



# BRNET January 2020 Newsletter

## Dear BRNET Members and Friends of BRNET:

Thank you for being a part of the Bullying Research Network! In our January newsletter, you will find updates from the network.

Be sure to check out our website at <http://cehs.unl.edu/BRNET/> for additional resources and announcements.

## Featured Spotlight—Dr. Tony Volk

**Tony Volk (Ph.D.)** started off his academic career with a degree in Biology from Carleton University before graduating with Highest Honours in Neuroscience. He then spent some time as a field herpetologist personally testing the hypothesis that maternal incubation behavior influenced the bite rate of young black rat snakes. Drawing on that experience, he did a stint in the corporate world as a software engineering manager at Corel before going to graduate school at Queen's University. At Queen's he did his MA in Evolutionary Psychology focusing on infant-parent interactions with Dr. Vernon Quinsey (whose work focused on psychopaths and sex offenders, obviously). He then switched to Developmental Psychology for his PhD, some say because he had a baby girl and thus desperately needed more education on the topic! He received his PhD in 2005 and joined the multidisciplinary department of Child and Youth Studies at Brock University near Niagara Falls, Canada.

Tony's introduction to bullying research came at the hands of Wendy Craig, who recruited him to help with an early WHO bullying dataset. His students at Brock further encouraged him to continue the research, but it was a chance encounter with Bruce Ellis regarding the evolutionary aspects of bullying at SRCD 2011 that truly cemented his interest in bullying. He has since gone on to work with Tracy Vaillancourt, Dorothy Espelage, and several Dutch researchers who have valiantly tried to teach him the value and ways of social network analyses.

With regards to bullying, Tony's primary contribution is the study of bullying from an evolutionary perspective. This perspective helps explain the ubiquity, persistence, and functionality of bullying perpetration. It also helps explain the interaction between individual and environmental factors, leading to his work on bullying and personality, ecological, and cross-cultural factors. An evolutionary perspective also underlies the theoretical foundations of the Meaningful Roles (MR) intervention that focuses on addressing the functional goals of bullying by offering prosocial alternatives to bullying

behavior. MR thus focuses on addressing the benefits as well as the costs of bullying and is in various stages of piloting in Canada, the US, and the Netherlands.

Tony is currently the Chancellor's Chair of Research at Brock University where he is focusing on understanding the neural and perceptual responses of adolescents who bully. He is also head of an ongoing 8-year SSHRC-funded longitudinal project with Wendy Craig and Drew Dane that seeks to understand the goals, outcomes, social networks, ecologies and personalities of bullies.

At the heart of all of Tony's research lies the honest and joyful pursuit of knowledge that is only made better by collaborating with really fun and interesting people, which is why he is so grateful for organizations such as BRNET that help bring those kinds of people together! For more information on Tony Volk's research, please visit his [research page at www.brocku.ca/volklab](http://www.brocku.ca/volklab).

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### **BRNET New Members!**

BRNET has a current total of 234 members! Welcome to the BRNET, **Drs. Wright & Fung!**

### **New Friends of BRNET!**

BRNET has a current total of 83 'Friends!' Welcome, **Raluca Balan & Dr. Liesbeth Mercken!**

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Please send recommendations for potential BRNET members (i.e., faculty, researchers, and clinicians who are conducting research on bullying or related topics) to Drs. Shelley Hymel, Susan Swearer, or to [bullyresearchnet@gmail.com](mailto:bullyresearchnet@gmail.com).

