but rather mothers and children who were residing in the same home and were receiving social or economical services. Parental supervision and discipline was measured through self-report and observation. Child

aggression was measured through parent report, teacher report, vignettes, and observation.

Espelage, Bosworth, and Simon (2000) and Cohn et al. (2003) also found higher rates of bullying by children who experienced physical parental discipline or who had less supervision by parents.

George and Main (1979) took the research one step further and investigated bullying by youth who as infants were known to be abused. They found that youth who were abused as infants were significantly more aggressive towards their peers and caregivers than control youth.

Espelage et al. (2003) provide a possible explanation for these findings, suggesting that “Families high in conflict, who engage in bullying and aggressive behaviors in the home, and who value aggression as a functional means to an end, are likely to have children who value the utility of bullying behaviors” (p.377).

Mohapatra, Irving, Paglia-Boak, Wekerle, Adlaf, and Rehm (2010) examined bullying and victimization among children with previous Child Protection Services (CPS) family involvement. They found that females with previous CPS family involvement were at greater risk of bullying and victimization than females who did not have CPS involvement. For males, youth with previous CPS family involvement were at increased risk for more victimization but no more at risk for bullying than males without CPS involvement. This research is unique, in that it studied families who were known to have involvement with CPS for issues of abuse or neglect. Therefore, the sample is much more refined and results are more accurate in addressing the issue of how children in out-of-home placement are at increased risk for peer bullying and victimization.

What then, is different about families with children who bully versus families with children who are victimized? It is possible that the social dynamics within these families is different. Bowers, Smith, and Binney (1994) found that bullies showed a concern with power

within their family, while victims described having experienced an enmeshed family structure. Perhaps the values that are modeled by parents become a major factor in determining whether a child becomes a bully, victim, or is uninvolved with bullying during the school years. It is unknown, however, what comes first, whether it be the submissive attitude of victims or bullying by others. Duncan (1999) noted that the submissiveness of victims might allow peers and adults to target them, but also pointed out that the submissiveness could be the after-effect of the bullying and abuse by peers and parents. One weakness of Duncan's study was the ethnic makeup of her sample. Approximately 91% of her sample was Caucasian, which was typical of the university at which her study took place. This is not likely to be representative of the children in OOH placement, therefore limiting generalization to OOH youth.

In an important longitudinal study of family experience and youth aggression, Herrenkohl, Egolf, and Herrenkohl (1997) investigated the lives of maltreated children both in preschool and again 16 years later. They found significant relationships between the severity of physical discipline, experience of neglect, sexual abuse, and negative interactions with mothers experienced by children in preschool and the self-reported assaultive behavior of those children during adolescence. Sample assaultive behaviors included hitting parents or others, hitting others with the idea of seriously injuring or killing, or having sexual relations with someone against his or her will.

In summary, the field lacks research that explicitly examines the association of peer bullying and victimization with OOH placement of children. It is known that poor parenting, whether harsh or neglectful, can lead to higher rates of childhood aggression and that the parent-child relationships are different for bullies and victims. Additionally, harsh and neglectful treatment by parents may result in out of home placement. It is also the case that the social

experiences involved in OOH placement and the different “social address” acquired by youth in OOH placement may increase risk for involvement in peer bullying and victimization. There is also a lack of research about how various social relationships may act as risk or protective factors for OOH youth and their involvement in peer bullying and victimization. Research focused on OOH youth is needed to identify targets of intervention for this at risk group. By understanding how social experiences such as parenting, peer relationships, and support at school may affect a child’s bully or victim status, we can better understand how to address this problem.

Additionally, more specific research is needed on bullying and victimization involving OOH youth, given most existing data are derived from samples of neglected and abused children still residing in the home or from studies using retrospective report.

## LGBT Youth

This study also examined a group of young people who may be at greater risk for victimization because of their non-normative gender identifications as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT). It is unknown how many youth identify as LGBT, particularly because many youth may not yet clearly know their sexual orientation or may intentionally hide it because they know it is socially undesirable (Rotheram-Borus & Langabeer, 2001; Savin-Williams, 1990). Additionally, many youth may sexually experiment with same-sex partners but do not identify as LGBT or continue this experimentation into adulthood (Savin-Williams, 1990). A survey of 34,196 Minnesota high school aged youth in 1987 found that .8% identified as bisexual and .3% as homosexual (French, Story, Remafedi, Resnick, & Blum, 1996). In 1995, a survey conducted with 4,159 youth in Massachusetts found that 2.5% identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual (Garofalo, Wolf, Kessel, Palfrey, & DuRant, 1998). Widely accepted prevalence

rates for LGBT youth have not yet been established, despite this being a topic of research for several years.

One of the first experiences of a LGBT youth is feeling “different” (D’Augelli, Grossman, & Starks, 2006; Rivers & D’Augelli, 2001; Savin-Williams, 1990). LGBT youth realize that they are not like everyone else and this can be a very confusing experience. While these youth are trying to figure out their sexual orientation, they are also getting messages from society that homoerotic feelings are shame worthy (Rivers et al., 2001). Should they identify as LGBT, many of these youth are also aware of the criticism that they may face if they were to “come out.” For this reason, LGBT youth may attempt to “pass,” or create a heterosexual social image (Rotheram-Borus et al., 2001). Those who are unable or unwilling to hide their non-normative sexual identity often face victimization by family members, friends, or other peers. School is one location where a great deal of this victimization may occur. Berrill (1990) reports that between 33% and 49% of lesbian and gay students in the United States have experienced some sort of harassment, threats, or violence during high school or junior high school. Actions against these youth included a range of peer behavior from verbal assaults to threats with a weapon, as well as physical and sexual assault (Rivers et al., 2001). Furthermore, some schools do not report such incidents to authorities because of the youth’s sexual orientation and instead encourage the youth to conform to what is considered socially acceptable behavior within the school to avoid future attacks (Rivers et al., 2001). Harassment of these youth has been shown to result in poor school performance, truancy, and school dropout (Rotheram-Borus et al., 2001).

Pilkington and D’Augelli (1995) point out that many studies of victimization of LGBT youth have methodological problems, such as retrospective accounts by participants, limited geographic regions of study, or unclear definitions of “youth.” Pilkington and D’Augelli’s study

included lesbian, gay, and bisexual (LGB) youth ages 15 to 21 from 14 major cities across the United States (Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, San Diego, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.). The data from this survey indicated that 22% of males and 29% of females identifying as LGB reported being physically injured by another student because of their sexual orientation and 1 in 20 reported abuse by teachers. LGB youth stated they were fearful of losing friends, as well as facing verbal or physical harassment from students and teachers due to their sexual orientation. Over half (58%) reported hiding their sexual orientation from peers. Furthermore, 43% of males and 54% of females reported losing at least one friend after disclosing their sexual orientation. Immediate family members were not always supportive either. Approximately 36% of the youth stated that they were verbally insulted by an immediate family member (mother, father, or sibling) at least one time and 10% reported being physical assaulted. One in five LGB youth stated that their mother had been verbally abusive and approximately 14% identified their fathers as a perpetrator (Pilkington et al., 1995).

Victimization experienced by LGB individuals was further studied by D'Augelli et al. (2006), using interviews of 15 to 19 year old youth over a 2 year period. Of the youth interviewed, approximately 78% reported verbal victimization, 11% physical victimization, and 9% sexual victimization during their lifetime, with males reporting more of all types compared to females. The youth reported that the abuse occurred because they were LGB or were perceived to be LGB. On average, verbal victimization began at age 13 and 72% of verbal victimization occurred at school. On average, physical victimization also began at age 13 and 56% of the physical victimization occurred at school. While the average age of sexual victimization began at 13 ½ years, school was not reported as a location where this occurred. While D'Augelli et al.

note that their sample may not generalize to the entire LGB population; the rates of victimization in their sample are comparable to those reported in previous research. Being called a “sissy” or “tomboy” by one’s parents and being discouraged by parents for acting in gender atypical ways were associated with LGB youth reporting more verbal and physical victimization in their lifetime and reporting being attacked at earlier ages than LGB youth who did not have these experiences with their parents (D’Augelli et al., 2006).

In a review of literature, Berrill (1990) concluded that lesbians face more verbal harassment by family members, whereas both lesbians and gay men experienced similar rates of physical abuse by family. Between 19% and 41% of LGBT individuals surveyed indicated having experienced verbal abuse by relatives. Approximately 4% to 7% reported physical abuse by family members (Berrill, 1990). In the same vein, Rivers et al. (2001) state that, “LGB youths are more frequently the survivors of childhood physical or sexual abuse than heterosexual youths” (p.202). Thus, as with out of home placement, the risk for involvement of LGBT youth in peer bullying and victimization may result from learning experiences in the home, from the identification of “being different” by peers, or from both.

Using the 2005 Dane County Youth Assessment, Birkett, Espelage, and Koenig (2009) investigated victimization of seventh and eighth grade LGB students and students questioning their sexuality. Significant differences were found with regard to homophobic teasing; students who were questioning their sexual orientation reported the most teasing, LGB students reported intermediate rates, and heterosexual students reported the least amount of homophobic teasing. Students who were questioning their sexual orientation also reported significantly more victimization on the general victimization scale than LGB or heterosexual students.

Espelage, Aragon, Birkett, and Koenig (2008) also used the 2005 Dane County Youth Assessment to investigate more general forms of victimization experienced by high school students. Students questioning their sexuality reported more homophobic teasing and general victimization than LGB or heterosexual youth. LGB youth reported significantly more homophobic teasing than heterosexual youth, but no more general victimization than heterosexual youth.

In summary, prevalence rates of youth self-identifying as LGBT have not yet been clearly established. This population is difficult to study because youth who do endorse LGBT sexual orientation at this age may or may not disclose it to their friends, family, or researchers. They are aware of the criticism or challenges that they may face, should they decide to disclose their sexual orientation. Research shows that the rates of victimization of LGBT youth are high, and that adults within the school system who are supposed to protect these youth do not always do so. Additionally, family members may be unsupportive or even abusive if the youth discloses their LGBT status. Peer bullying and victimization experienced by LGBT youth relative to youth who endorse normative gender identities and the manner in which the quality of parent, peer, and adult school relationships may mitigate or exacerbate bullying and victimization are examined in further detail in this research. Little is known about the rates of bullying by LGBT youth, partly because they are often portrayed as victims. However, given typical reciprocity in aggressive behavior, it may be that LGBT youth also engage in bullying, perhaps in part as a reaction to and as a means of self-protection from victimization by other peers.

## Multiple Stigmatizing Labels

Research has also focused on individuals who possess multiple stigmatizing labels, such as LGBT, racial minority, or even female gender, as each of these or other characteristics which are associated with stigmatization may increase individuals' chances of being victimized.

Research supports the idea that having just one of these labels or characteristics puts an individual at a higher risk for victimization. Therefore, having two or more of these labels or characteristics may heighten an individual's chances for being victimized even more. While the rates of victimization may be higher for individuals with multiple stigmatizing labels, it is unknown which label may contribute to the victimization, thus making it difficult for the victims to understand the source (Berrill, 1990; Pilkington et al., 1995). Berrill (1990) refers to this as a "double jeopardy" (p.282). This study focuses on individuals who experience OOH placement as well as LGBT status (OOH+LGBT), with the hypothesis that these two characteristics put the individuals at greater risk for victimization, and perhaps bullying, than either characteristic alone.

## Parents, Peers, and School

It is recognized that many different variables may influence youths' involvement in peer bullying and victimization, including the family environment, peer relationships, and the school environment. These variables may act as protective factors or risk factors for bullying or victimization. As described earlier, research has shown that coercive parenting styles or chaotic home situations are associated with increased bullying behavior by children. The social and instrumental support available in healthy peer relationships may protect a youth from being victimized or from engaging in bullying of other youth. The characteristics of peer affiliates may

also be important; deviant peers are known to promote rates of child aggression. The availability of adult support and monitoring at school may also act as a risk or protective factor for bullying or victimization.

Espelage et al. (2000) investigated bullying and victimization in a sample of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade children. They found that, after controlling for sex, children who were physically disciplined by parents or spent a great deal of time without parental supervision, and children who had deviant peer friends, were more likely to bully others. On the other hand, children who reported having a positive adult role model were less likely to bully others.

Ahmed and Braithwaite (2004) surveyed Australian children in grades four through seven, as well as their parents. They found that victims and bullies were significantly different from nonbully/nonvictims in their liking for school. Both victims and bullies had lower rates of school liking. This may be tied to the amount of adult support the youth experienced in the school setting, including relationships with teachers or other adults, as well as the amount and quality of peer friendships, as these play a significant part in school-liking for youth.

