Designing a Pilot Field Study: Bullying and Suicide

By: Patricia Dennis, Safa Muhanna & John Sargent

Introduction and Rationale

- Bullying: A pervasive issue affecting mental health and well-being
- Suicide: A tragic outcome often linked to prolonged bullying
- Importance of studying the relationship between bullying and suicide
- Potential for developing effective prevention and intervention strategies

Narrated by: John

Problem Statement and Research Questions

Problem: The complex relationship between bullying and suicide requires in-depth investigation to inform prevention strategies.

- How do different roles in bullying scenarios impact psychological well-being?
- What observable behaviors characterize bullying, and how do they affect victims and bystanders?
- How do enablers influence the perpetuation or prevention of bullying?

Narrated by:

Literature Review Summary

This literature review highlights the prevalence and negative impact of cyberbullying on adolescents. Studies show that cyberbullying is a significant contributor to mental health issues like depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts (Hinduja & Patchin, 2018; HRSA, 2024; Gini et al., 2017). The review emphasizes the role of various actors in bullying, including victims, bullies, and bystanders, and the importance of addressing bystanders' passive encouragement (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004). The review also discusses the influence of cultural and contextual factors on bullying and mental health(Kim et al., 2019), and the need for whole-school approaches to prevention (Olweus, 2013). Additionally, the review explores the psychological mechanisms underlying the harmful effects of bullying, such as social learning theory, social cognitive theory, and ecological systems theory (APA, n.d.). By understanding these theories, we can develop more effective prevention and intervention strategies. For instance, social learning theory suggests that we should limit children's exposure to aggressive media and promote positive role models. Social cognitive theory suggests that we should challenge negative beliefs and promote empathy. Ecological systems theory suggests that we should address bullying at multiple levels, including the individual, family, school, and community. All of which sum up the action plan to educate and support stakeholders by raising awareness and educating, providing support systems, and implementing community outreach programs.

Narrated by:
Safa

Theoretical Framework

- Social Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)
- Individual factors
- Peer interactions
- School environment
- Family influence
- Community context
- Interpersonal Theory of Suicide (Joiner, 2005)
- Perceived burdensomeness
- Thwarted belongingness
- Acquired capability for suicide

Narrated by: John

Evaluation and Assessment Methods

- Stratified random sampling of students from diverse schools
- Inclusion of various roles: victims, bullies, bystanders, and enablers
- Observational studies in school settings
- In-depth interviews with participants
- Focus groups with teachers and counselors
- Thematic analysis of interview transcripts
- Grounded theory approach for data interpretation
- Narrative analysis of personal accounts

Narrated by:

Evaluation and Assessment Methods (Simplistic Breakdown)
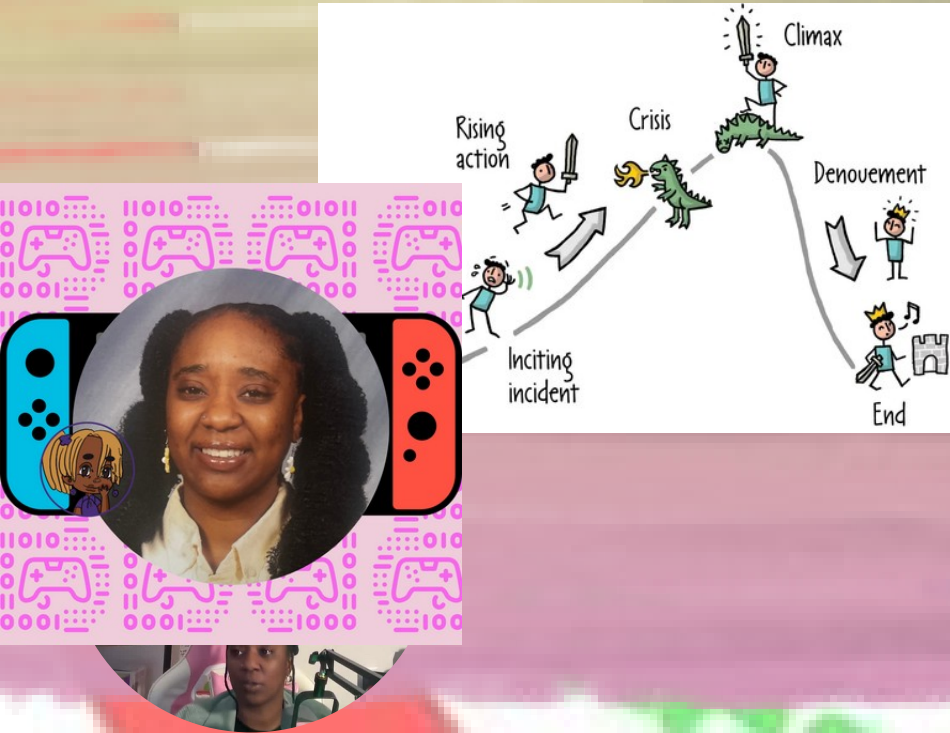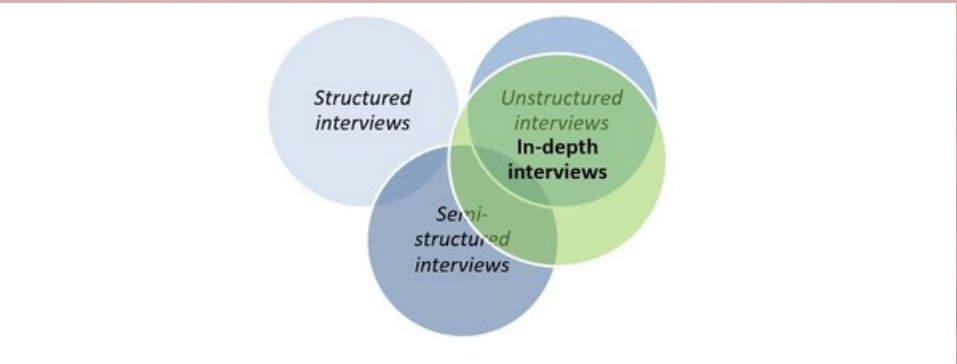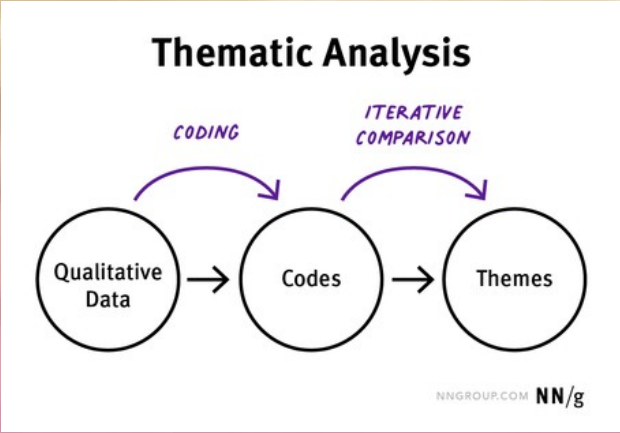