

The mission of the Bullying Research Network (BRNET) is to **connect** international and national researchers, **serve** as knowledge translators, and **share** evidence-based knowledge in bullying prevention and intervention.

RESEARCHER SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Adrijana Grmuša



Dr. Adrijana Grmuša is a Research Associate at the Institute for Political Studies in Belgrade. Her research interests center on security and safety in educational environments, with a specific focus on (a) bullying and peer victimization among children and adolescents in school settings and (b) overarching issues of school safety. In her work, she addresses these topics by employing a mixed-methods approach that integrates statistical modeling, qualitative interviewing, and field observations. She employs a mixed-methods approach to her work, integrating advanced statistical modeling with qualitative interviewing and field

observations. She holds a PhD in Security Studies from the University of Belgrade's Faculty of Security Studies, which builds upon her foundational background in Management and organization from the University of Belgrade's Faculty of Organizational Sciences.

February | 2026

DEAR BRNET MEMBERS AND AFFILIATES:

Thank you for being a part of the Bullying Research Network!



INSIDE

RESEARCHER
SPOTLIGHT

MEMBERS AND
AFFILIATES

AUTHOR EXCHANGE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- Grmuša, A.** (forthcoming). Serbia. In J.S. Hong, R. Thornberg, V.J. Llorent & Z. Han (Eds.), *Bullying: Global case studies in policy and prevention for young people*. Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc.
- Grmuša, A.** (2023). Opinions of the members of teams for protection in secondary schools on the quality of in-service training programmes in relation to bullying prevention and intervention. *Journal of the Institute for Educational Research*, 55(2), 351-374.
<https://doi.org/10.2298/ZIP2302351G>
- Grmuša, A.** & Hong, J. S. (2023). Preventing and reducing bullying victimization in high schools: Which works better? Physical or psychological safety measures. *Journal of Psychologists and Counsellors in Schools*, 34(2), <https://doi.org/10.1177/20556365241236607>
- Grmuša, A.** (2024). The Belgrade School Shooting in 2023 and the Serbian Government's Response Within the Framework of Legal and Education Systems. In J. Herron & S.R. Sartin (eds.), *Impact of Gun Violence in School Systems*, (pp. 27-74). IGI Global.
- Hong, J.S., Zhuang, L., Thornberg, R., Jungert, T., & **Grmuša A.** (2024). Proposing and testing the pathways from bullying victimization to bringing a weapon to school. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 80(1), 97-109. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.23594>
- Hong, J. S., Lee, J. H., Rose, C. A., Topolewski, C. N., Marsack, Daniels, D. E., & **Grmuša, A.** (2024). Bullying involvement and subtypes of disabilities: Who is likely to be affected by what? *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-024-06547-4>
- Grmuša, A.** (2024). The role of in-service teacher training in bullying prevention: Insights from Belgrade secondary schools. In G. Crescenza, V Riccardi & Verónica Onrubia-Martínez (Eds.), *Educational experiences in the classroom. Innovation and Research* (pp.113-123). Dykinson.



BRNET MEMBERS

BRNET has a current total of 307 members
from 34 countries.

Welcome Sofia Mastrokoukou!

Please send recommendations for potential BRNET members (i.e., faculty, researchers, and clinicians conducting research on bullying or related topics) to Drs. Wendy Craig, Susan Swearer, or to the BRNET Coordinator, at bullyresearchnet@gmail.com. You may also direct potential BRNET members toward [our website](#) for further information.

If you have not yet provided your information, please send the following to bullyresearchnet@gmail.com:

1. contact information that can be posted on the website;
2. a brief biography of you and your work that can be posted on the website;
3. current/ongoing projects in this area;
4. an annotated bibliography of your work or curriculum vitae that can be posted on the website.

AFFILIATES OF BRNET

BRNET has a current total of 141 affiliates
from 21 countries.

