



UNITING RESEARCHERS IN BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION

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

May | 2026

Dr. Sofia Mastrokoulou



Dr. Sofia Mastrokoulou is an Assistant Professor of Developmental and Educational Psychology at Universitas Mercatorum in Italy. Her research centers on socio-emotional and relational processes in educational settings, with particular focus on bullying victimization, student-teacher relationship quality, psychological adjustment, and inclusive learning environments. She investigates how interpersonal dynamics within schools influence students' well-being, resilience, and developmental trajectories across childhood, adolescence, and emerging adulthood.

A central theme in her scholarship is the examination of bullying and peer victimization among vulnerable student populations, including adolescents with ADHD and students facing socio emotional challenges. Her recent work highlights the role of classroom relationships as

protective or risk factors, demonstrating how supportive teacher-student bonds can buffer the negative effects of victimization on mental health and life satisfaction. In longitudinal and cross-cultural studies, she has also explored cyberbullying pathways, aggressive behaviors, and the psychosocial correlates of social media addiction in youth.

Dr. Mastrokoulou has published extensively in high-impact international journals, including *Current Psychology*, *Scientific Reports*, *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, and *Social Psychology of Education*. Her work demonstrates broad engagement with developmental risk, emotional regulation, resilience, and inclusive educational practice, while maintaining a strong interdisciplinary and cross-cultural perspective through collaborations across Europe and beyond. Alongside her research, she has substantial teaching experience in developmental and educational psychology and has served as Visiting Professor in Psychology of Disability at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology in Kakamega, Kenya. Her academic profile is further enriched by editorial responsibilities and active membership in international scientific associations, including the American Psychological Association and the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development.

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

- Mastrokoukou, S.,** Kaliris, A., & Longobardi, C. (2025). Drivers of academic procrastination and achievement: A moderated mediation analysis in students with and without specific learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022219425139183>
- Mastrokoukou, S.,** Berchiatti, M., Badenes-Ribera, L., Galiana, L., & Longobardi, C. (2025). Bullying in students with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD): Analyzing students' social status and student-teacher relationship quality. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 22(6), 878. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph22060878>
- Lin, S., Fabris, M. A., Longobardi, C., & **Mastrokoukou, S.** (2025). The association between social media addiction and aggressive behaviors: A longitudinal and gender-specific analysis. *Journal of Adolescence*, 97(3), 798-807. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jad.12454>
- Marengo, D., Settanni, M., **Mastrokoukou, S.,** Fabris, M. A., & Longobardi, C. (2024). Social media linked to early adolescent suicidal thoughts via cyberbullying and internalizing symptoms. *International Journal of Bullying Prevention*, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42380-024-00269-y>
- Longobardi, C., Settanni, M., Berchiatti, M., **Mastrokoukou, S.,** & Marengo, D. (2023). Teachers' sentiment about physical appearance of primary school students: Associations with student-teacher relationship quality and student popularity among classroom peers. *Social Psychology of Education*, 26(2), 383-403. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-022-09749-9>
- Fabris, M. A., Longobardi, C., Settanni, M., & **Mastrokoukou, S.** (2024). Childhood trauma and factors influencing primary school teachers; reporting of child abuse: insights from Italy. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 149, 106631. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2023.106631>



BRNET MEMBERS

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

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)

Godin, D., Brendgen, M., Ouellet-Morin, I., Juster, R.P., Viatro, F., Dionne, G., & Boivin, M. (2026). Peer victimization in college: The role of gendered personality traits and previous peer victimization experiences. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 1-11.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/01650254261430631>

This study examined the association of masculine and feminine personality traits with peer victimization in college and the moderating role of previous peer victimization. Using a longitudinal sample of 716 participants (58% women), victimization in childhood and adolescence was assessed through peer-and self-reports. At age 19, participants evaluated their victimization in college and gendered personality traits. Control variables included body mass index, harsh parenting, and socioeconomic status. Results showed that men with more feminine traits and women with more masculine traits were more victimized in college than their peers with gender-conforming personality traits. However, this was only evident among those who had already frequently been victimized in childhood and adolescence. Chronic peer victimization during the school years may reinforce certain behaviors related to femininity or masculinity traits that—if contrary to prevailing gender-role norms—may increase the risk of further victimization when individuals enter college. The findings emphasize the need for interventions to reduce bias against gender-nonconforming youth.

Page, S., Notte, E., George, H., Slater, C., Cagney, J., Ilyas, I., Rozubi, N. C., Anderson, K., Ramaiya, A., & Fry, D. (2026). Mental health and psychological vulnerabilities in the context of technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse: A systematic evidence review. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 176(108033).
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2026.108033>

A new systematic review examined the link between mental health and technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation and abuse (TF-CSEA). Analysing 10 studies with over 25,000 participants across seven countries, researchers found that depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and prior trauma were consistently associated with victimisation. Crucially, the relationship appears bidirectional with mental health difficulties both preceding and resulting from exploitation; creating potential cycles of repeated harm. Perhaps most striking: traditional parental monitoring through technological surveillance showed limited protective effects. What actually mattered? The quality of parent-child relationships including, open communication, emotional warmth, and trust. The findings suggest prevention efforts should combine universal school-based programmes building emotional resilience with targeted support for high-risk youth, while parent education should prioritise connection over control. With 12.5% of children globally experiencing online solicitation annually, understanding these psychological pathways is essential for effective child protection.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1

Since last year, **Merrill Palmer Quarterly: A Peer Relations Journal is edited by Brett Laursen, Hannah Schacter, Melanie Zimmer Gembeck, and Rene Veenstra.** Our aim is to restore the journal to its former prominence with a clear mission and an efficient editorial process. Review times are fast. Submissions are carefully screened by the Editor in Chief and Managing Editor. Strong fitting papers go to peer review; others are returned without review. This curator model sharpens reviews and respects reviewer time. Please consider sharing your research with them!

Bullying: Global Case Studies in Policy and Prevention for Young People

Edited by Jun Sung Hong, Associate Professor, School of Social Work, Wayne State University, USA and Visiting Professor, Department of Social Welfare, Ewha Womans University, South Korea, Robert Thornberg, Professor of Education, Department of Behavioural Sciences and Learning, Linköping University, Sweden, Vicente J. Llorent, Associate Professor, Department of Education, University of Cordoba, Spain and Ziqiang Han, Professor, School of Political Science and Public Administration & Center for Risk Governance and Emergency Management, Shandong University, China. April 2026 ISBN: 978 1 03534 831 2 Extent: c 880 pp.

<https://www.e-elgar.com/shop/usd/bullying-9781035348312.html>

2

This comprehensive book provides a global overview of how bullying and peer victimization affect children and adolescents. Organised by geographical regions, the chapters outline socio-cultural contexts of bullying in 110 countries/societies. Researchers and practitioners present anti-bullying prevention and intervention methods as well as the laws and policies to protect children and adolescents from bullying. They present detailed insights from countries/societies where research on the subject is limited and explore the concept of bullying in many non-Western countries/societies.

3

Consider submitting a paper for a **special issue of Psychology of Violence: "Risk and resilience of bullying across the globe: A tribute to James Garbarino"** ([link](#)). The co-editors are Jun Sung Hong, Dorothy Espelage, and Timothy Lawrence. The deadline for submissions is September 1, 2026.

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