



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Caroline Hunt

Associate Professor,
Associate Head, Clinical

10th January 2014

Dear Drs Swearer and Hymel,

Thank you for your invitation for me to become a member of the Bullying Research Network (BRNET). I am very sorry to take so long to respond, but I was on annual leave over much of November and December, and have only recently returned to work.

I have visited the BRNET website and it looks like a fantastic resource and network for bullying researchers. I would very much like to be considered for membership, and am very excited about the possibility of working with you. I have provided the information requested below.

1. Contact information that can be posted on the website

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2. A brief biography

Caroline Hunt (PhD)

Caroline Hunt is Associate Professor and Associate Head (Clinical) with the School of Psychology at the University of Sydney. Caroline's research interests in the area of bullying focus on helping young children develop skills to reduce their risk of being bullied over time. The 'Confident Kids' program has been run in Australian schools and is currently being construct as a web-based intervention. She has also published a measure of the experience of being bullied, the Personal Experiences Questionnaire. Her other research areas include the nature and treatment of anxiety disorders, particularly in young people.

3. A list of current/ongoing projects in this area

I am, along with colleagues at the Centre for Emotional Health at Macquarie University, currently investigating specific risk factors of being bullied in a sample of children seeking treatment for an anxiety disorder. The aim of the research is to assess what proportion of children and adolescents presenting for treatment with an anxiety disorder report having

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been bullied at school, and to further understand what social and individual factors might make anxious children more vulnerable to being bullied.

I am also in the process of analysing longitudinal data that aims to test a model of the specific relationship between bullying and anxiety and depression, drawing from current theories of anxiety and depressive disorders in childhood as well as findings from the bullying literature. Specifically, the model will test the role of anxious temperament in moderating the likelihood that the experience of being bullied, and the associated threat or loss related cognition, will result in clinically significant anxiety and/or depressive symptoms.

Involvement in bullying is an important outcome indicator in a project that investigates the factors contributing to psycho-social development in young primary school children. This research has been funded by the Australian Research Council. The research team also includes developmental (Drs Marc De Rosnay and Elian Fink) and social psychology (Dr Lisa Zadro) researchers. This prospective study has shown that teachers are able to reliably predict, from their identification of externalising behaviours in the first year of school, those children who become involved in bullying, both as perpetrators and victims, 2 years later. The data also suggest two distinct pathways to becoming a bully in the first year of school, based on a child's level of socio-cognitive understanding as well as their social preference according to peers.

I am also a co-investigator on a large NH&MRC-funded randomised trial based in schools comparing a targeted and universal whole-school approach. This project is funded by the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council and is being led by Professor Ron Rapee.

Work currently being undertaken by graduate students includes:

- Using the 'Confident Kids' programme as a starting point, the development and evaluation of a internet-based intervention for young adolescents targeting cyber-bullying
- Investigating the role of emotional regulation in the experience of bullying

Two post-graduate clinical students have recently been awarded theses which investigated (1) the role of family variables on bullying involvement, and (2) individual characteristics of children who bully others.

4. An annotated bibliography of your work in this area

Nguy, L. & Hunt., (2004) C. Ethnicity and bullying: A study of Australian high school students. *Educational and Child Psychology.*, 21, 78-94.



This study investigated whether students from ethnic minority groups report higher levels of bullying than those in the ethnic majority. The two groups reported similar levels of bullying and we concluded that the multicultural context of Australian society may have contributed to findings of equivalent levels of bullying in both ethnic minority and ethnic majority groups.

Hunt, C. (2007). The effect of an education program on attitudes and beliefs about bullying and bullying behaviour in junior secondary school students. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health*, 12, 21-26.

A randomised controlled trial across six schools that evaluated a brief educational intervention in changing attitudes towards bullying and discourage bullying behaviour. Overall, the intervention was found to have little impact on reported bullying.

Berry, K. & Hunt, C. (2009). Evaluation of an intervention program for anxious adolescent boys who are bullied at school. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 45, 376-382.

A pilot evaluation of a targeted group-based intervention focusing on individual factors on the experience of being bullied in anxious children. Participants in the intervention condition reported a significant decrease in their experience of being bullied, as well as symptoms of anxiety and depression, relative to participants in a wait-list control condition.

Hunt, C., Rapee, R. & Peters, L. (2012). Development of a measure of the experience of being bullied in youth. *Psychological Assessment*, 24, 156-165. DOI: 10.1037/a0025178.

A self-report questionnaire of the experience of school-based bullying (Personal Experience Questionnaire, PECK) has been successfully developed that has shown good evidence of reliability and validity with other self-report and peer nomination assessments of bullying. This new measure provides a continuous, dimensional measure of the experience of bullying across four distinct domains: verbal-relational bullying, cyber-bullying, physical bullying and bullying based on culture.

5. Relevant web-based links you would like to share

My home research page provides a broader outline of my current research interests and also provides access to copies of the Personal Experience Questionnaire (PECK). Both English and Danish versions are currently available.

<http://sydney.edu.au/science/people/caroline.hunt.php>



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6. An updated version of your Curriculum Vitae

My CV will be sent in the same e-mail as this letter.

Best wishes

Caroline Hunt.

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