Other researchers have focused on how youth perceive relationships with their parents, friends, and with other adults, such as teachers. Nation, Vieno, Perkins, and Santinello (2008) investigated youths' sense of empowerment in parental, peer, and teacher relationships in a sample of Italian children ages 11, 13, and 15. They discovered a shift between ages 11 and 15 years, with the younger children's teachers having more of an influence on their behavior and the older children's parents having more of an influence on their behavior. For youth ages 13 and 15 who were bullied or victimized, parents were more likely to make decisions for them. Power relationships among friends were not found to be a significant predictor of bullying and

victimization in this study. It is unknown if these results would generalize to youth in the United States.

Holt and Espelage (2007) studied youth bullying and victimization in the United States using the University of Illinois Bully Scale and the University of Illinois Victimization Scale (Espelage & Holt, 2001), both of which were used in the present study. Nonbully/nonvictim youth and bullies reported significantly more peer social support than victims. Additionally, nonbully/nonvictim youth reported more maternal social support than victims. Bullies did not significantly differ from victims and nonbully/nonvictims with regard to maternal social support.

As previously described, Birkett et al. (2009) used the 2005 Dane County Youth Assessment to study victimization among middle school LGB students and students questioning their sexuality. In addition to the differences in levels of victimization, students who were questioning their sexual orientation reported significantly lower levels of positive school climate than LGB or heterosexual students. Espelage et al. (2008) also used the 2005 Dane County Youth Assessment to study victimization among high school LGB students and students questioning their sexuality. Although there were differences in levels of victimization, there were no significant differences in positive school climate. There were no significant group differences in the quality or amount of perceived communication with their parents, but students who were questioning their sexuality reported significantly less parental support than LGB or heterosexual students.

In summary, many variables may affect a child's bully or victim status, such as parenting, peer relationships, and support at school, such as relationships with teachers. Depending on the quality and availability of the support, these social relationships may serve as protective factors or risk factors for bullying and victimization. Very little is known about how these variables

impact bullying and victimization, and whether the degree of protection or risk is different for OOH youth, LGBT youth, and non-OOH/non-LGBT youth.

### Research Questions and Model

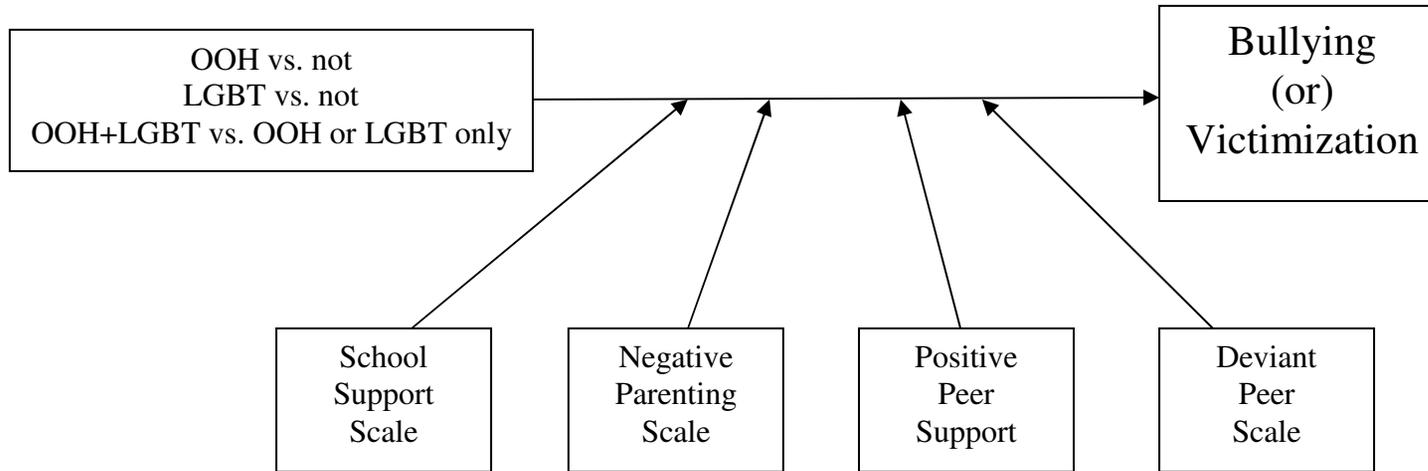
In this study, three hypotheses about rates of bullying and victimization were tested. First, it was hypothesized that OOH youth would report higher rates of bullying and victimization than non-OOH youth. Second, it was hypothesized that LGBT youth would report higher rates of victimization but similar rates of bullying as compared to non-LGBT youth. Third, it was hypothesized that youth who experience both OOH placement and LGBT identification would report higher rates of victimization and bullying than youth who experienced only OOH placement or who only endorse LGBT status.

As a second goal, this research examined how support from adults at school, negative parenting, positive peer support, and deviant peer involvement affected risk for peer bullying and victimization. It was hypothesized that the quality of these social relationships would mitigate or exacerbate rates of youth bullying or victimization. See Figure 1 for the model used in this study. More specifically, positive factors, such as high amounts of support from adults in the school environment, healthy parenting, having positive peer support, and affiliation with nondeviant peers would protect a youth from bullying others and from being victimized by others. Inversely, it was hypothesized that negative factors, such as low support from adults at school, abusive parenting, the lack of positive peer support, and association with deviant peers would put a youth at greater risk for bullying others and for being victimized. This social relationship model was tested and compared for OOH youth, LGBT youth, and youth endorsing both OOH placement and LGBT status (OOH+LGBT). Given the absence of previous research

and theory about how social relationships may differentially affect the rates of bullying and victimization of LGBT and OOH youth, no specific hypotheses about group differences were asserted.

Figure 1

*Research Model*



## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Participants

Data used in this study were collected in the 2009 Dane County Youth Assessment from Dane County, Wisconsin. The participants in this study were students in Dane County schools during the 2008-2009 school year. Fourteen of the 16 school districts in Dane County agreed to participate in the study and all of these schools attempted to survey every student in grades 7 through 12. Response rates varied between 85% and 92%. Some schools attempted to reach students who were unresponsive, such as students with truancy issues, but there was no uniform method for this across schools. District survey results were aggregated to create the data set. The resulting sample size was 24,394 youth and the sample was representative of Dane County youth with regard to age, gender, and race.

Data used for this research only included youth in ninth through twelfth grade. The resulting sample size was 16,766 with 8581 (51%) males and 8185 (49%) females. Of the total sample, 25% were in ninth grade, 25% in tenth grade, 24% in eleventh grade, and 26% in twelfth grade. Approximately 15% of youth in the sample were 14 years old, 26% were 15 years old, 23% were 16 years old, 25% were 17 years old, and 11% were 18 years or older. The socioeconomic status of the sample was unknown; however, 26% of the youth completing the survey reported participating in the school's free or reduced fee lunch program. Approximately 4% of the youth were unsure if they participated in the free or reduced lunch program and the remaining 70% stated that they did not. With regard to ethnicity, 68% were Caucasian, 13% were African American, 7% were Hispanic, 4% were Biracial, 3% were Southeast Asian, 3% were Asian American (not Southeast Asian), 1% were Native American, and 1% endorsed an

ethnicity of “Other.” Nine percent of youth ( $n = 1539$ ) in the sample endorsed nontraditional sexual orientation (i.e., gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual, questioning) and 3% ( $n = 560$ ) of the sample indicated they had been in out-of-home placement (i.e., foster care, group home).

## Procedures

Youth in regular and alternative middle and high schools in Dane County, Wisconsin were eligible for survey administration. Fourteen of the sixteen school districts in Dane County agreed to participate in the study and all students in 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in those schools were invited to complete the survey. Self-report data were obtained using electronic questionnaires. Participation was voluntary and information remained anonymous. Data were collected from November 2008 through February 2009.

## Measures

Questionnaires consisted of 117 questions about a variety of topics including demographic information, home life, school life, community life, risky behaviors, and emotional health. Responses to questions used in this research were selected to measure sexual orientation and current or past out of home living situations, relationships with parents, peers, and adults at school, and bullying and victimization in school. The bullying and victimization questions used in the 2009 Dane County Youth Assessment were derived from the University of Illinois Bully and Victimization Scales, developed by Dorothy Espelage. Table 1 lists the questions used from the survey to determine LGBT and OOH status, as well as possible responses to those questions by participants.

TABLE 1

QUESTIONS AND POSSIBLE RESPONSES FOR LGBT AND OOH STATUS

QUESTION	POSSIBLE RESPONSES	CATEGORY
Do you identify yourself as any of the following? (Check all that apply)	Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Questioning my sexual orientation, None of the above	LGBT if endorsed any besides “None of the above”
In your lifetime, have you ever... (Check all options that apply to you)	Lived in foster care, Lived in a group home or residential facility	OOH status if endorsed

Table 2 lists the questions from the survey used to assess victimization and possible responses by participants. Twelve month victimization was investigated separately from 30 day victimization, as it was believed that the time period queried and the specific type of victimization in the 12 month questions were significantly different in content and period of recall from those asked in 30 day questions.

Descriptive statistics and item analysis were conducted on responses to all 30 day victimization questions to determine if these responses could be combined to form a 30 day victimization scale for all youth in the sample. Results indicated a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.87 and a range of inter-item correlations from 0.46 to 0.77. It was determined that a 30 day victimization scale could be calculated for each youth by averaging their responses on all 30 day victimization questions. A square root transformation was used on the 30 day victimization scale to reduce skewness.

TABLE 2

QUESTIONS AND POSSIBLE RESPONSES FOR VICTIMIZATION

QUESTION	POSSIBLE RESPONSES	CATEGORY
In the PAST 12 MONTHS, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed about being perceived as gay, lesbian, or bisexual?	Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Very often	12 Month Victimization
In the PAST 12 MONTHS, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed through the internet or text messaging?	Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Very often	12 Month Victimization
In the PAST 12 MONTHS, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed about how you look?	Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, Very often	12 Month Victimization
In the LAST 30 DAYS, I got hit and pushed by other students.	Never, 1 or 2 times, 3 or 4 times, 5 or 6 times, 7 or more times	30 Day Victimization Scale
In the LAST 30 DAYS, other students made fun of me.	Never, 1 or 2 times, 3 or 4 times, 5 or 6 times, 7 or more times	30 Day Victimization Scale
In the LAST 30 DAYS, other students picked on me.	Never, 1 or 2 times, 3 or 4 times, 5 or 6 times, 7 or more times	30 Day Victimization Scale
In the LAST 30 DAYS, other students called me names.	Never, 1 or 2 times, 3 or 4 times, 5 or 6 times, 7 or more times	30 Day Victimization Scale

Table 3 lists the questions from the survey used to assess bullying and possible responses to those questions by participants. Descriptive statistics and item analysis were conducted on responses to all 30 day bullying questions to determine if these responses could be combined to form a 30 day bullying scale for all youth in the sample. Results indicated a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.91 and a range of inter-item correlations from 0.43 to 0.79. It was determined that a 30 day bullying scale could be calculated for each youth by averaging their responses on all 30 day bullying questions. A square root transformation was used on the 30 day bullying scale to reduce skewness.

TABLE 3

QUESTIONS AND POSSIBLE RESPONSES FOR BULLYING

QUESTION	POSSIBLE RESPONSES	CATEGORY
In the LAST 30 DAYS, I helped harass other students.	Never, 1 or 2 times, 3 or 4 times, 5 or 6 times, 7 or more times	30 Day Bullying Scale
In the LAST 30 DAYS, I teased other students to hurt their feelings.	Never, 1 or 2 times, 3 or 4 times, 5 or 6 times, 7 or more times	30 Day Bullying Scale
In the LAST 30 DAYS, I encouraged people to fight.	Never, 1 or 2 times, 3 or 4 times, 5 or 6 times, 7 or more times	30 Day Bullying Scale
In the LAST 30 DAYS, I upset other students for the fun of it.	Never, 1 or 2 times, 3 or 4 times, 5 or 6 times, 7 or more times	30 Day Bullying Scale
In the LAST 30 DAYS, I spread rumors about other people.	Never, 1 or 2 times, 3 or 4 times, 5 or 6 times, 7 or more times	30 Day Bullying Scale
In the LAST 30 DAYS, I started arguments or conflicts.	Never, 1 or 2 times, 3 or 4 times, 5 or 6 times, 7 or more times	30 Day Bullying Scale
In the LAST 30 DAYS, I excluded other students from my group of friends.	Never, 1 or 2 times, 3 or 4 times, 5 or 6 times, 7 or more times	30 Day Bullying Scale
In the LAST 30 DAYS, in a group I made fun of other students.	Never, 1 or 2 times, 3 or 4 times, 5 or 6 times, 7 or more times	30 Day Bullying Scale

Table 4 lists the questions from the survey used to measure the adult social support perceived by youth to be available at school and possible responses to those questions. Items were reverse scored so that more school support would be indicated by a higher number, with 0 being strongly disagree and 3 being strongly agree. Descriptive statistics and item analysis were conducted on responses to the three school support questions to determine if these responses could be combined to form an adult school support scale for all youth in the sample. Results indicated a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.78 and inter-item correlations ranging from 0.53 to 0.56. It was determined that a school support scale could be calculated for each youth by averaging their responses on the three school support questions.

