

Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence

La Promotion des Relations et l'Élimination de la Violence



PREVNet

The Trauma Associated with Bullying Involvement

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THE NETWORKS
OF CENTRES OF
EXCELLENCE
NEW INITIATIVE



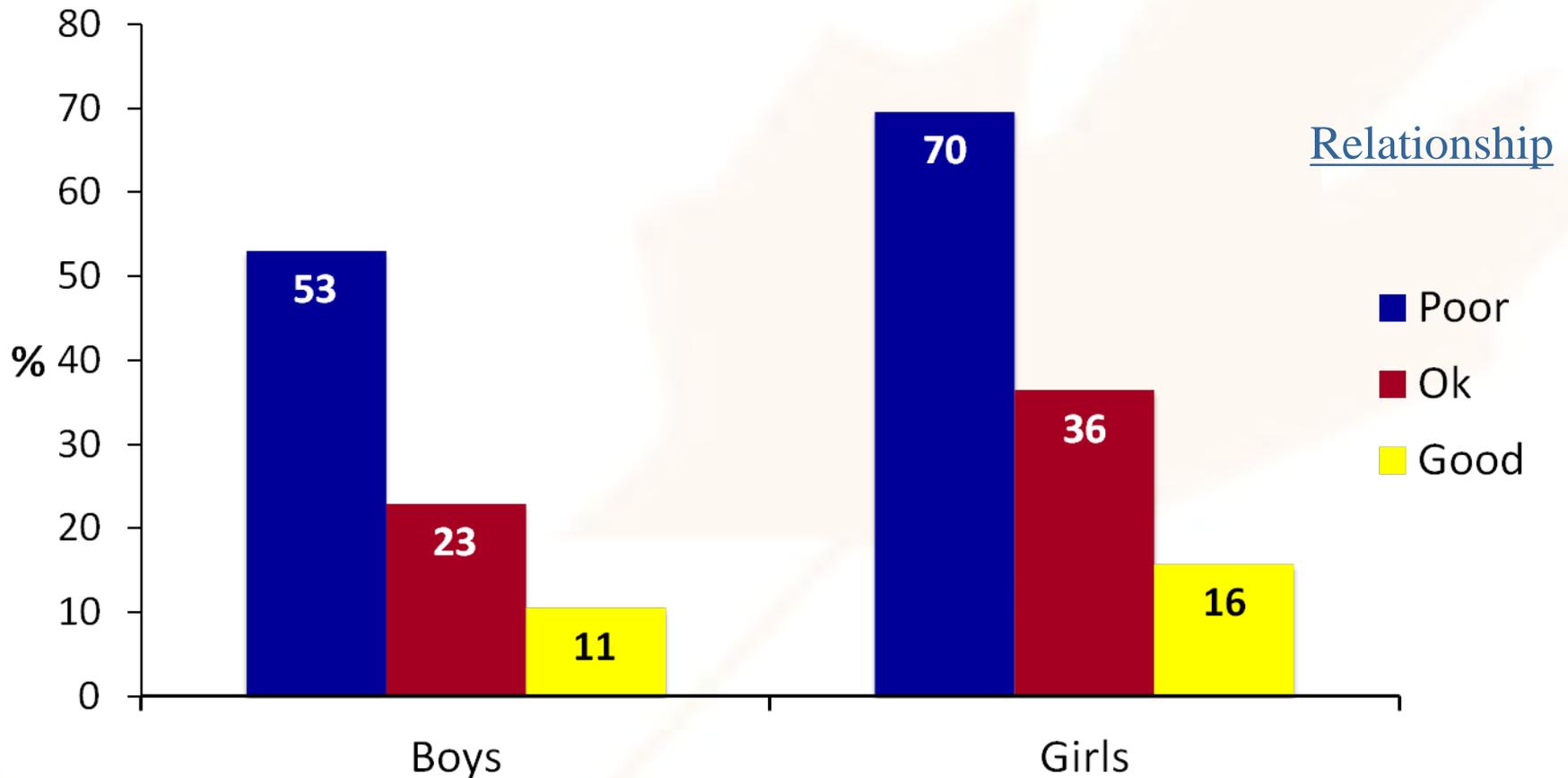


Relationships matter!!