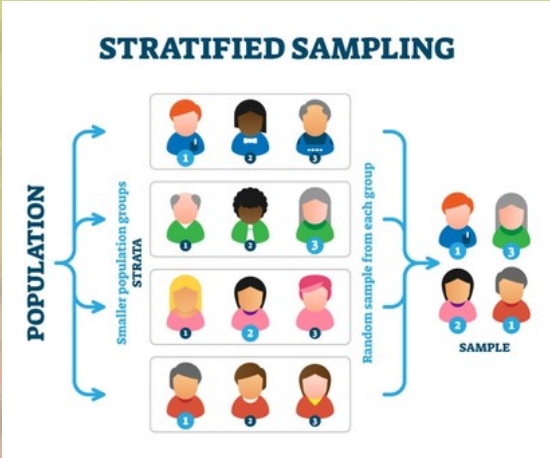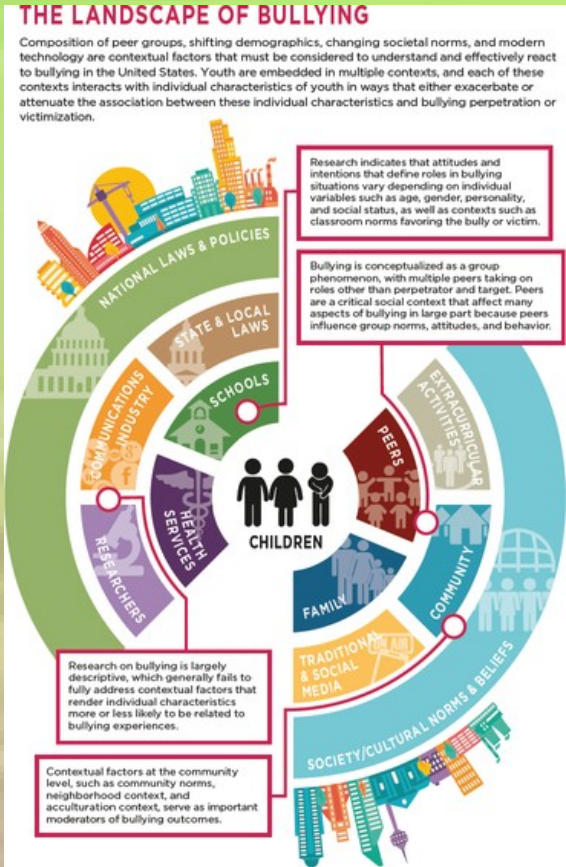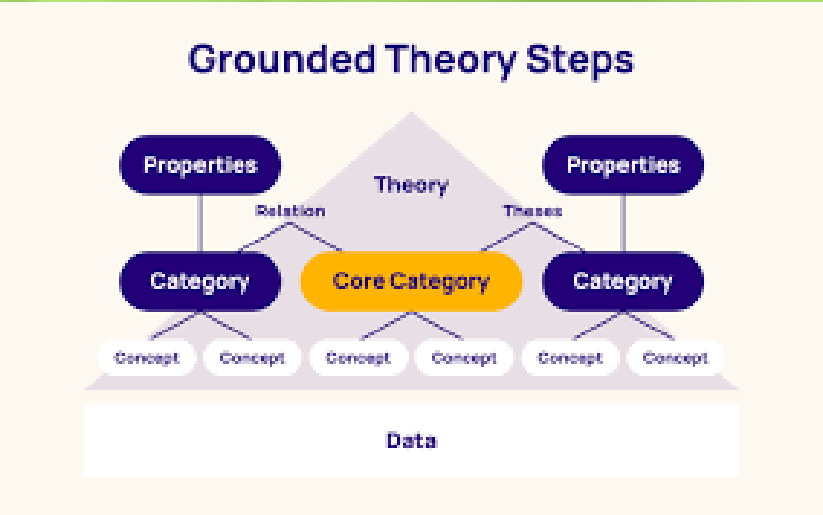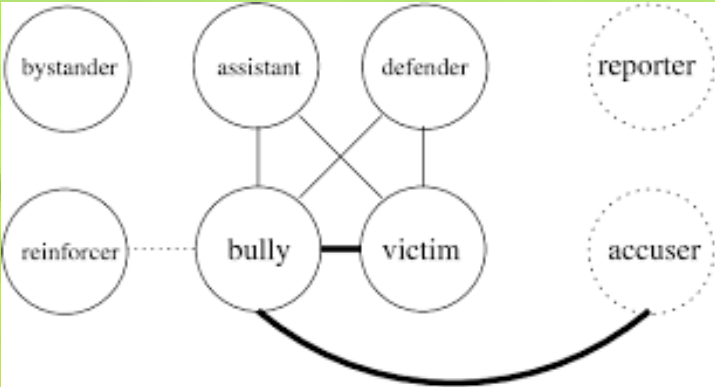
Narrated by:

Data Collection and Analysis

- Field notes from observations

- Audio recordings of interviews and focus groups

- Reflexive journaling by researchers

- Open coding of transcripts and field notes

- Axial coding to identify relationships between themes

- Selective coding to develop core categories

- Constant comparative method for theory development

J
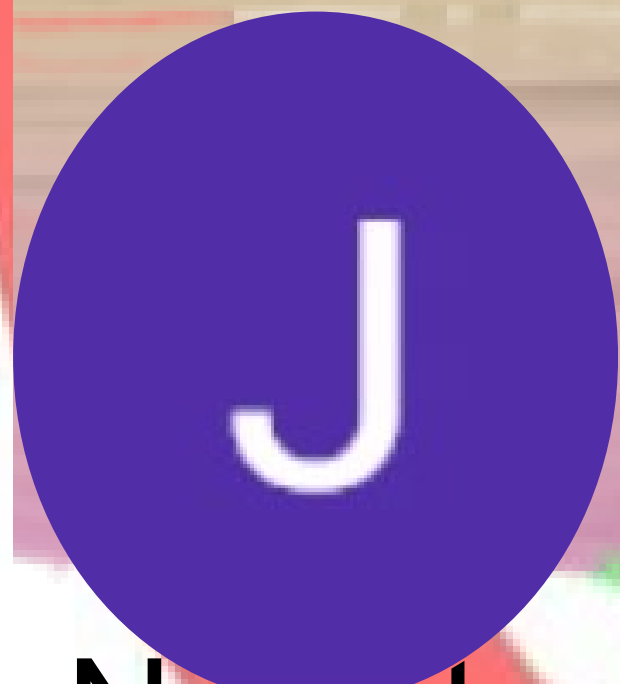
Narrated by:

Major Findings

- Psychological Impact:
- Victims: Increased risk of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation
- Bullies: Potential for long-term antisocial behaviors
- Bystanders: Guilt, fear, and moral disengagement
- Bullying Behaviors:
- Verbal: Name-calling, taunting, threats
- Physical: Hitting, pushing, damaging property
- Social: Exclusion, rumor-spreading, cyberbullying
- Role of Enablers:
- Passive observation reinforcing bully behavior
- Peer pressure influencing bystander responses
- Adult inaction perpetuating bullying culture

Narrated by:

Implications and Recommendations

- School-wide anti-bullying programs

- Bystander intervention training

- Mental health support for all involved parties

- Parent and community engagement initiatives

- Cyberbullying awareness and digital citizenship education

- Regular assessment of school climate and safety

- Development of clear reporting mechanisms and follow-up procedures
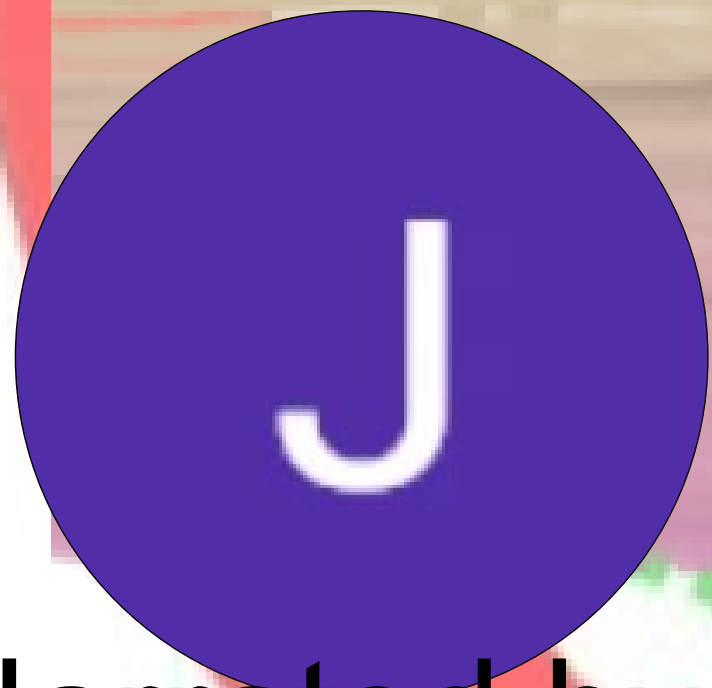
Narrated by: John