Affiliates of BRNET is a group of graduate students, administrators, parents, and individuals who are interested in learning more about the Bullying Research Network. Affiliates of BRNET receive our monthly e-newsletter. If you are interested in becoming an Affiliate of BRNET or want to refer someone to Affiliates of BRNET, please email Melanie Willis, the BRNET Coordinator, at bullyresearchnet@gmail.com with the following information: name, title, address, and email address.

AUTHOR EXCHANGE

We would love to share your research articles or other publications in our newsletters. If you'd like your work featured, please email Melanie Willis at bullyresearchnet@gmail.com with the following information:

- Your article citation (with a link to the DOI, if possible)
- Your article abstract
- Your email (so individuals who receive our newsletter can request further information, if desired)

Tolmatcheff, C & Veenstra, R. (2025). So you want to design an anti-bullying program? Recommendations for evaluating the potential of discrete ingredients and improving program cost-effectiveness. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 86(102110).
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2025.102110>

This study utilizes a novel approach to anti-bullying program research, suggesting that the evaluation of discrete ingredients should precede program development to create the most cost effective programs. This paper outlines methodological recommendations aimed at addressing four major shortcomings in intervention studies that impede our understanding of both bullying and the essential ingredients of effective programs: (1) the lack of testing of mechanisms of change, (2) the evaluation of multi-ingredient programs as whole packages, (3) the failure to link outcomes to implementation, and (4) the failure to account for differential effects on different student profiles. By addressing these four major limitations, researchers can comprehensively assess the potential of discrete ingredients and, ultimately, develop or improve multi-ingredient programs with an optimal cost-effectiveness ratio.

Peetz, H. K., Lansu, T. A. M., Hoekstra, N. A. H., van den Berg, Y. H. M., Burk, W. J., & Mainhard, M. T. (2025). Assessing youth's internal and external attributions to negative peer interactions and victimization—development of the Causal Attributions for Peer Experiences (CAPE) scale. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 35(2), e70037.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.70037>

This study presents the newly developed CAPE (Causal Attributions for Peer Experiences) scale, which assesses youth's stable internal, unstable internal, stable external, and unstable external attributions for peers' mean behavior. Self-blame (characterological and behavioral) and hostile intent attributions were positively correlated, and although there is heterogeneity between individuals, latent profile analysis shows that subgroups moderate or high on all blaming attributions exist. Moreover, all types of attributions are related to youth's socio-emotional functioning, and youth with a profile of both strong self-blame and strong hostile intent attributions experience the most internalizing and externalizing problems, as well as victimization.

Nuckols, J., Garandeau, C. F., Graf, D., Malamut, S. T., & Lansu, T. A. M. (2025). Do fear of victimization and importance of being popular predict victim-defending and bully-following behaviors?. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 01650254251394493.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/01650254251394493>

This study investigates whether fear of victimization and finding popularity important are concurrently and prospectively associated with engaging in bystander behaviors in school bullying situations. Participants included 2,709 Finnish adolescents in Grades 7-9 ($M_{\text{age}} = 13.79$; 51.5% boys). Contrary to expectations, fear of victimization did not predict a lower likelihood of defending behaviors but was concurrently and longitudinally associated with lower bully-following, suggesting that fear may inhibit harmful peer alignment rather than defending. The importance of being popular was positively associated with bully-following over time but showed no consistent associations with defending. These findings highlight the nuanced role of fear and status motives in shaping bystander behavior and inform intervention strategies that aim to foster prosocial engagement in bullying situations.

Pouwels, J. L., van den Berg, Y.H. M., Colpin, H., Cillessen, A. H. N., & Lansu, T. A. M. (2026). Co-transitioning peers impact the continuation of victimization across the transition from primary to secondary school. *Social Development*, 35(1), e70047.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.70047>