TABLE 4  
 QUESTIONS AND POSSIBLE RESPONSES FOR SCHOOL SUPPORT

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>POSSIBLE RESPONSES</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>
Teachers and other adults treat me fairly.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	School Support Scale (reverse scored)
There are adults I can talk to at school if I have a problem.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	School Support Scale (reverse scored)
I feel like I belong at this school.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	School Support Scale (reverse scored)

Table 5 describes the question used from the survey used to assess positive peer support, as well as possible responses by participants. The one positive peer support item was reverse scored so that a higher number would indicate greater positive peer support, with 0 being strongly disagree and 3 being strongly agree. It was determined that this question would stand alone for positive peer support, as no other question in the data set was related to the availability of peer support.

TABLE 5  
 QUESTION AND POSSIBLE RESPONSES FOR PEER SUPPORT

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>POSSIBLE RESPONSES</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>
I have at least one good friend I can trust.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	Positive Peer Support (reverse scored)

Table 6 lists the questions used from the survey used to assess association with deviant peers and possible responses to those questions. Deviant peer items were reverse scored as needed and z-scored for equal weighting such that a higher number would represent more association with deviant peers. Due to z-scoring, means cannot be interpreted literally. As a reference, analysis of the last two questions in the table was conducted. It indicated that, for the entire sample, the mean was 1.15, with 0 being strongly agree and 3 being strongly disagree.

Descriptive statistics and item analysis were conducted on responses to the deviant peer questions to determine if these questions could be combined to form a deviant peer scale for all youth in the sample. Results indicated a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.79 and inter-item correlations ranging from 0.27 to 0.69. It was determined that a deviant peer scale could be calculated for each youth by averaging their responses on the five deviant peer questions.

TABLE 6  
QUESTIONS AND POSSIBLE RESPONSES FOR DEVIANT PEER ASSOCIATION

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>POSSIBLE RESPONSES</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>
How often have you been at someone's home where teens were drinking alcohol and the PARENTS KNEW they were drinking?	Very often, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never	Deviant Peer Scale (reverse scored)
How often have you been at someone's home when the parents KNOWINGLY provided the alcohol?	Very often, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never	Deviant Peer Scale (reverse scored)
I most frequently get alcohol from my friends.	Yes, No	Deviant Peer Scale
I most frequently get alcohol when someone older buys it for me.	Yes, No	Deviant Peer Scale
Most of my friends DO NOT drink or do drugs.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	Deviant Peer Scale
Most of my friends DO NOT smoke cigarettes or chew tobacco.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	Deviant Peer Scale

Table 7 lists the questions used from the survey used to measure the quality of parenting, as well as possible responses by participants. The first six items, which reflect skillful parenting, were reverse scored. Descriptive statistics and item analysis were conducted to determine if responses to these questions could be combined to form a skillful parenting scale for all youth in the sample. Results indicated a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.84 and inter-item correlations ranging from 0.35 to 0.70. It was determined that a skillful parenting scale could be calculated for each youth by averaging their responses on these items.

Questions hypothesized to measure abusive parenting were reverse scored. Descriptive statistics and item analysis were used to determine if these items could be combined to form an abusive parenting scale for all youth in the sample. Results indicated a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.69 and inter-item correlations ranging from 0.39 to 0.52. It was determined that an abusive parenting scale could be calculated for each youth by averaging their responses on these questions.

Descriptive statistics and item analysis were applied to questions that seemed to measure poor parental modeling, after reverse and z-scoring, to determine if these responses could be combined to form a negative parent modeling scale for all youth in the sample. Results indicated a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.74 and inter-item correlations ranging from 0.27 to 0.59. It was determined that a negative parent modeling scale could be calculated for each youth by averaging their responses on these items.

After each of the three parenting scales were formed, their inter-correlations were examined. All three scales were highly correlated with one another. The skillfull parenting scale was again reverse scored so that higher numbers would indicate unskillful parenting, thus allowing all three scales to be scored in the same direction. A forced ( $n=1$ ) factor analysis was applied to the three parenting scales to assess their convergence. The skillful parenting scale (reverse scored) loaded .53, the abusive parenting scale loaded .74, and the negative parent modeling scale loaded .73. The skillful parenting scale (reverse scored), the abusive parenting scale, and the negative parent modeling scale were combined using a regression factor score into one composite negative parenting scale. Due to z-scoring, means of this negative parenting scale cannot be interpreted literally. As a reference, analysis of the last three questions in the table

was conducted. It indicated that, for the entire sample, the mean was 1.52, with 1 being strongly disagree and 4 being strongly agree.

TABLE 7

QUESTIONS AND POSSIBLE RESPONSES FOR PARENTING

<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>POSSIBLE RESPONSES</b>	<b>CATEGORY</b>
My parents usually know where I am when I go out.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	Skillful Parenting Scale (reverse scored)
My parents set clear rules about what I can and cannot do.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	Skillful Parenting Scale (reverse scored)
My parents have talked with me about my future plans.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	Skillful Parenting Scale (reverse scored)
My parents have consequences if I break rules.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	Skillful Parenting Scale (reverse scored)
My parents encourage me to do my best.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	Skillful Parenting Scale (reverse scored)
My parents love and support me.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	Skillful Parenting Scale (reverse scored)
Sometimes things feel so bad at home that I want to run away.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	Abusive Parenting Scale (reverse scored)
My parents and I physically fight.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	Abusive Parenting Scale (reverse scored)
When was the last time a parent kicked you or hit you with their hand/fist or with an object leaving bruises or bumps?	Past 30 days, Not in the last 30 days but in the last 12 months, More than 12 months ago, Never	Abusive Parenting Scale (reverse scored)
Have one or both of your parents/guardians ever been in prison or jail?	Yes, No, Don't know	Negative Parent Modeling Scale (reverse scored)
My parent gets drunk at least once a week.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	Negative Parent Modeling Scale (reverse scored)
My parent uses illegal drugs at least once a week.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	Negative Parent Modeling Scale (reverse scored)
My parents physically fight with each other.	Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly disagree	Negative Parent Modeling Scale (reverse scored)

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

#### Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics indicated that 465 youth (3%) endorsed spending some time in foster care and 282 (2%) reported spending some time in out of home residential care. In the 16,766 total sample, 560 youth (3%) endorsed spending time in either foster care, residential care, or both. These 560 youth comprised the OOH group used in this study. The OOH group used in this study may include LGBT youth if these youth also endorsed spending time in out of home placement.

Of the 16,766 total sample, 1539 youth (9%) endorsed a sexual orientation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning their sexual orientation, or a combination of these. These youth comprised the LGBT group used in this study. The LGBT group used in this study may include OOH youth if these youth also endorsed a nontraditional sexual orientation. In the 16,766 total sample, 113 youth (1%) endorsed both spending time in out of home placement and being LGBT. These youth comprised the OOH+LGBT group for this study.

Information on victimization and bullying is provided below. The mean for all youth on the adult school support scale was 3.13 (with 4 being the highest possible score), with a standard deviation of .67. The mean for all youth on the negative parenting scale was 0 and the standard deviation was 1 as a result of using a regression factor score to combine the original z-scored parenting scales into one composite negative parenting scale. The mean for all youth on the positive peer support question was 3.61 (with 4 being strongly agree and 3 being agree) and the standard deviation was .68. After averaging z scores, the mean for all youth on the deviant peer scale was .01 and the standard deviation was .72.

## Twelve Month Victimization for OOH Youth

For the question “In the past 12 months, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed through the internet or text messaging?”, 784 youth (5%) of the entire sample answered sometimes, 185 youth (1%) answered often, and 313 youth (2%) answered very often. Table 5 summarizes the means, standard deviations, and t-tests comparing OOH youth to non-OOH youth. An independent samples t-test, with equal variances not assumed, indicated a significant difference  $t(476) = 4.36, p < .001$ , with OOH youth reporting being victimized more frequently through the internet or text messaging.

For the question “In the past 12 months, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed about being perceived as gay, lesbian, or bisexual?”, 555 youth (3%) of the entire sample answered sometimes, 204 youth (1%) answered often, and 272 youth (2%) answered very often. An independent samples t-test, with equal variances not assumed, comparing youth in out of home placement to youth not having spent any time in out of home placement indicated a significant difference  $t(480) = 6.42, p < .001$ ; OOH youth reported being victimized more frequently for being perceived as gay, lesbian, or bisexual than non-OOH youth.

For the question “In the past 12 months, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed about how you look?”, 1459 youth (8%) of the entire sample answered sometimes, 421 youth (2%) answered often, and 467 youth (3%) answered very often. An independent samples t-test, with equal variances not assumed, comparing youth in out of home placement to youth not having spent any time in out of home placement indicated a significant difference  $t(479) = 6.22, p < .001$ ; OOH youth reported being victimized for their looks more often than non-OOH youth.

Table 5

*Descriptive Statistics and T-Tests for OOH Youth Versus Non-OOH Youth*

	<u>OOH Youth</u>		<u>Non-OOH Youth</u>		<i>t</i> *	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
In the past 12 months, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed through the internet or text messaging?	0.54	0.91	0.35	0.80	4.36	<.001
In the past 12 months, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed about being perceived as gay, lesbian, or bisexual?	0.57	1.06	0.25	0.73	6.42	<.001
In the past 12 months, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed about how you look?	0.95	1.25	0.58	0.98	6.22	<.001

\*Note: Equal variances not assumed for t-tests

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics and T-Tests for LGBT Youth Versus Non-LGBT Youth*

	<u>LGBT Youth</u>		<u>Non-LGBT Youth</u>		<i>t</i> *	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
In the past 12 months, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed through the internet or text messaging?	0.61	0.95	0.34	0.79	9.29	<.001
In the past 12 months, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed about being perceived as gay, lesbian, or bisexual?	0.79	1.16	0.22	0.68	16.60	<.001
In the past 12 months, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed about how you look?	0.96	1.16	0.56	0.97	11.28	<.001

\*Note: Equal variances not assumed for t-tests

Table 7

*Descriptive Statistics and T-Tests for OOH+LGBT Youth Versus OOH only or LGBT only Youth*

	<u>LGBT &amp; OOH Youth</u>		<u>LGBT or OOH Youth</u>		<i>t</i> *	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
In the past 12 months, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed through the internet or text messaging?	0.86	1.02	0.56	0.93	2.56	.01
In the past 12 months, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed about being perceived as gay, lesbian, or bisexual?	1.29	1.35	0.67	1.09	4.12	<.001
In the past 12 months, how often have you been bullied, threatened, or harassed about how you look?	1.04	1.35	0.95	1.17	0.60	0.55

\*Note: Equal variances not assumed for t-tests

## Twelve Month Victimization for LGBT Youth

Table 6 summarizes the means, standard deviations, and t-tests comparing the 12 month victimization rates reported by LGBT youth to non-LGBT youth. An independent samples t-test, with equal variances not assumed, indicated a significant difference  $t(1265) = 9.28, p < .001$ , with LGBT youth reporting more victimization through the internet and text messaging. An independent samples t-test, with equal variances not assumed, comparing LGBT youth to non-LGBT youth indicated a significant difference  $t(1201) = 16.60, p < .001$ , with LGBT youth reporting more victimization for being perceived as being gay, lesbian, or bisexual than non-LGBT youth. Additionally, an independent samples t-test, with equal variances not assumed, comparing LGBT youth to non-LGBT youth indicated a significant difference  $t(1268) = 11.28, p < .001$ , with LGBT youth reporting more victimization for how they look than non-LGBT youth.