Percentage of students who reported having a high relationship with their parents, by their grades and gender

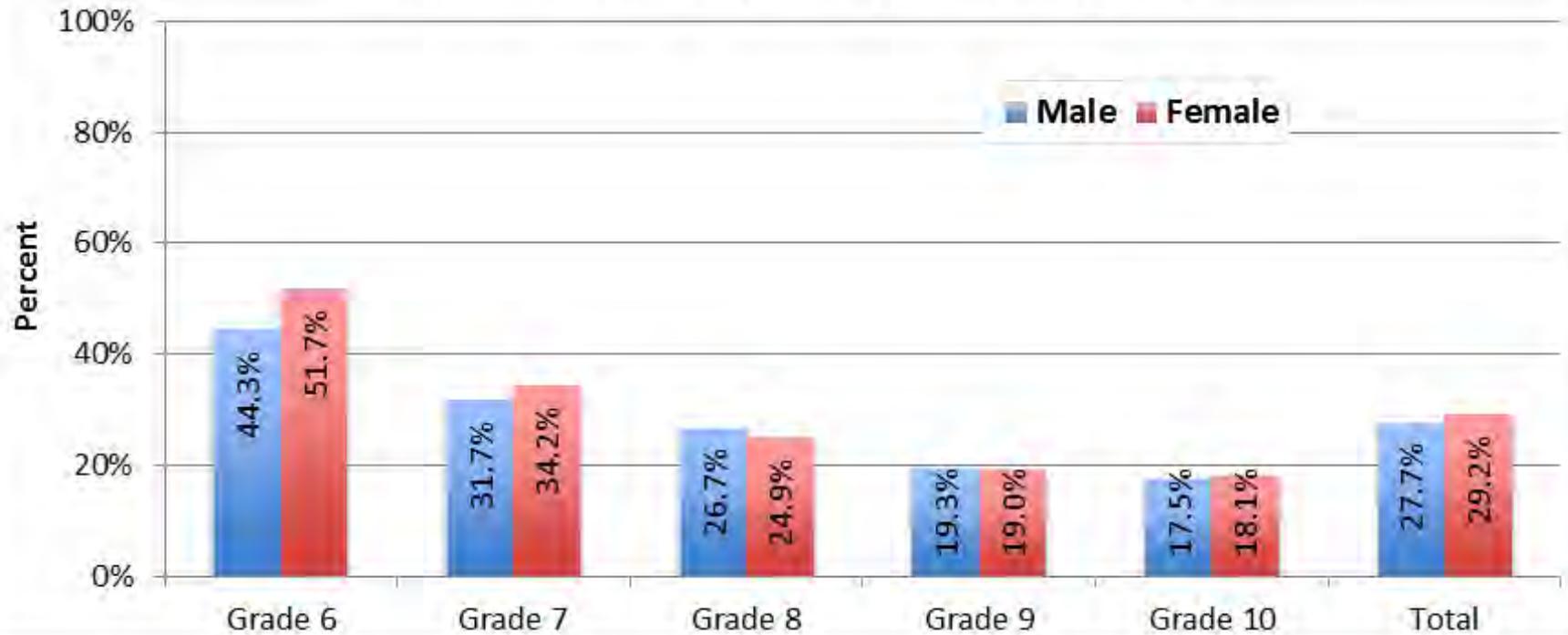


Emotional Problems and Relationship With Parents

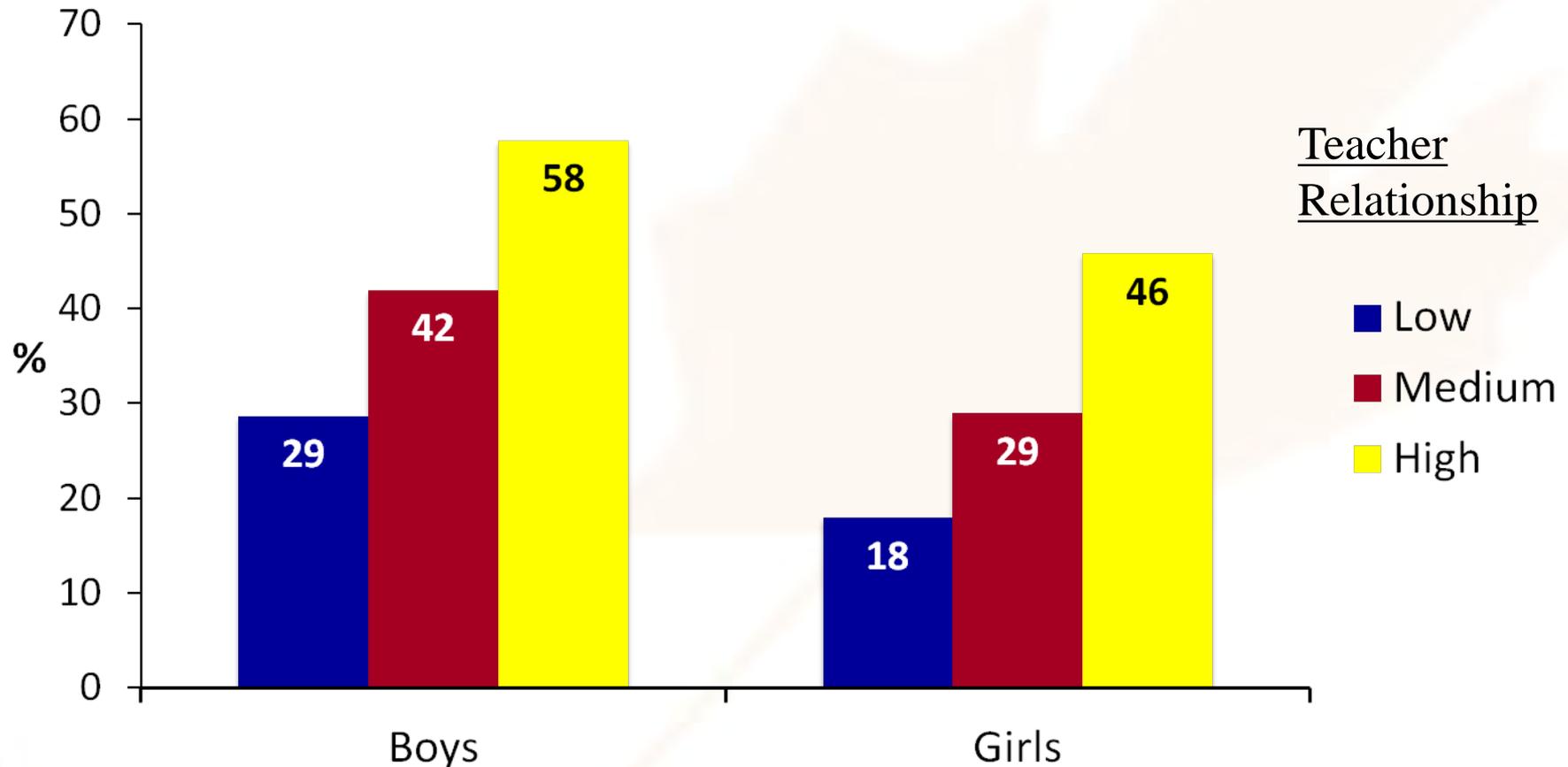


Data from the Canadian Health Behaviour Survey of School Aged Children.

Percentage of students who reported having a high relationship with their teachers, by their grades and gender



Emotional Wellbeing and Teacher Relationships



Data from the Canadian Health Behaviour Survey of School Aged Children.



The Central Role of Relationships

- Outcomes:
 - Physical Health, Healthy Lifestyle, Emotional Health, Positive Behaviours, Aggression, Substance Use, Risky Behaviours, Academic Achievement.
- Parent relationships mattered for 23/24 health outcomes.
- Teacher relationships were related to 8/24 outcomes.
- School relationships mattered for 13/24 outcomes.
- Peer relationships mattered for 14/24 outcomes
- Neighbourhood relationships mattered for 12/24 outcomes.
- Trends over time

Pepler, Debra, Craig, Wendy, & Haner, Dilys (2012). Healthy Development Depends on Healthy Relationships, Public Health Agency Canada.