This two-wave longitudinal study examined the stability of self- and peer-reported victimization across the transition from primary to secondary school and the role of children's peer group in this stability. A total of 193 students from primary schools in the Netherlands (60% boys; $M_{\text{age}} T1 = 12.16$ years) were followed as they transitioned into secondary schools. Their level of victimization before and after the transition was determined using self-reported questionnaires and peer nominations. We further determined whether any of their primary school classmates transitioned to the same classroom in secondary school, and if so, whether these co-transitioning peers were friends in primary school, as determined by peer nominations. Multilevel analyses revealed that self-reported victimization was stable if students co-transitioned to the secondary school classroom without peers, but not if they co-transitioned with peers, regardless of the friendship relation with them. In contrast, peer-reported victimization tended to be stable across all groups. However, it was more stable among students with co-transitioning non-friends than among those with a co-transitioning friend or without co-transitioning peers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BRNET member Claire Garandau with colleagues Sarah Malamut and Lydia Laninga-Wijnen edited a special issue on peer victimization in the International Journal of Behavioral Development. The special issue includes eight longitudinal studies from five countries with rigorous methodologies (e.g., genetically sensitive, multilevel, or experimental designs) to shed light on predictors and outcomes of school peer victimization. All papers are attached and cited:

Garandau, C. F., Malamut, S. T., & Laninga-Wijnen, L. (2025). Introduction to the special section on predictors and outcomes of peer victimization. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 49(6), 523-527. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01650254251361351>

Brendgen, M., Ouellet-Morin, I., Cantave, C. Y., Vitaro, F., Dionne, G., & Boivin, M. (2024). Social support moderates the link between chronic peer victimization in school and later cortisol secretion. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 49(6), 528-538. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01650254241273136>

Tenhunen, E.-L., Kuusiahho, I.-L., & Salmivalli, C. (2024). Can changing schools help peer-victimized students escape their plight? A mixed-methods study. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 49(6), 539-548. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01650254241289308>

Bakth, F. N., Hoffman, A., & Schacter, H. L. (2024). Longitudinal pathways linking peer victimization to academic efficacy in adolescence: Indirect effects via sleep. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 49(6), 549- 559. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01650254241308469>

Wiertsema, M., Kretschmer, T., Vrijen, C., Hartman, C., & van der Ploeg, R. (2025). Prospective associations between peer victimization in adolescence and parental stress and self-efficacy: Self-esteem and internalizing problems as pathways. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 49(6), 560-570. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01650254251314768>

Oncioiu, S. I., Korde, A., Klatzka, C. H., & Bowes, L. (2025). Does negative parenting behavior lead to later peer victimization? A longitudinal co-twin control study. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 49(6), 571-580. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01650254251324163>

Brigham, E. F., Christensen, K., & Troop-Gordon, W. (2025). Should I go to my teacher for help? Predictors of seeking the teacher's assistance when victimized by peers. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 49(6), 581-593. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01650254251327354>

Garandau, C. F., Malamut, S. T., Laninga-Wijnen, L., & Salmivalli, C. (2025). Does the classroom context moderate the effects of internalizing problems and peer status on peer victimization? Testing a vulnerability-by-context model. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 49(6), 594-604. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01650254251333684>

Lansu, T. A. M., Peetz, H. K., Hoekstra, N. A. H., & van den Berg, Y. H. M. (2025). How classmates' evaluation of and behavior toward (victimized) children affects their well-being: An examination of implicit and explicit processes. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 49(6), 605-626. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01650254251356493>



1

Call for Book Chapter Proposals**2**

Dr. Daria Khanolainen & Dr. Yulia Nesterova invite contributions for an upcoming edited volume titled ***Inheriting Victimhood: Collective Memory, Identity Formation, and the Intergenerational Transmission of National Trauma.***

We welcome empirically grounded chapters from diverse social science perspectives, especially those focusing on education, youth, or intergenerational dynamics. The book will explore how memories of historical atrocities are transmitted across generations and how these narratives shape identity, education, and politics in different societies. [Read the full call attached.](#)

3

International Society for Research on Aggression (ISRA) 2026 World Meeting will be next summer from July 20-23, 2026!

