



ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND BULLYING

Improving **social-emotional wellbeing** among students has become an important area of focus for projects funded by the Wellness Fund, and also foundational to multiple strategies used to address bullying and its prevention at both school and jurisdictional levels.

"Social and emotional wellbeing creates the foundations for healthy behaviours and educational attainment. It also helps prevent behavioural problems (including substance misuse) and mental health problems. That's why it is important to focus on the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people."¹

This summary report presents statistical associations between social-emotional wellbeing and bullying. The data for the analysis was obtained from the *Tell Them from Me (TTFM)*, representing approximately 800 schools from 28 districts over a five year period (2009-2014). *Tell Them from Me (TTFM)* is a powerful evaluation instrument that uses student perception data to provide a unique school narrative and to inform school practice.



¹ <https://www.nice.org.uk/advice/lgb12/chapter/Introduction>



MEASUREMENTS

Bullying refers to the percentage of students who experienced physical bullying within the past month, and/or any verbal, social or cyber bullying more than once a week.

“Bullying is a repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour intended to cause harm, fear or distress, including psychological harm or harm to a person's reputation. It often involves an imbalance of social or physical power. It can be verbal, social, physical, or cyber-bullying.”²

Multiple parameters that serve as indicators for **social-emotional wellbeing** were analyzed; these include positive relationships, positive sense of belonging, anxiety and depression.

Positive Relationships is defined as the percentage of students with positive relationships (having close friends, talking and listening to friends, getting along with others).

Positive Sense of Belonging is defined as the percentage of students who feel accepted and valued by their peers and others at their school.

Anxiety is defined as the percentage of students who experience feelings or display symptoms related to anxiety.

Depression is defined as the percentage of students who experience feelings or display symptoms related to depression.

“Peer support networks can also help to create healthy, respectful relationships and a developed sense of empathy, which can prevent or eliminate bullying behaviour and discrimination. They can also increase students' sense of belonging and positive mental health by fostering meaningful relationships.”³

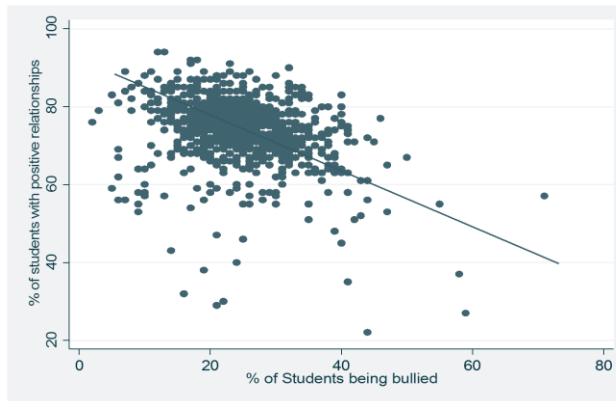
² <https://education.alberta.ca/bullying-prevention/what-is-bullying/>

³ <https://education.alberta.ca/peer-support-networks/why-are-peer-support-networks-important/everyone/why-are-peer-support-networks-important/>



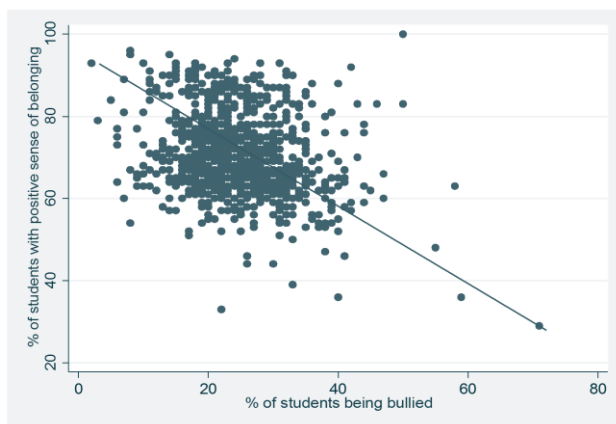
RESULTS

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS



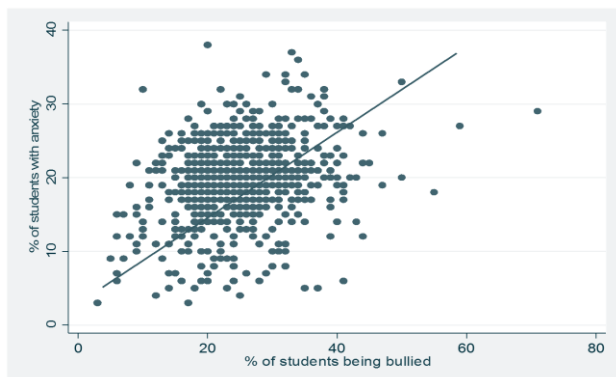
There is a negative correlation between being bullied and positive relationships ($r=-26\%$). When the percentage of students who are being bullied increases, the percentage of students with positive relationships decreases, and vice versa. This indicates that being bullied negatively impacts positive relationships among students.

POSITIVE SENSE OF BELONGING



There is a negative correlation between being bullied and positive sense of belonging ($r=-30\%$). When the percentage of students who are being bullied increases, the percentage of students with a positive sense of belonging decreases, and vice versa. This indicates that being bullied negatively impacts the sense of belonging of students.

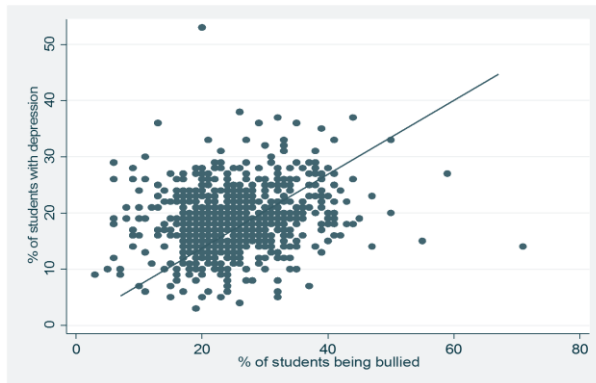
ANXIETY



There is a positive correlation between being bullied and anxiety ($r=32\%$). When the percentage of students who are being bullied increases, the percentage of students with anxiety also increases, and vice versa. This indicates that being bullied could lead to anxiety among students.



DEPRESSION



There is a positive correlation between being bullied and depression ($r=20\%$). When the percentage of students who are being bullied increases, the percentage of students with depression also increases, and vice versa. This indicates that being bullied could lead to depression among students.

CONCLUSION

The results of the TTFM data demonstrate the impact of bullying on the wellbeing of students across Alberta. In order to improve positive sense of belonging, positive relationships, and rates of anxiety and depression among students, school communities need to adopt strategies which develop the social emotional competencies of students and staff.

A comprehensive school health approach, which embeds social-emotional wellbeing into teaching practices, supports the development of healthy school environments that promote a positive sense of belonging and positive relationships.

"Bullying prevention is an ongoing, collaborative, problem-solving process that is an essential part of creating welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments. It requires a comprehensive approach — there are no single solutions."⁴

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

WELLNESSFUND.UALBERTA.CA



⁴ <https://education.alberta.ca/bullying-prevention/being-proactive/>