Bullying as a Traumatic Experience

- Traumatic experience that occurs in peer interactions.
- Impact of bullying is often underestimated and minimized

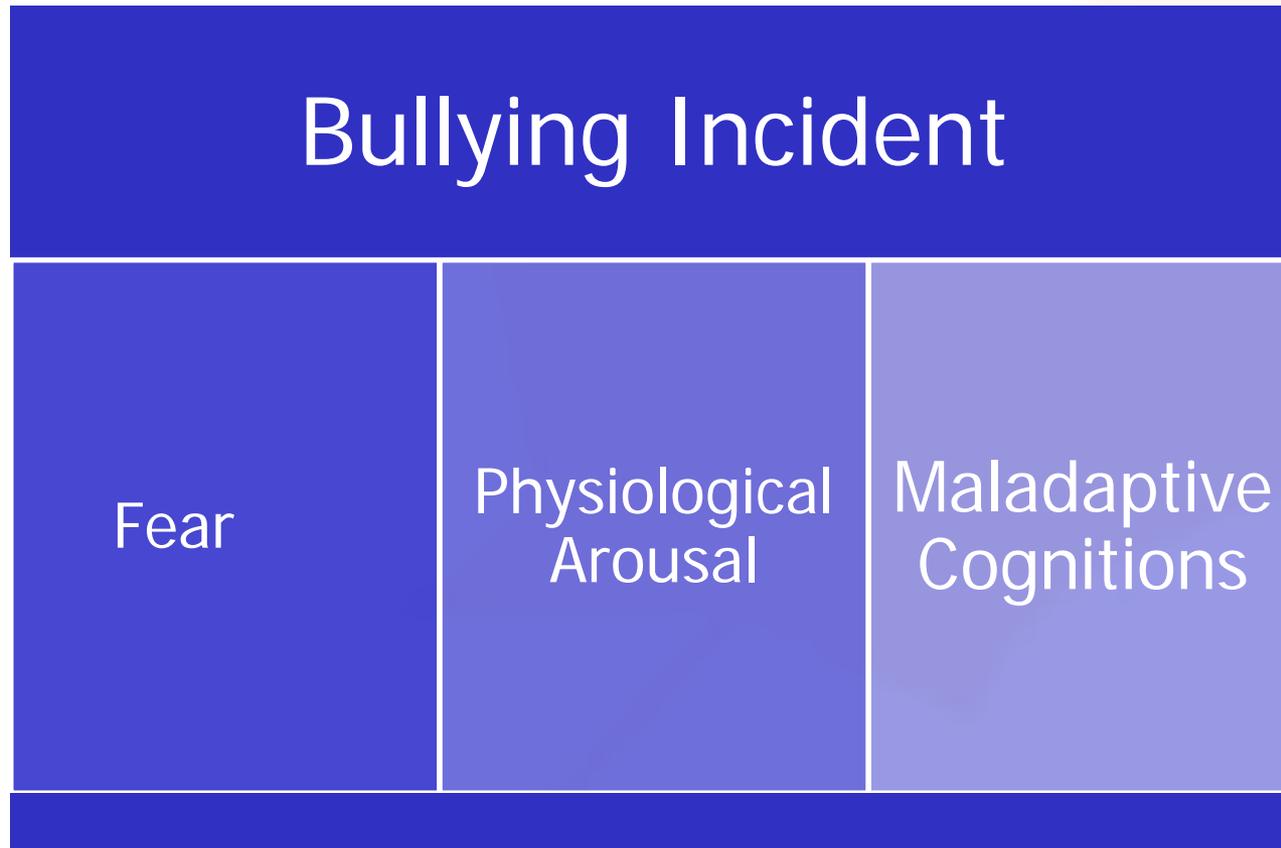


Trauma is experienced by all

- A large proportion of those who bully have been victimized and have experienced trauma within the family or the community
- Bullying is a shared interpersonal experience that may produce a shared experience of trauma through a shared social rejection interaction