*If you have recently joined BRNET and have not yet provided your information, please send the following to [bullyresearchnet@gmail.com](mailto:bullyresearchnet@gmail.com).*

- 1) contact information that can be posted on the website;
  - 2) a brief biography of you and your work;
  - 3) a list of current/ongoing projects in this area;
  - 4) an annotated bibliography of your work in this area (i.e., full reference plus a few sentences about the work), and;
  - 5) relevant web-based links you would like to share.
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### **Friends of BRNET**

Friends of BRNET is a group of graduate students, administrators, parents, and individuals who are interested in learning more about the Bullying Research Network. Friends of BRNET receive our monthly e-newsletter. If you are interested in becoming a Friend of BRNET or want to refer someone to Friends of BRNET, please email Alia Noetzel, the BRNET Coordinator, at [bullyresearchnet@gmail.com](mailto:bullyresearchnet@gmail.com) with the following information: name, title, address, and email address.

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### **BRNET Member Grant/Funding Announcements**

Receipt of funding facilitates the BRNET mission to conduct interdisciplinary research related to bullying and aggression, with particular attention being paid to the link between basic and applied research. Thus, the BRNET directors are excited to offer members a new opportunity to share grants (and other sources of funding) they have received for their research projects.

Funding varies across countries and is not limited to federal grants. If you are interested in sharing your grants or funding with other BRNET members, please send an abstract of the research funding along with the funding source to [bullyresearchnet@gmail.com](mailto:bullyresearchnet@gmail.com) and we will post the information on our website.

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## **BRNET MEMBER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **(1) *The Teacher's Guide to Resolving School Bullying: Evidence-Based Strategies and Pupil-Led Interventions*, a new book authored by BRNET Member Dr. Elizabeth Nassem**

Drawing on the author's cutting-edge research this practical book helps teachers better understand the causes of bullying, gives them confidence to resolve nuanced cases, and provides them with the tools to develop pupil-led anti-bullying campaigns. This book delves into the complex nature of bullying at school in a clear and approachable way. It helps school staff understand the student's views and experiences of bullying, and how power imbalances and systemic inequalities can contribute to bullying relationships between pupils. The author provides evidence-based interventions that suggest ways teachers can develop knowledge and skills to resolve incidents. Key to this is a new approach to pupil-led interventions which allows staff to harness pupil voices to develop effective anti-bullying strategies. Included are resources and tools to help teachers set up these advisory groups and interventions, and train others to do the same. This is essential reading for teachers looking for a comprehensive and accessible guide to tackling bullying. Take a look here: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Complexity-School-Bullying-Nassem-Elizabeth/dp/1785924192>

### **(2) Job Opportunity**

The Department of Child and Youth Studies at Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario invites applications for a SSHRC Canada Research Chair Tier 2 position in Children and Youth: Performance and Mental Health at the rank of assistant or associate professor level to commence July 1, 2020. Please see attached PDF for additional information.

### **(3) Articles of Interest**

Dear Colleagues,

Please find attached a new multiplex SIENA paper in [Journal of Research on Adolescence](#) with as highlights: (1) friendship and help networks show some similarities, but only partly overlap and have distinct characteristics; (2) mutual help was important for the maintenance of friendship, but not for the initiation of friendship; (2) mutual friendships provided a context in which help took place.

Van Rijsewijk, L. G. M., Snijders, T. A. B., Dijkstra, J. K., Steglich, C. E. G., & Veenstra, R. (2019). The interplay between adolescents' friendships and the exchange of help: A longitudinal multiplex social network study. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, doi: 10.1111/jora.12501.

And another multiplex SIENA paper examining the association between friendship and academic networks. This study indicated that: (1) in high-ability classrooms students chose high-achieving peers as academic partners; (2) in high-ability classrooms students avoided deviant peers (i.e., those high in school misconduct) as academic partners; and (3) academic relationships led to friendships, and vice versa, in both high- and low-ability classrooms.

Palacios, D., Dijkstra, J. K., Villalobos, C., Treviño, E., Berger, C., Huisman, M., & Veenstra, R. (2019). Classroom ability composition and the role of academic performance and school misconduct in the formation of academic and friendship networks. *Journal of School Psychology, 74*, 58-73, doi: 10.1016/j.jsp.2019.05.006.