## Twelve Month Victimization for OOH+LGBT Youth

Table 7 summarizes the means, standard deviations, and t-tests comparing the 12 month victimization rates by OOH+LGBT youth to rates reported by youth who endorsed either OOH placement or LGBT status. An independent samples t-test, with equal variances not assumed, indicated a significant difference  $t(88) = 2.56, p = .01$ , with OOH+LGBT youth reporting more frequent victimization through the internet and text messaging than youth who just endorsed OOH placement or LGBT sexual orientation. An independent samples t-test, with equal variances not assumed, comparing OOH+LGBT to OOH only or LGBT only youth indicated a significant difference  $t(87) = 4.12, p < .001$ , with OOH+LGBT youth reporting more frequent victimization for being perceived as gay, lesbian, or bisexual than youth who endorsed either OOH placement or LGBT status. Lastly, an independent samples t-test, with equal variances not

assumed, comparing OOH+LGBT youth to OOH only or LGBT only youth was not significant  $t(87) = 0.60, p = .55$ , meaning that youth with both characteristics reported no more victimization for how they look than youth with just one of these characteristics.

### Thirty Day Victimization Rates

The 30 day victimization scale was comprised of four items. Mean item frequencies of responses for the 30 day victimization scale can be seen in Table 8. Twice as many OOH and LGBT youth reported being victimized more than five times monthly compared to reports of non-OOH/non-LGBT youth. These rates of victimization were even greater for OOH+ LGBT youth. Means and standard deviations for all groups on the 30 day victimization scale can be seen in Table 9. Reported rates of 30 day victimization varied from 0 (never) to 2 (3 or 4 times).

TABLE 8  
FREQUENCY REPORTS OF 30 DAY VICTIMIZATION

<b>Frequency of victimization</b>	<b>Non-OOH/ Non-LGBT (n=14,521)</b>	<b>OOH (n=433)</b>	<b>LGBT (n=1,086)</b>	<b>OOH+LGBT (n=83)</b>
< one time in last 30 days	84%	74%	76%	52%
1-2 times in last 30 days	11%	19%	17%	30%
3-4 times in last 30 days	3%	3%	3%	5%
5-6 times in last 30 days	1%	2%	2%	6%
7+ times in last 30 days	1%	2%	2%	7%

TABLE 9  
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF 30 DAY VICTIMIZATION

	<b>OOH</b>	<b>Non-OOH</b>	<b>LGBT</b>	<b>Non-LGBT</b>	<b>OOH+LGBT</b>	<b>OOH only/ LGBT only</b>
<b>Mean</b>	.61	.38	.56	.37	1.04	.51
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	.90	.68	.81	.67	1.23	.76

Independent samples t-tests were used to compare the mean 30 day victimization rates reported by youth from different subsamples. When comparing OOH youth to non-OOH youth and assuming unequal variances, results indicated a significant difference,  $t(448) = 5.12, p < .001$ , with OOH youth endorsing more victimization. When comparing LGBT youth to non-LGBT youth and assuming unequal variances, results also showed a significant difference,  $t(1207) = 7.25, p < .001$ , with LGBT youth endorsing more victimization. When comparing OOH+LGBT youth to youth with just one of these characteristics, there was again a significant difference,  $t(85) = 3.84, p < .001$ , with OOH+LGBT youth endorsing more victimization than youth with just one of these characteristics.

### Thirty Day Bullying Rates

The 30 day bullying scale was comprised of eight items. Mean item frequencies of responses on the 30 day bullying scale can be seen in Table 10. The largest difference between groups was for rates of bullying greater than seven times per month. LGBT youth reported engaging in twice as much of this high rate bullying as non-OOH/non-LGBT. OOH youth reported engaging in four times as much of this high rate bullying as non-OOH/non-LGBT youth. OOH+LGBT youth reported engaging in eleven times as much of this high rate bullying as non-OOH/non-LGBT youth. Means and standard deviations for all groups on the 30 day bullying scale can be seen in Table 11. Reported rates of 30 day bullying varied from 0 (never) to 2 (3 or 4 times).

TABLE 10

## FREQUENCY REPORTS OF 30 DAY BULLYING

<b>Frequency of bullying</b>	<b>Non-OOH/ Non-LGBT (n=14,210)</b>	<b>OOH (n=409)</b>	<b>LGBT (n=1,063)</b>	<b>OOH+LGBT (n=78)</b>
< one time in last 30 days	92%	85%	90%	74%
1-2 times in last 30 days	6%	6%	6%	14%
3-4 times in last 30 days	1%	3%	1%	0%
5-6 times in last 30 days	<1%	2%	1%	1%
7+ times in last 30 days	1%	4%	2%	11%

TABLE 11

## MEANS AND STANDARD DEVAIATIONS OF 30 DAY BULLYING

	<b>OOH</b>	<b>Non-OOH</b>	<b>LGBT</b>	<b>Non-LGBT</b>	<b>OOH+LGBT</b>	<b>OOH only/ LGBT only</b>
<b>Mean</b>	.49	.28	.36	.28	.74	.35
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	.96	.55	.70	.55	1.30	.69

Independent samples t-tests were used to compare the rates at which youth from different subsamples reported bullying others. When comparing OOH youth to non-OOH youth and assuming unequal variances, results indicated a significant difference,  $t(416) = 4.53, p < .001$ , with OOH youth reporting to engage in more bullying. When comparing LGBT youth to non-LGBT youth and assuming unequal variances, results also showed a significant difference,  $t(1173) = 3.64, p < .001$ , with LGBT youth reporting to engage in more bullying. When comparing OOH+LGBT youth to youth with just one of these characteristics, there was again a significant difference,  $t(78) = 2.59, p = .01$ , with OOH+LGBT youth reporting to engage in more bullying than youth with just one of these characteristics.

## Relationship Between Victimization and Bullying

Correlation coefficients were computed to test the relationship between the 30 day victimization scale and the 30 day bullying scale for all youth, OOH youth, LGBT youth, and OOH+LGBT youth. Significant correlations were found for all youth ( $n = 14523$ ),  $r = .62$  with  $p < .001$ . This was also true for OOH youth ( $n = 433$ ),  $r = .64$  with  $p < .001$ , LGBT youth ( $n = 1086$ ),  $r = .58$  with  $p < .001$ , and for OOH+LGBT youth ( $n = 82$ ),  $r = .70$  with  $p < .001$ . As demonstrated by the correlations, there was relatively the same amount of overlap between victimization and bullying for all four groups.

## Models of Risk and Protective Factors for Victimization and Bullying

### OOH Youth

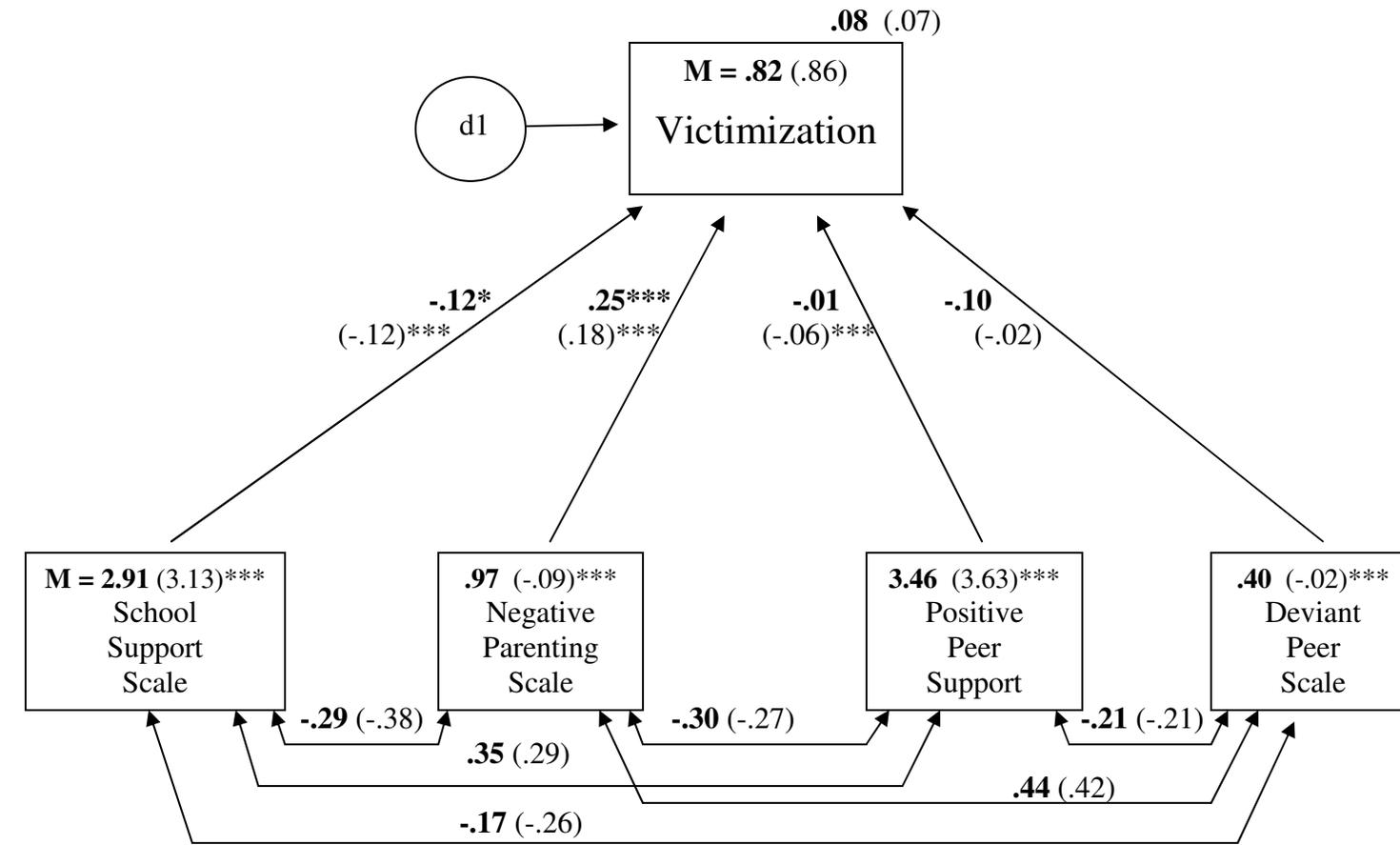
Structural equation modeling was used to assess the association of social relationship quality with victimization, comparing OOH youth and non-OOH youth. There was good model fit,  $\chi^2(1) = 2.98$ ;  $p = .08$ ; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .01. Figure 2 depicts this model, with parameters for OOH shown in bold and for non-OOH shown in parentheses. School support from adults was negatively related to victimization for both OOH youth ( $b = -.12$ ,  $p = .05$ ) and non-OOH youth ( $b = -.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Negative parenting was significantly related to victimization for both OOH youth ( $b = .25$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and non-OOH ( $b = .18$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Positive peer support was negatively related to victimization only for non-OOH youth ( $b = -.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ) while deviant peer friendship was not a significant predictor of victimization for either group. None of the parameters for association with social support and victimization were significantly different by group. The variables in the model accounted for 8% of the variance for OOH youth and only 7% of the variance for non-OOH youth. There were significant between group

differences ( $p < .001$ ) for means on the adult school support scale (OOH  $M = 2.91$ , non-OOH  $M = 3.13$ ), negative parenting scale (OOH  $M = .97$ , non-OOH  $M = -.09$ ), positive peer support (OOH  $M = 3.46$ , non-OOH  $M = 3.63$ ), and the deviant peer scale (OOH  $M = .40$ , non-OOH  $M = -.02$ ), with OOH youth reporting less support from adults at school, more negative parenting, less positive peer support, and more deviant peer friendships. These mean level group differences were also apparent in the model for bullying.

Figure 3 depicts the model assessing the association of social support with 30 day rates of bullying, comparing reports by OOH youth to reports by non-OOH youth. There was good model fit,  $\chi^2(1) = 3.09$ ;  $p = .08$ ; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .01. OOH parameter estimates are shown in bold and non-OOH are shown in parentheses. Adult support at school was a significant negative predictor of bullying for non-OOH youth ( $b = -.09$ ,  $p < .001$ ) but was not significantly related to bullying for OOH youth. Negative parenting was a significant predictor of self-reported bullying for both OOH youth ( $b = .27$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and non-OOH youth ( $b = .20$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Positive peer support was not a significant predictor for either group. Deviant peer affiliation was a significant predictor of self-reported bullying for both OOH youth ( $b = .19$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and non-OOH youth ( $b = .19$ ,  $p < .001$ ). None of the parameters for association with social support and victimization were significantly different by group. The variables in the model accounted for 20% of the variance for OOH youth and only 14% of the variance for non-OOH youth. The mean level group differences in all measures of social support were the same as in the model for victimization.