Shared Trauma Perspective

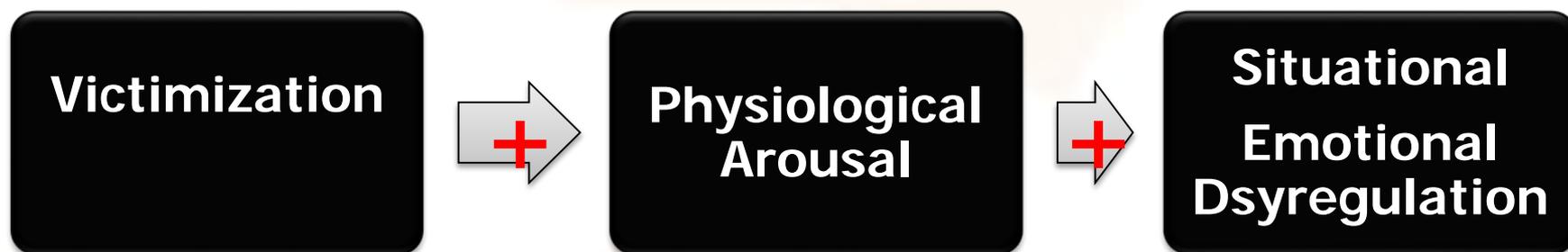
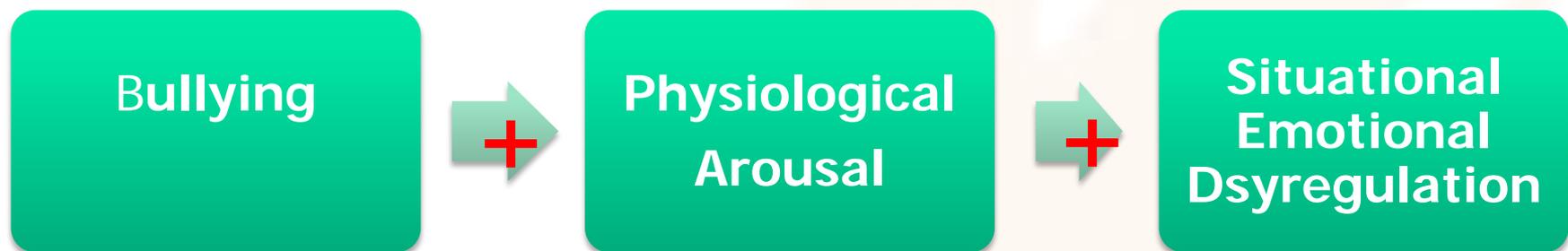