Implications and Recommendations (Resources)

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry. (n.d.). Bullying resource center. Retrieved from https://www.aacap.org/aacap/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Centers/Bullying_Resource_Center/Home.aspx

Comer, R. J., (2010 pg. 559), Abnormal Psychology, Worth Publishing, USA, 7th Ed.

Crisis Text Line. (n.d.). Bullying. Retrieved [today's date], from https://www.crisistextline.org/topics/bullying/#what-is-bullying-1

PACER Center. (n.d.). Sites for kids and teens. Retrieved, from https://www.pacer.org/bullying/info/sites-for-kids-and-teens.asp

Santrock, J. W., (2006, pg. 475), Educational Psychology, McGraw-Hill, USA.

Teach.com. (n.d.). Bullying resources. Retrieved, from https://teach.com/online-ed/counseling-degrees/online-masters-school-counseling/bullying-resources/

Narrated by: John

Conclusion

Bullying and suicide are intricately linked, requiring comprehensive approaches

Multi-level interventions addressing individual, peer, school, and community factors

Importance of fostering a culture of empathy, respect, and inclusivity

Ongoing research needed to refine prevention and intervention strategies

Collaborative efforts among educators, mental health professionals, and policymakers crucial for effective change

Narrated by:

Resources

It's important to remember that you are not alone. If you or someone you know is struggling with bullying or suicidal thoughts, please reach out for help. Here are great resources to help:

StopBullying.gov: This government website offers resources on bullying prevention, including information on cyberbullying and how to report it.

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**: This national hotline is available 24/7 to provide free and confidential support for people in distress.
- **Trevor Project**: This organization provides crisis intervention and suicide prevention services for LGBTQ+ youth.
- **Jed Foundation**: This organization provides resources on mental health, suicide prevention, and substance abuse.

- **Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741:** A global nonprofit organization that provides free and confidential mental health support and crisis intervention.
- **PACER Center:** A website created by and for middle and high school students, with ideas to address bullying, be heard, and lead change in an important social cause.

Final Thoughts

As you can see, help and support is available 24/7. I encourage you to further explore the information and resources that have been shared with you as they are readily available to anyone and everyone. Share them with students, friends, and families to remind them that help is available and they are not alone. Building a support system is a vital step towards overall well-being. Remember, creating a safe and inclusive environment starts with each of us. Let's work together to promote mental health awareness and equip ourselves with the tools to navigate life's challenges. By sharing these resources and fostering a culture of support, we can empower individuals to reach their full potential, both personally, academically, and professionally.

Presented by Patricia, Safa, and John

Patt's Contribution

In our group project, my primary contributions included transforming John's research paper into an engaging presentation. I took charge of designing the slide deck, ensuring it was visually appealing and effectively communicated our key points. Additionally, I handled the video editing to create a cohesive and professional final product.

I also contributed to the voice recording, specifically focusing on sections that addressed the Problem Statement, Research Questions, and the crucial Evaluation and Assessment Methods. This ensured that these important aspects were clearly conveyed in the video presentation.

Safa's Contribution

In our group project, I played a key role by developing the literature base from John's paper, ensuring that our work was grounded in comprehensive research. Additionally, I contributed to the voice recording, focusing on sections that covered the brief literature review, major findings, conclusion, and final thoughts. These contributions were essential in providing a well-rounded and informative presentation.

John's Contribution

In our group project, I played a pivotal role by developing the foundational research paper that underpinned our work. Additionally, I contributed to the voice recording, specifically addressing the Introduction and Rationale, Theoretical Framework, Data Collection and Analysis, as well as the Implications and Recommendations. These efforts were vital in ensuring our project was thorough, well-organized, and clearly conveyed to our audience.