If you have related manuscripts (in press or submitted), please let us know. We would be glad to receive it. Best wishes,

René Veenstra, Loes van Rijsewijk, and Diego Palacios, and others

#### **(4) Save the Date—Workshop on Aggression 2020 in Turku, Finland**

The 25th Workshop on Aggression will take place on **November 13-14, 2020** in Turku, Finland, with the overarching theme “Prevention of aggression and violence among and against youth.” Please come to meet researchers studying bullying, dating violence, online abuse and grooming, child maltreatment, and other types of aggression, and evidence-based prevention of these global challenges. This workshop is hosted by BRNET member, Dr. Christina Salmivalli.

#### **(5) Save the Date—Bullying Research Symposium 2020 in Vienna, Austria**

The Bullying Research Symposium (BRS) will take place on **November 6-7, 2020** at the University of Vienna (Austria) and addresses scholars on all career stages with a research focus on school bullying. The aim of the symposium is a more intensive exchange about the ongoing research and to set up a closer network between the individual researchers and/or research teams.

Besides the keynotes the program will include shorter presentations, symposia, databased workshops and a poster session. The thematic focus is set around teachers and school bullying. We are very proud to welcome Prof. Dr. Sheri Bauman (University of Arizona, USA) and Prof. Yuichi Toda (Osaka Kyoiku University, Japan) in Vienna as keynote speakers, who will provide input from an international perspective.

More information on registration and submission follows in early 2020.

Contact: [antonia.paljakka@univie.ac.at](mailto:antonia.paljakka@univie.ac.at).

#### **(6) Article of Interest**

Attached, please find a new article featuring BRNET member Dr. Mark Van Ryzin. Below, you will find the citation.

Van Ryzin, M. J., & Roseth, C. J. (2019). Effects of cooperative learning on peer relations, empathy, and bullying in middle school. *Aggressive Behavior, 45*(6), 643-651.  
<https://doi.org/10.1002%2Fab.21858>

#### **(7) Making an Impact on School Bullying, a new book edited by BRNET Member Dr. Peter K. Smith**

This invaluable book looks at a range of practical interventions that have addressed the problem of school bullying. Each chapter examines the context in which the intervention took place, how theoretical knowledge transferred into practice, and the impact and legacy of the work. Covering the most important and widely-used strategies to combat bullying, the book provides readers with a roadmap to developing

practical and impactful interventions, as well as examining the lessons learned and the challenges still to be met.

Please refer to the attached PDF for additional information and a 20% discount code.

### **(8) Article of Interest**

Attached, please find a new article featuring BRNET member Dr. Ann DeSmet. Below, you will find the citation and a brief description.

DeSmet, A., De Bourdeaudhuij, I., Walrave, M., & Vandebosch, H. (2019). Associations between bystander reactions to cyberbullying and victims' emotional experiences and mental health. *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking*, 22(10), 648-656.  
<https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2019.0031>

To underscore the importance of bystander actions in cyberbullying, often studies from traditional bullying are cited. This study shows that negative bystander actions are also in cyberbullying associated with more negative emotions and mental health problems among victims - but we did not find an association with positive bystander behaviour. This indicates a need to better understand how to reduce negative bystander behaviour, which may not be necessarily be reached by interventions focusing on increasing positive, as adolescents sometimes use both negative and positive forms of bystander behaviour. We moreover found more negative emotions, mental health harm and associations with negative bystander behaviour among self-identified victims, than among adolescents who had reported experiencing a potentially offensive internet practice but did not identify as 'cyberbullying victims.'

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Thank you for your involvement in the Bullying Research Network! If you have any news, information, research, suggestions for new members, or other materials that our members would find useful, please do not hesitate to email us at [bullyresearchnet@gmail.com](mailto:bullyresearchnet@gmail.com) and we will include it in our newsletter and/or on our website.

Most sincerely,



Dr. Shelley Hymel  
University of British Columbia  
BRNET Co-Director



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