

Jodie Lodge

**School Bullying:
Perspectives on Understanding an International Problem**

Violence prevention, including bullying, must be a priority for all who are concerned about the health of children and youth. School bullying emerges as an international issue, and we have increasing knowledge of its nature and effects. Recent years have seen a shift in bullying research from a dyadic focus on the characteristics of the *Bully* and the *Victim*, to the recognition of the *Bystanders* in the process of victimization. Bullying is collective in its nature, based on social relationships. At a broader conceptual level, the social systems and settings in which children are embedded appear crucial to the well-being and coping of young people in bullying situations. Focusing on the group process could provide feedback on why the group allows or even encourages peer aggression. Likewise, a more complete understanding of the social nature of bullying may go some way to overcoming the obstacles for peers to intervene. A safe schools framework is currently a national priority, with several organisations strongly advocating the importance of the way children view each other. Bullying, harassment, and violence are issues that are of great concern to school communities and school authorities. From a public health perspective, the time is now for concerted efforts to integrate an understanding of and response to bullying into the larger framework of violence prevention.

Jodie Lodge is a probationary psychologist and a registered teacher with almost ten years of professional teaching experience, working with children, adolescents and their families. She has worked within a variety of school and community settings, playing a leading role in program development and evaluation. She is currently employed as a research assistant in the Department of Learning and Educational Development at **The University of Melbourne**, where she is also a **Doctoral candidate in Educational Psychology**. Her research examines the personal, social and contextual correlates of bystander coping among primary school children as a response to witnessing verbal insults.