Figure 2

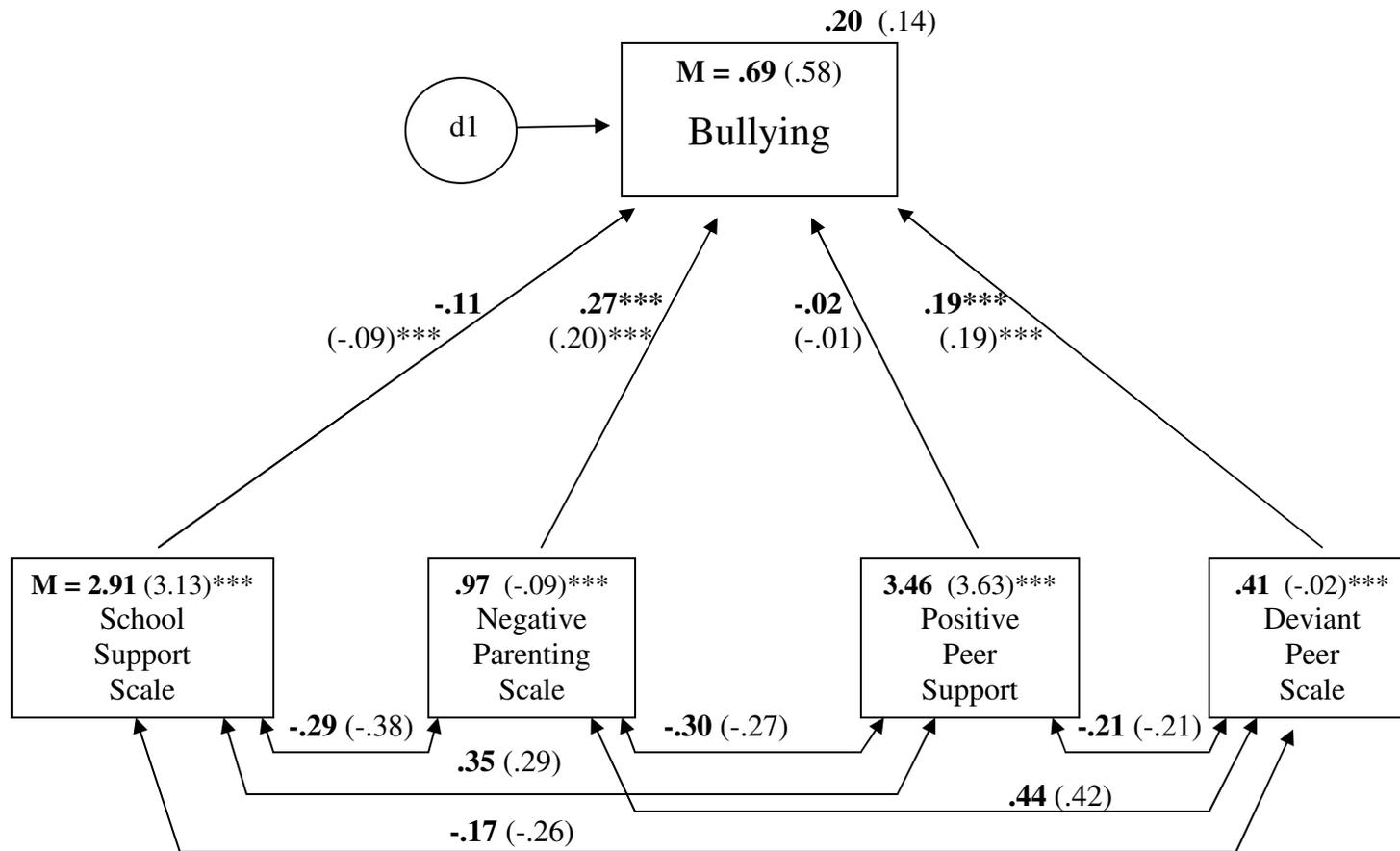
SEM for OOH versus non-OOH youth for Victimization



\*  $p \leq .05$   
 \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Figure 3

SEM for OOH versus non-OOH youth for Bullying



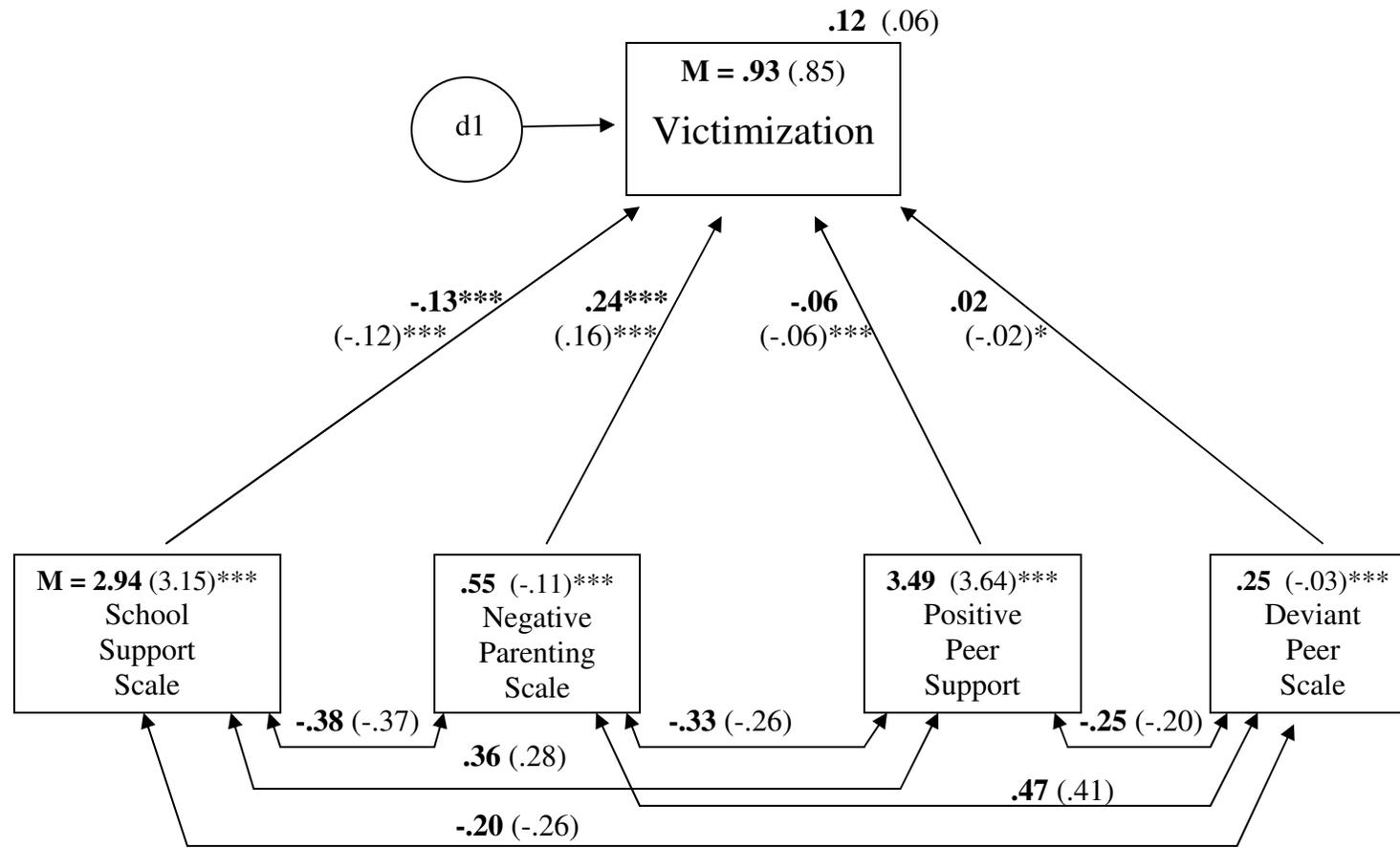
\*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

## LGBT Youth

Structural equation modeling was used to assess the association of social relationship quality with victimization, comparing rates reported by LGBT youth and rates reported by non-LGBT youth. There was good model fit,  $\chi^2(1) = 2.02$ ;  $p = .16$ ; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .01. Figure 4 depicts this model, with parameter estimates for LGBT shown in bold and for non-LGBT shown in parentheses. Adult support at school was a negative predictor of victimization for both LGBT youth ( $b = -.13$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and non-LGBT youth ( $b = -.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Negative parenting was a positive predictor of victimization for both LGBT youth ( $b = .24$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and non-LGBT youth ( $b = .16$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Positive peer support was a negative predictor of victimization, but only for non-LGBT youth ( $b = -.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ), as was deviant peer affiliation ( $b = -.02$ ,  $p = .03$ ). LGBT youths' report of deviant peer affiliation was associated with increased risk for victimization ( $b = .02$ ) while non-LGBT youth reported deviant peer affiliation as protecting them from victimization ( $b = -.02$ ) although this was not a significant difference. None of the parameters for association with social support and victimization were significantly different by group. The variables in the model accounted for 12% of the variance for LGBT youth and only 6% of the variance for non-LGBT youth. There were significant between group differences ( $p < .001$ ) for means on the school support scale (LGBT  $M = 2.94$ , non-LGBT  $M = 3.15$ ), negative parenting scale (LGBT  $M = .55$ , non-LGBT  $M = -.11$ ), positive peer support (LGBT  $M = 3.49$ , non-LGBT  $M = 3.64$ ), and the deviant peer scale (LGBT  $M = .25$ , non-LGBT  $M = -.03$ ), with LGBT youth reporting less adult support at school, more negative parenting, less positive peer support, and more deviant peer affiliation. These mean level group differences were also apparent in the model for bullying.

Figure 4

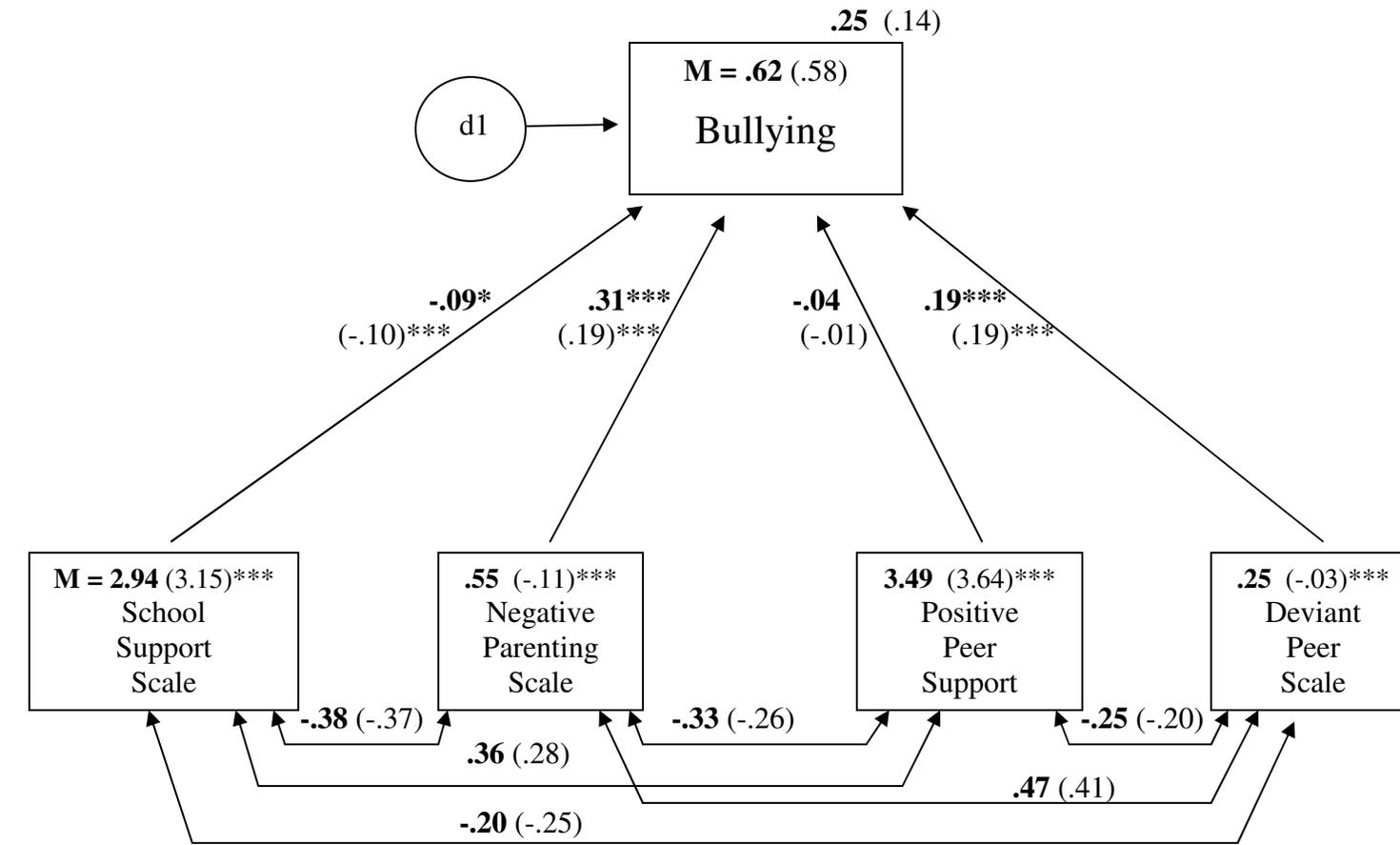
SEM for LGBT versus non-LGBT youth for Victimization



\*  $p \leq .05$   
 \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Figure 5

SEM for LGBT versus non-LGBT youth for Bullying



\*  $p \leq .05$   
 \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Figure 5 depicts the model assessing the relationship of various types of social supports to rates of bullying, comparing self-reports by LGBT youth and non-LGBT youth. There was good model fit,  $\chi^2(1) = 2.15$ ;  $p = .14$ ; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .01. Parameter estimates for LGBT are shown in bold and non-LGBT are shown in parentheses. Adult support at school was a significant negative predictor of bullying for LGBT youth ( $b = -.09$ ,  $p = .01$ ) and non-LGBT youth ( $b = -.10$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Negative parenting was a significant positive predictor of self-reported bullying for both LGBT youth ( $b = .31$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and non-LGBT youth ( $b = .19$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Positive peer support was not a significant predictor for either group. Deviant peer affiliation was a significant predictor of bullying for both LGBT youth ( $b = .19$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and non-LGBT youth ( $b = .19$ ,  $p < .001$ ). None of the parameters for association with social support and victimization were significantly different by group. The variables in the model accounted for 25% of the variance for LGBT youth and only 14% of the variance for non-LGBT youth. The mean level group differences in all measures of social support were the same as in the model for victimization.