The conference will take place at Brock University, St. Catharines, in the Niagara Region in Ontario, Canada with access to some of the region's most iconic destinations—Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and the surrounding wine country, filled with top-rated restaurants, charming shops, and world-class wineries. We have an exciting and dynamic scientific program that aims to represent the most cutting-edge multidisciplinary research on aggressive behavior. The scientific program will include symposia, oral paper presentations, poster sessions, and invited talks. Our social program will include a wine and cheese reception, a trip to see Niagara Falls, and a gala dinner at a local winery. Please share our call for abstracts widely with your colleagues and networks including new investigators and students.

For any questions regarding ISRA 2026, please contact: ISRAWorldMeeting2026@gmail.com

4

Special Issue Prevalence and Correlates of Bullying Behaviors among Children and Young People will provide an update on contemporary research about those likely to bully and be bullied. Meta-analyses have demonstrated that anti-bullying programs are only modestly effective in reducing bullying in children younger than 7th grade and may worsen bullying in older adolescence. Given that state anti-bullying laws and Tier I prevention approaches, such as whole-school anti-bullying programs, are not robustly effective in reducing bullying, it is important to recognize what may be helpful in preventing bullying and intervening. We will discuss the need for the protection of specific groups of children who have been shown to be more likely than classmates to be bullied (e.g., students who are of sexual or gender minorities, are overweight or obese, or are culturally or ethnically at risk at being targeted). Recommendations related to protecting children and creating just, equitable, safe spaces for them in school systems will be helpful in promoting healthy development in all children.

Abstract Deadline: 03/01/2026 | Notification of Abstract Acceptance: 03/15/2026

Prof. Dr. Laura M. Crothers - crothersl@duq.edu

Prof. Dr. Jered B. Kolbert - kolbertj@duq.edu

Manuscripts should be submitted online at www.mdpi.com by **registering** and **logging in to this website**. Once you are registered, **click here to go to the submission form**. Manuscripts can be submitted until the deadline. All submissions that pass pre-check are peer-reviewed. Accepted papers will be published continuously in the journal (as soon as accepted) and will be listed together on the special issue website. Research articles, review articles as well as short communications are invited. For planned papers, a title and short abstract (about 100 words) can be sent to the Editorial Office for announcement on this website. Submitted manuscripts should

not have been published previously, nor be under consideration for publication elsewhere (except conference proceedings papers). All manuscripts are thoroughly refereed through a single-blind peer-review process. A guide for authors and other relevant information for submission of manuscripts is available on the [Instructions for Authors](#) page. *Behavioral Sciences* is an international peer-reviewed open access monthly journal published by MDPI.

Please visit the [Instructions for Authors](#) page before submitting a manuscript. The [Article Processing Charge \(APC\)](#) for publication in this [open access](#) journal is 2200 CHF (Swiss Francs). Submitted papers should be well formatted and use good English. Authors may use MDPI's [English editing service](#) prior to publication or during author revisions.

Brock University in Niagara Falls, Canada has student, post-doc, and faculty opportunities for research that are co-funded by the Canadian federal government. In particular, our [BRAVE](#) group of bullying researchers is interested in potential PhD and post-docs who might want to come study/work with us. Details can be found here:

<https://brocku.ca/graduate-studies/scholarships-awards/research-awards-and-scholarships/cirta/>

5

Anyone interested is welcome to email [Tony Volk](#) or anyone else in the BRAVE group. There's also a research-focused Canada Excellence Research Chair faculty position aimed at mid-career researchers who study any aspect of healthy development. Details can be found in the link below and anyone interested is welcome to contact the BRAVE group for further details.

https://brocku.wd3.myworkdayjobs.com/brocku_careers/job/St-Catharines-Main-Campus/Canada-Excellence-Research-Chair--CERC--in-Healthy-Development-Across-the-Lifespan-at-the-rank-of-Professor-or-Associate-Professor_JR-1022839

Thank you for your involvement in the Bullying Research Network! If you have any news, research, new member recommendations, or materials that our members would find useful, please email us at bullyresearchnet@gmail.com. We will include it in our newsletter, on our website, and/or social media.

Most sincerely,



Dr. Susan Swearer
University of Nebraska - Lincoln
BRNET Co-Director



Dr. Wendy Craig
Queen's University
BRNET Co-Director