Stress and Brain Development

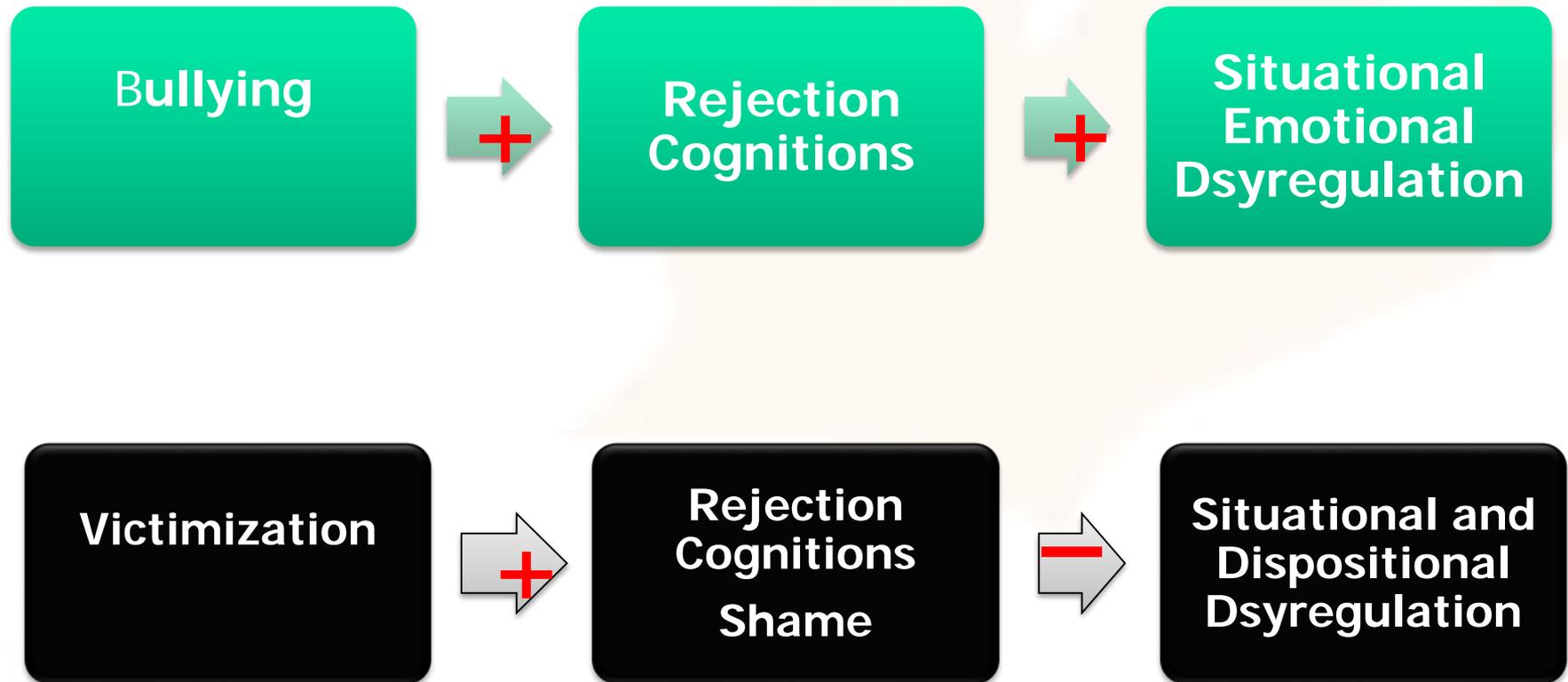
- The brain adapts to the experiences that a child has:
 - If the child has positive experiences, brain adapts positively for learning, memory, and regulation.
 - If the child has stressful experiences, brain adapts negatively, with too much or little response to stress.
 - As the brain develops, the gene expression adapts as well, leading to further positive or negative brain development.
 - Experiences leave a chemical “signature” on genes, which can be temporary or permanent
 - Affect how easily the genes are switched on or off.