#### OOH+LGBT Youth

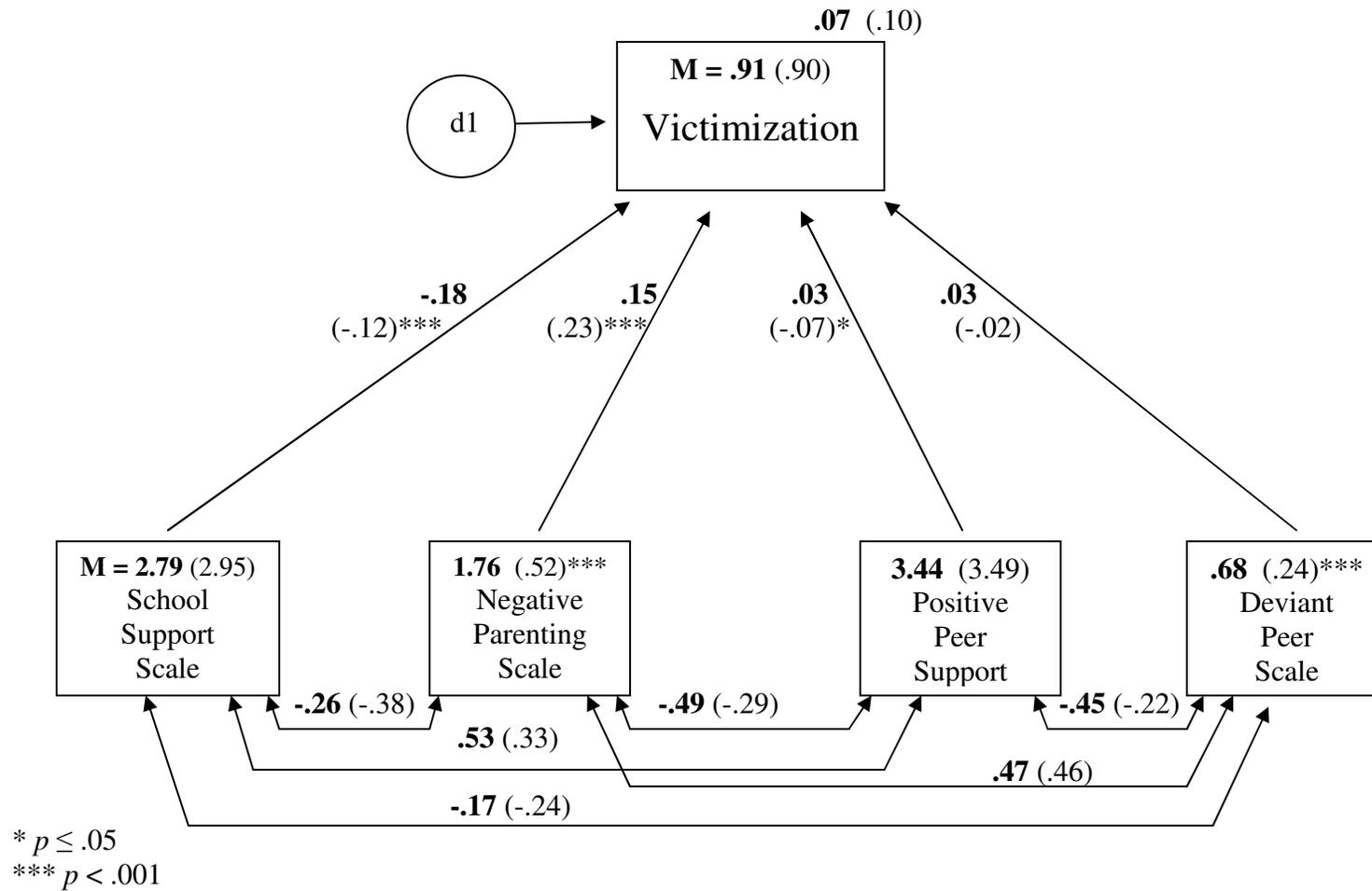
Last, structural equation modeling was used to assess the association of various facets of social relationship quality with victimization, comparing OOH+LGBT youth with youth endorsing only OOH status or LGBT orientation. There was good model fit,  $\chi^2(1) = 1.40$ ;  $p = .24$ ; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .02. Figure 6 depicts this model, with parameter estimates for OOH+LGBT youth shown in bold and for OOH only or LGBT only youth shown in parentheses. Adult support at school was a significant negative predictor of self-reported victimization for OOH only/LGBT only youth ( $b = -.12$ ,  $p < .001$ ) but not for OOH+LGBT youth. Negative

parenting was a positive predictor of victimization for OOH only/LGBT only youth ( $b = .23, p < .001$ ) but not for OOH+LGBT youth. Positive peer support was a negative predictor of victimization for OOH only/LGBT only youth ( $b = -.07, p = .04$ ) but not for OOH+LGBT youth. For OOH+LGBT youth, positive peer support was associated with increased risk for victimization ( $b = .03$ ), while for OOH only/LGBT only youth positive peer support was associated with decreased risk for victimization ( $b = -.02$ ), although this difference was not significantly significant. Deviant peer friendship was not a significant predictor of victimization for either group. Given the small sample size in the OOH+LGBT group, power to detect reliable paths for this group was low. Variables in the model accounted for 7% of the variance for OOH+LGBT youth and 10% of the variance for OOH only/LGBT only youth. There were significant between group differences ( $p < .001$ ) between means on the negative parenting scale (OOH+LGBT  $M = 1.76$ , OOH only/LGBT only  $M = .52$ ) and the deviant peer scale (OOH+LGBT  $M = .68$ , OOH only/LGBT only  $M = .24$ ), with OOH+LGBT youth reporting more negative parenting and more deviant peer affiliation. These mean level group differences were also apparent in the model for bullying.

Figure 7 depicts the model for bullying assessing the association of various facets of social support with bullying, comparing self-reports for OOH+LGBT youth with youth endorsing only OOH status or LGBT orientation. There was good model fit,  $\chi^2(1) = 1.45; p = .23$ ; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .02. Parameter estimates for OOH+LGBT youth are shown in bold and OOH only or LGBT only youth are shown in parentheses. Adult support at school was a negative predictor for self-reported bullying for OOH only/LGBT only youth ( $b = -.10, p < .001$ ) but not for OOH+LGBT youth. Negative parenting was a significant positive predictor of bullying for OOH+LGBT youth ( $b = .35, p = .01$ ) and for OOH only/LGBT only

Figure 6

SEM for OOH+LGBT versus OOH only or LGBT only youth for Victimization





youth ( $b = .27, p < .001$ ). Positive peer support was not a significant predictor of bullying for either group. Deviant peer affiliation was also a significant positive predictor of bullying for both OOH+LGBT youth ( $b = .26, p = .05$ ) and OOH only/LGBT only youth ( $b = .19, p < .001$ ). None of the parameters for association with social support and victimization were significantly different by group. The variables in the model accounted for 37% of the variance for OOH+LGBT youth and only 20% of the variance for OOH only/LGBT only youth.

### Model Summary

Table 12 summarizes the results from all structural equation models used in this study. In the table, SS denotes adult support at school, NP denotes negative parenting, PP denotes positive peer support, DP denotes deviant peer affiliation, Vic represents victimization, and Bul represents bullying. Significant associations between the social relationship variables with youths' reports of victimization or bullying are designated by asterisks, with one asterisk being  $p \leq .05$  and three asterisks being  $p \leq .001$ . The total variance accounted for by each model is also shown, along with the means of the social relationship variables for each group.

The social relationship models account for a modest amount of variance (6%-12%) in youths' self-reports of victimization by peers, and more substantial amounts (14%-37%) of variance in youths' self-reported bullying behavior. Thus, effect sizes for the models might be thought of as small for victimization and medium sized for bullying. There were almost no between group differences in the strength of the association of comparable social relationship factors with bullying or with victimization. However, as shown by mean levels of adult support at school, parenting, positive peer support, and deviant peer affiliation, the perceptions of the quality of various social relationships by OOH, LGBT and LGBT+OOH groups were

consistently less positive and supportive or more negative than those of non-OOH/non-LGBT youth.

For all groups, higher rates of victimization were reliably associated with lower levels of adult support at school, negative parenting, and lower rates of positive peer support, but not deviant peer affiliation. Negative parenting was the strongest social relational predictor of victimization. For all groups, higher rates of bullying behavior were reliably associated with lower levels of adult support at school, negative parenting, and negative peer affiliation, but not with positive peer support. Negative parenting was the strongest social relational predictor of bullying, even more so than for victimization.

TABLE 12

SUMMARY OF STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELS

	OOH	Non-OOH	LGBT	Non-LGBT	OOH+LGBT	OOH only/ LGBT only
SS → Vic.	-.12*	-.12***	-.13***	-.12***	-.18	-.12***
NP → Vic.	.25***	.18***	.24***	.16***	.15	.23***
PP → Vic.	-.01	-.06***	-.06	-.06***	.03	-.07*
DP → Vic.	-.10	-.02	.02	-.02*	.03	-.02
Model Variance	8%	7%	12%	6%	7%	10%
SS → Bul.	-.11	-.09***	-.09*	-.10***	-.07	-.10*
NP → Bul.	.27***	.20***	.31***	.19***	.35*	.27***
PP → Bul.	-.02	-.01	-.04	-.01	-.10	-.02
DP → Bul.	.19***	.19***	.19***	.19***	.26*	.19***
Model Variance	20%	14%	25%	14%	37%	20%
Mean SS	2.91	3.13	2.94	3.15	2.79	2.95
Mean NP	.97	-.09	.55	-.11	1.76	.52
Mean PP	3.46	3.63	3.49	3.64	3.44	3.49
Mean DP	.40	-.02	.25	-.03	.68	.24

\*  $p \leq .05$

\*\*\*  $p \leq .001$

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

Professionals and educators agree that youth bullying and victimization are significant problems. Bullying and victimization have been linked to many negative developmental outcomes, including deviant behavior, poor social and emotional adjustment, depression, poor peer relationships, and loneliness (Nansel et al., 2001; Olweus, 1995). Estimated rates of bullying and victimization reported by youth in previous research vary from 11% to 81% (Cohn et al., 2003; Espelage et al., 2000; Hoover et al., 1992; Nansel et al., 2001) depending on the duration of the recall period and the range of behaviors used to define bullying and victimization. Approximately 44% of youth in this study reported being victimized in past 30 days and 50% reported bullying others in the last 30 days. These rates appear to be similar to and in the range of those rates described in other studies.

The purpose of this study was to investigate rates of bullying and victimization reported by three groups of high-risk high school youth, those in out of home placement (OOH), those self-identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning their sexual orientation (LGBT), and those that were both (OOH+LGBT). One goal was to compare the rates reported by youth in these high-risk groups to rates reported by youth who do not endorse these characteristics. A second goal was to determine whether perceived levels of peer support, adult support at school, deviant peer affiliation, and parental support are differentially associated with rates of bullying and victimization, and to examine whether these relationships are different for OOH youth, LGBT youth, OOH+LGBT youth, and youth without either of these two characteristics.

The involvement of OOH youth in bullying and victimization has received little attention in research. This study focused on youth in OOH placement, a subsample of 560 (3%) high school students who responded to health survey in Dane County, Wisconsin. While the number of youth in OOH placement comprises a small proportion of the total youth population in the Dane County sample, researchers have noted that children victimized by parents are likely to experience significant difficulties in their interactions with peers. As a consequence, OOH youth are likely to represent a high risk group for bullying and victimization. Much of the existing research indicating that harsh or abusive parenting may lead to bullying behaviors or victimization in the peer group has focused on youth still residing in their parents' home (Cohn et al., 2003; Espelage et al., 2000; George et al., 1979; Herrenkohl et al., 1997; Knutson et al., 2005; Mohapatra et al., 2010). The analyses from this research report extend previous findings by examining bullying and victimization for youth whose family environment was sufficiently destructive and chaotic enough to result in out of home placement. Youth who have been maltreated by parents are typically depicted as bullies and rarely have researchers investigated the victimization of these youth by peers. It is likely that OOH youth are at high risk for victimization as well as bullying. They observe and are involved in coercive exchange in the home, and as a consequence are likely to generalize their involvement in aggressive exchange as both bullies and victims during interaction with peers at school. In this study, it was hypothesized that OOH youth would be at greater risk for bullying and victimization than non-OOH youth.

This study also focused on assessing the rates at which LGBT youth were involved in bullying or victimization. LGBT youth represented a subsample of 1539 (9%) youth responding to the Dane County high school survey. Rates of victimization reported by LGBT youth in

previous studies range from 22% to 78% (Berrill, 1990; D'Augelli et al., 2006; Pilkington et al., 1995), but these studies have primarily relied on the retrospective reports of adults about their experiences as adolescents. This study uses more temporally proximal reports about the involvement of LGBT youth in bullying and victimization during adolescence. Moreover, there is little research on rates of bullying by LGBT youth. LGBT youth are often painted as passive victims. Media often focuses on how LGBT youth are the targets of serious bullying as a result of their non-normative sexual orientation and being “outed” by peers. At the time of this study, no research could be found that examined bullying behaviors by LGBT youth, resulting in an incomplete and perhaps distorted picture of their involvement in peer aggression. It was hypothesized that LGBT youth would report higher rates of victimization than non-LGBT youth, but report comparable rates of bullying.

It was also hypothesized that youth self-reporting both LGBT and OOH status would be at even higher risk for involvement in bullying and victimization than youth reporting either LGBT or OOH status alone. These youth are likely to be at even greater risk as a result of exposure to coercive and unsupportive family environments and to denigration by peers due to non-normative sexual self-identification.

Bullying and victimization by peers are inherently a social phenomena, and risk for involvement in peer aggression at school can be exacerbated by the lack of social support or mitigated by the availability of positive relationships, not only with peers, but with parents and adults at school. This is likely true for all youth, but the degree to which such multifaceted social support is differentially available to youth and is differentially associated with risk for bullying and victimization involving OOH youth, LGBT youth, and youth without these characteristics is unclear. Using structural equation modeling, this study assessed the degree to which the quality

of relationships youth have with adults at school, and with parents and peers is associated with risk for involvement in bullying and victimization by OOH youth, LGBT youth, and youth without these characteristics. These analyses may provide information about targets of intervention to reduce risk for bullying and victimization, and whether these targets may be usefully tailored in intervention to optimally meet the needs of OOH and LGBT youth.

### Rates of Victimization

Results of this study indicated that OOH youth reported significantly more victimization than non-OOH youth, LGBT youth more than non-LGBT youth, and OOH+LGBT youth more than OOH only or LGBT only youth. This was apparent in reports of both 12 month victimization and 30 day victimization. These group differences reflect mean level frequency of victimization. Group differences are even more apparent when considering high rate victimization. The self-report data in this study suggest that not all OOH youth, LGBT youth, and OOH+LGBT youth are victimized at a high rate, but rather that there is a subset of youth in each of these groups who are victimized at high rates. For example, the proportion of OOH and LGBT youth who reported rates of victimization greater than five times per month was twice that of non-OOH/non-LGBT youth, and proportion of OOH+LGBT youth who reported the rates of victimization greater than five times a month for youth was three times higher than that of youth in the OOH only or in the LGBT only groups. There is a clear incremental risk for victimization for dual status OOH+LGBT youth. However, high rate victimization of LGBT and OOH youth is not a universal experience, suggesting that sources of variability in risk for victimization can be identified for these youth as well as for youth without these characteristics.

The youth self-report data from this Dane County sample indicated that OOH, LGBT and OOH + LGBT youth were also targeted for victimization by a wide variety of modes and for a wide variety of perceived reasons. These include victimization through the internet or texting, face-to-face victimization, being perceived as (or at least called) lesbian, gay, or bisexual, and for physical appearance. OOH+LGBT youth reported even higher rates of multimodal victimization and LGBT denigration than OOH only or LGBT only groups, with the exception of victimization for physical appearance. These data suggest the modes and reasons for victimization were not specific to the traits or identities that may be thought to characterize OOH and LGBT youth. For example, LGBT youth were not more likely to report being called or labeled “gay” than were OOH youth. Though the rates of victimization experienced by OOH, LGBT, and OOH+LGBT differ from those experienced by youth without those characteristics, the variety in forms and vehicles by which peers victimize youth are similar for all groups of youth.

The increased rates of victimization experienced by OOH and LGBT youth may reflect their non-normative presentation or social address, as well reflecting stigmatization associated with OOH status or real or perceived identification as LGBT. In other words, OOH and LGBT youth may be more liable to victimization because they look or act different from their peers (Hoover et al., 1992). This difference-stigmatization process may be exacerbated during adolescence as establishing an identity and social belonging are salient issues during this developmental period. Adolescents are heavily involved in social comparison and competition, and pay close attention to how they fit in with or are different than their peers (Choi, 2009). Being dramatically “different” is not always seen as a good thing during this developmental period.

With this being said, it is important to remember that these rates of victimization are based on youths' perception of victimization. The perceived victimization rates may or may not be the same as the actual rates of victimization. It is possible that youth are honest and unbiased, reporting similar rates that would be estimated by objective observers. It is also possible that specific subgroups of youth may feel that others victimize them more than what an observer would report, and the rates of victimization in this data set may reflect this bias. These subgroups of youth may feel that they are "picked on" more than their peers or they may truly feel as though they are an "out group" or minority amongst their classmates. The degree to which such bias operates differentially across OOH, LGBT and non-OOH and non-LGBT cannot be ascertained with these Dane County data.

#### Rates of Bullying

Results of this study indicated that OOH youth reported significantly more bullying than non-OOH youth, LGBT youth more than non-LGBT youth, and OOH+LGBT youth more than OOH only or LGBT only youth. These group differences were apparent across a variety of bullying tactics, including physical and relational bullying. The tactics used to bully do not appear to be specialized; youth who engage in bullying do so using a variety of tactics rather than specializing in any one type. The self-report data in this study suggest that not all OOH, LGBT and OOH+LGBT youth bully at high rates. Similar to victimization, there appears to be a smaller subset of youth in each group who engage in high rates of bullying. In fact, group differences were even more pronounced when the proportion of youth in each group who engage in very high rates of bullying was examined. The proportion of LGBT youth who reported rates of bullying greater than five times per month was only slightly higher than non-LGBT/non-OOH

youth, but the proportion of OOH youth who reported bullying greater than five times per month was three times that of non-OOH/non-LGBT youth. Furthermore, the proportion of OOH+LGBT youth who reported bullying at rates more than five times per month was two to four times higher than that of youth in the OOH only and LGBT only groups. It seems that there is an additive risk for bullying by OOH+LGBT youth.

It may not be surprising to find that OOH youth reported very high rates of bullying. These youth have often experienced abuse or neglect at home, and as a result may have learned that coercive and antagonistic social behavior is a source of power and control, and a useful means to attain status and access to desired activities and materials. Previous research consistently indicates youth who have been abused or experienced harsh discipline often interact with peers using aggression as a dominant social tool (Cohn et al., 2003; Espelage et al., 2000; George et al., 1979; Herrenkohl et al., 1997; Knutson et al., 2005; Mohapatra et al., 2010). If these youth are victimized at home, they are used to seeing or experiencing both the role of the perpetrator and the role of the victim. While the rates of victimization and bullying for OOH youth are higher than those of non-OOH youth, the ratio of victimization to bullying is fairly balanced. In fact, the ratio of one to the other is very similar to the ratio found for the non-OOH group even though the absolute rates are higher for OOH than the non-OOH youth.

Mean rates of bullying among LGBT youth were higher than non-LGBT youth. This is of interest because previous research on LGBT youth has focused on their status as victims rather than as bullies. The thought of LGBT youth being bullies runs counter to popular expectations. Based on a quick overview of this study, some might argue that victimization of LGBT youth by peers is not a “big deal” or that they deserve it because they also bully. It is important for the reader to understand that, at a mean level, LGBT youth are victimized more

than they bully. This imbalance of victimization to bullying is greater for LGBT and OOH+LGBT youth than any other group studied in this research. LGBT youth do bully, but disproportionately are victimized by peers.

Rates of bullying among OOH+LGBT youth were even higher than those for the OOH only or LGBT only groups. Although the sample size of OOH and LGBT youth in this study was small, this suggests that having a stigmatizing label not only puts one at a greater risk than having no stigmatizing labels, but having *two* stigmatizing labels makes one even more susceptible to bullying and victimization. The immediate social-interactional circumstances and causes of bullying and victimization, however, cannot be identified in the data from this study. These youth may instigate the bullying or their aggressive behavior may be in reaction to being victimized by peers. Additionally, it is important to remember that these rates of bullying are based on youths' perceptions. These perceived rates of bullying may or may not be the same as the actual rates of bullying. It is possible that youth are honest and unbiased, reporting similar rates that would be estimated by objective observers. It is also possible that these youth may feel that they bully others more than what an observer would report, and the rates of bullying in this data set may reflect this bias.

#### Relationship of Victimization and Bullying

It is known that bullying and victimization are highly inter-related. Studies have reported correlations between rates of victimization and rates of bullying ranging from .42 to .53 (Backus, 2010; Uba, 2009). Other researchers have identified individuals who both bully and are victimized by others at high rates. The percent of youth who are involved in high rates of both bullying and victimization vary from 6% to 58% in samples described in previous research

(Ahmed et al., 2004; Glover, Gough, Johnson, & Cartwright, 2000; Holt et al., 2007; Nansel et al., 2001). The correlations (.58 to .70) between bullying and victimization in the current study were similar to or perhaps slightly higher than those reported in other studies, even within the OOH and LGBT groups. This is consistent with previous research indicating reciprocity in aggression: Those youth who give a lot also get a lot in return. Many of the youth who endorsed high rates of victimization in this study also endorsed high rates of bullying.

However, it should also be noted that while the correlations between bullying and victimization are substantial, the nonshared variance was still 50 to 60% in this study. While there are a substantial portion of youth who are involved in neither bullying nor victimization and a small portion who are involved in high rates of both bullying and victimization, there are significant portions of the sample who were primarily involved in bullying or who primarily were victimized. This was equally apparent in the OOH, LGBT, OOH+LGBT and in the non-OOH and non-LGBT groups. These results contradict the notion that OOH youth are only bullies and that LGBT youth are only victims.

This overlap between bullying and victimization has led some researchers to investigate a group of youth they label “bully/victims.” These are the youth who bully and who are victimized by others at high rates. This study did not ascertain and explore a separate category for bully/victims, as the sample size was already small for OOH, LGBT and OOH+LGBT groups. However, this is an area which could be productively pursued in subsequent research.

#### Risk and Protective Factors for Victimization and Bullying

While OOH youth, LGBT youth, and OOH+LGBT youth were victimized by and bullied others significantly more than non-OOH or non-LGBT youth, it is also clear that there was

significant variation in rates of bullying and victimization reported by youth in all of these groups. What then, accounts for the variation in bullying and victimization, and are the sources of such variation similar for OOH youth, LGBT youth, and non-OOH/non-LGBT groups? To answer these questions, the associations of youths' reports of relationship quality with parents, peers and adults at school with their reports of bullying and victimization were assessed and contrasted across groups using multi-group structural equation modeling.

The degree to which relationship quality with peers, parents and adults at school were associated with bullying and victimization was not different for OOH, LGBT, or OOH+LGBT youth compared to youth not endorsing any of these characteristics. The quality of relationships with parents, peers and adults at school were all related to risk for bullying or victimization, and to a similar degree for all groups of youth. The importance of positive relationships and social support in mitigating risk for involvement in peer aggression as perpetrator or victim was apparent for all youth in the Dane County sample. What differentiated the groups was the degree to which positive relationships and social support were perceived to be available or experienced by OOH, LGBT, and non-OOH/non-LGBT youth. OOH youth reported significantly less positive adult support at school, more negative parenting, less positive peer relationships, and more deviant peer affiliation than non-OOH youth. LGBT youth reported significantly less adult support at school, more negative parenting, less positive peer relationships, and more deviant peer affiliation than non-LGBT youth. Additionally, OOH+LGBT youth reported significantly more negative parenting and more deviant peer affiliation than OOH only or LGBT only youth. The critical differentiating factor was not whether supportive social relationships were important in relation to involvement in bullying or victimization, but rather the diminished degree to which supportive social relationships were perceived to be available to OOH and LGBT youth.

Several other more nuanced findings were also apparent. First, the quality of social relationships tested in the models consistently accounted for more variance in bullying than victimization across all subgroups. The stronger association of relationship quality to bullying may reflect the impact of aggressive behavior on relationships more generally and not just with peers; high rates of bullying may reflect a more general coercive and aggressive interpersonal style that diminishes the opportunity for constructive social experiences and social support in all relationships. Victimization, on the other hand, may be more powerfully related to nonsocial factors such as appearance and demographic characteristics or to more immediate contextual factors in social interaction.

Second, the quality of relationships with parents was more consistently and more powerfully associated with bullying and victimization than the quality of other social relationships. Granted, the multi-item measurement of parent-youth relationship quality was a better measure than the single or few items used to assess relationships with friends, deviant peers and adults at school; however, it may also be that long-term socialization of youth and the ongoing modeling, limit setting, and monitoring provided by parents are simply very powerful influences on youths' involvement in aggression in the peer group during adolescence – as either perpetrators or as victims. The relatively high levels of poor parenting and unsupportive family relationships reported by youth in OOH placement are expected, as many of these youth were likely removed from the home for this reason. In fact, poor parenting and unsupportive family environments have been consistently associated with increased aggression during childhood and adolescence, and this is often exacerbated by the iatrogenic peer deviancy training effects of out of home placement in settings that aggregate troubled youth.

It may, however, be surprising to find that LGBT youth also perceived higher rates of negative and unsupportive parenting. Previous research has documented the relative lack of support and sometimes active rejection by parents of LGBT youth as one consequence of LGBT self-identification by youth. However, given the ambiguous time frame to which the questions related to parenting were posed in the Dane County survey, it is unknown whether the negative parenting occurred before youth openly identified as LGBT or whether the poor parenting was in response to youth disclosing their LGBT sexual orientation. In fact, it is unclear in the Dane County survey whether LGBT youth had disclosed their sexual orientation to their parents at all. As such, interpretation of source and impact of parenting quality reported by LGBT youth must remain tentative.

While there are several limitations in interpreting the strong association of parenting with bullying and victimization, the data in this study suggest that bullying programs may usefully target parenting in addition to the more proximal school environment, including both peers and adults. Current bullying programs target the school, emphasizing the impact that teachers and other adults have on the climate and behaviors of the students, as well as encouraging students to report bullying or even intervene to mitigate its occurrence. While these programs may be efficacious for non-OOH/non-LGBT students and may make their school experience better, these programs may not work for OOH or LGBT youth if these youth do not endorse having positive, supportive relationships with peers or adults at school. Standard programs may instead make the gap between these groups even larger than what already exists. Enhancing parenting skills and the quality of youth-parent relationship is likely to reduce bullying and victimization in two ways. First, the parent-child relationship is enduring and one primary source of social and self-regulatory skills beginning as early as infancy and continuing through early and middle

childhood. The development of these skills is likely to mitigate youths' involvement in aggression into adolescence. Second, ongoing parental involvement, support and coaching are crucial to youths' concurrent adjustment during the challenging period of adolescence. Parents who are at best unavailable and uninvolved or who at worst are rejecting and negative fail to provide the solid touchstone needed by youth to successfully accommodate the challenges of adolescence.

The third nuanced finding concerns peers. Youths' self-reported association with deviant peers was more strongly related to bullying than victimization. This is consistent with previous research which indicates that bullying is often occasioned and accompanied by peer approval, and that association with deviant peers amplifies antisocial behavior. Youths' self-report of having at least one friend or source of positive peer support was not reliably related to bullying and was relatively weakly related to less victimization. Previous research has found that having a friend reduces risk for victimization, at least during childhood, but the relatively weak replication of this relationship in the present study may indicate that the protective function of friendship is diminished during adolescence. Alternately, the lack of replication may reflect that this variate for positive peer support was defined by only one item in the Dane County survey. Additionally, the one item did not ask about the behavioral characteristics of the friend. It is possible that youth identify someone as a good friend who is abusing substances or engaging in other deviant behaviors.

The reports of relatively less positive peer support and of more association with deviant peers by OOH youth are not surprising. Many OOH youth are enrolled in new schools after being removed from the home and may have reduced opportunity to form healthy friendships. Because OOH youth are also more likely to engage in problem behaviors, they may be rejected

by most normative youth and actively seek out other deviant youth. Out of the home placement also exposes youth to illegal activities and otherwise deviant behavior of peers residing in the same foster home or residential center, exacerbating the risk associated with unsupportive and ineffective parenting.

The reports of relatively less positive peer support and of more association with deviant peers by LGBT youth is a more novel finding. It may be that friendships are more difficult to establish and deviant peer association may occur as a result of rejection by peers for a non-normative sexual orientation. However, this interpretation is limited because youths' disclosure of their sexual orientation to peers is not explicitly assessed in the Dane County data set. Research indicates some LGBT youth intentionally hide their sexual orientation for fear of rejection or may not identify as LGBT because they have not fully and finally established their sexual orientation during adolescence.

The lack of adult support at school reported by OOH and LGBT youth is a disheartening although not surprising finding. As compared to non-OOH and non-LGBT groups, these youth reported fewer teachers and adults at school treat them fairly, they had less adult support at school if they needed to talk, and they felt less school-belongingness. School support was more strongly associated with victimization than bullying. Current efforts to reduce bullying and victimization at school focus on increasing adult monitoring to reduce aggression and on creating policies and procedures to promote a safe, supportive environment for youth. However, these data indicate that these efforts may not be well implemented or sufficient.

Results from this study suggest the risk and protective social-relationship factors associated with bullying and victimization are the same for all groups of youth, and may serve as potential targets for universal anti-bullying programs. From a prevention perspective, programs

focused on creating healthy family and parenting environments may be a particularly powerful strategy in that patterned, high rate bullying and victimization may reflect a failure in socialization that begins early in the home and continues into adolescence. If abusive parenting and negative modeling by parents can be reduced and replaced with healthy, positive parenting practices, the child is more likely to develop the social and self-regulatory skills to relate to peers in more constructive ways. This is true for all youth, but perhaps even more so for OOH youth, LGBT youth and OOH+LGBT youth who on average experience less supportive home environments and whose risk for bullying and victimization is greater than the more general population of youth.

More generally, the results in this study suggest interventions to reduce bullying and victimization may usefully focus on multiple relationships inside and outside of the school or peer group. The quality of relationship with parents, peers and adults at school each made unique, additive contributions to the prediction of bullying and victimization. The results also indicate that interventions need to target bullying in its multiple forms and vehicles, including face to face, relational and cyber-bullying. Youth who identify as LGBT and who have been placed outside of the home appear to be at particular risk for involvement in peer aggression. Even though the social risk factors are the same, the relative lack of positive social relationships and greater affiliation with deviant peers, perhaps both concurrent and in earlier development, signal a particular vulnerability for OOH and LGBT youth.

### Strengths and Limitations

This study is unique and offers powerful information to professionals who wish to understand and help youth, particularly youth in OOH placement and youth identifying as

LGBT. The way in which life circumstances affect bullying or victimization may not be different for these youth, but their life circumstances are certainly different from “normal” youth, suggesting that prevention and intervention efforts may need to be intensified and perhaps tailored to fit their unique experiences and social status. It is hoped that this study will instigate further research given the lack of information about bullying and victimization involving these two groups of youth. While this study replicated some findings already published on LGBT youth, there has been little research on OOH youth. The sample size of OOH and LGBT youth was sufficiently large to ascertain rates of bullying and victimization and to examine social risk and protective factors. The sample was diverse in terms of ethnicity and socioeconomic background and was obtained from an average-sized urban city.

A full range of behaviors defining bullying and victimization was assessed in this study. Physical, verbal, cyber, and relational bullying were examined, as well as victimization for specific personal characteristics (i.e. sexual orientation, physical features). Furthermore, multiple social-relational risk and protective factors were assessed for their contribution to bullying and victimization. Many studies only focus on one form of bullying or victimization, and on selected social-relational risk and protective factors. The current study provides a more complete picture.

There were also several substantial limitations to the current study. The data were collected from youth in one limited geographical region and in one school district. The degree to which the results generalize to other regions, youth and schools is unknown. Rates of bullying and victimization may vary by region or depend on the availability and quality of school-wide anti-bullying programs. The sample also focused exclusively on high school youth and the degree to which the results generalize to other developmental periods is unknown.

While the overall sample in this study was large, the number of OOH, LGBT and OOH+LGBT youth in the study was relatively small. This small sample size impacted the statistical power for risk models, especially for OOH+LGBT youth. A larger OOH+LGBT sample may have resulted in significantly different means levels of adult support at school or positive peer support for OOH+LGBT compared to OOH only or LGBT only youth. While OOH+LGBT youth are at greater risk than OOH only and LGBT only youth, the reasons for this increased risk could not well ascertained in this study. Additionally, the OOH, LGBT, and OOH+LGBT subgroups are each heterogeneous in terms of personal characteristics and social context. Given that only subsets from each of these groups were involved in bullying and victimization at very high rates, a search for additional differentiating characteristics within each of these groups is needed.

All broad social surveys are limited in the range and detail of questions asked of respondents. This is also the case for the Dane County Youth Survey, and as a consequence, limitations on the range and nature of the items in the survey precluded optimal definition and clarity of key social-relational constructs. Some constructs were based on single (positive peer support) or a very few (adult social support at school) items. Still other constructs were derived from items that were relatively narrow. For example, association with deviant peers was based on items reflecting peer drug use only rather than broader antisocial behavior.

Perhaps more importantly, the developmental timing and social referents for key constructs were often vague. The survey did not ask LGBT youth whether they had disclosed their sexual orientation to friends or to family. It is assumed that youth endorsing such sexual orientations on this survey would have previously disclosed this information, but this may not be the case. This diminishes confidence in the interpretation that the higher rates of victimization

reported by LGBT youth compared to non-LGBT youth is due to others' knowledge of their sexual identification.

The survey used in this research also asked about parenting in a way that did not specify whether the questions were to be answered in relation to experiences with biological parents, step parents, foster parents, or the current caregiver of the child. Directions for the questions stated, "In the questions that follow, the word 'Parent' refers to the adult in your life who is responsible for your care. This may be more than one person and could be a guardian." For children in OOH placement, this presents particular interpretational difficulty. The reason for out of home placement may also be varied and was not specifically queried. This research also used children who spent any time in OOH placement, without specifying the developmental timing and duration of that placement.

This study was correlational and cross sectional in nature, which also limits inferences of causality. While bullying and victimization are not likely to be the causes of out of home placement or sexual identity, the behavioral characteristics of youth may affect both rates of bullying and victimization and the quality of social relationships experienced by youth in OOH placement and who identify as LGBT. Longitudinal research is needed to clarify these issues.

All data were derived from youths' self-report, introducing biases associated with mono-method assessment. OOH and LGBT youth may less accurately estimate their rates of involvement in bullying and victimization, and the quality of their relationships with parents, peer and adults at school. On the other hand, self-report data may more accurately reflect real rates of bullying and victimization in that other informants may have less access to these experiences and behaviors across multiple social settings. It is also the case that that self-report

data may more accurately reflect the perceived quality of relationships than that of “objective” observers.

This study investigated bullying and victimization separately, but some research indicates there is a subset of youth who are both bullies and victims. These youth are labeled as bully/victims and researchers have suggested that variables such as family dynamics are different for this group of youth when compared to victims only or bullies only. Future research on OOH and LGBT youth should additionally focus on bully/victims. Finally, the proximal, social-interaction contexts, causes and consequences of bullying and victimization cannot be ascertained using a survey instrument.

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