Bullying and Physiological Arousal



Bullying and Emotional Dysregulation in Adolescents

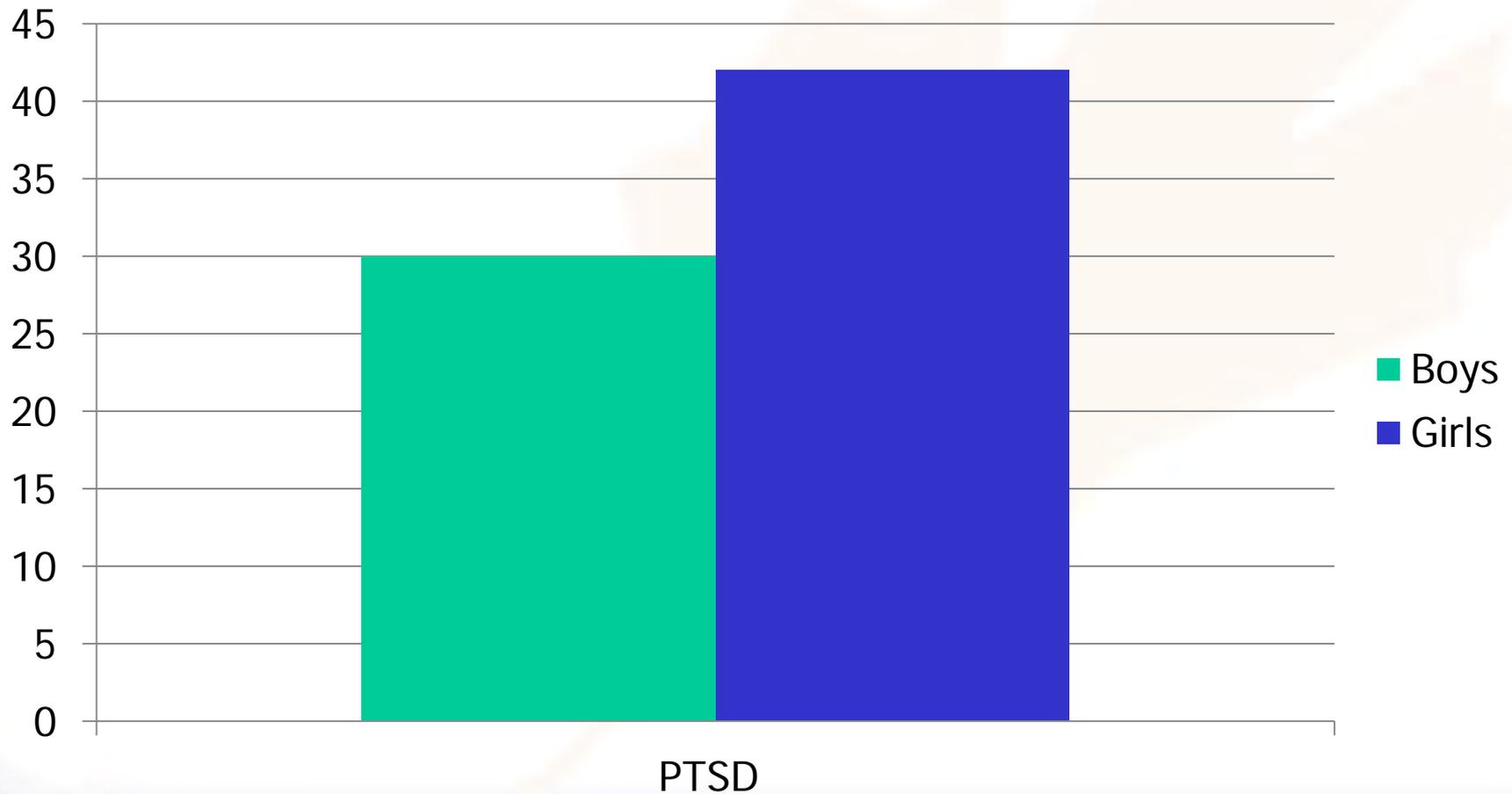


Brain Activity of Victimized Youth Experiencing Social Exclusion

- Peer victimized group showed increased neural response in:
 - left amygdala (involved in fear and arousal processing)
 - left parahippocampal gyrus (involved in emotional memory)
 - left inferior frontal operculum (involved in emotional experience)
 - right fusiform gyrus (involved in processing of faces)
- Extent of the altered neural response is proportional to the degree of bullying they experienced.



Victimization and PTSD Symptoms



Sticks and stone but words....

- Duration and number of places related to internalizing, externalizing problems, and relationships issues.
- People can relive and re-experience social pain more easily than physical pain
- Emotions more intense and painful
- Physical pain is often short lived but not social



Bullying as a Traumatic Experience

- Witnessing bullying associated with:
 - Somatic complaints
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Substance use

Jones & Barlow, 1990
Rivers et al., 2009
Zinzow et al., 2009



Bullying and the Peer Group

- Bullying occurs in a group context
- Peers present for 85% of bullying incidences
- 19-25% defend → many positive associations
 - Reduced victimization
 - Higher self-esteem, peer acceptance, and popularity for defended youth

Hawkins et al., 2001
Salmivalli et al; 2010 2011
Sainio et al., 2011



Bystander Actions

- May escalate victimization or mitigate its effects (McDougall & Vaillancourt, 2015)
- Can calm strong emotions or amplify friend's anger
- Can discourage retaliation & reconcile those involved (Johnson, Waasdorp, Bednam, & Bradshaw, 2013)
- Bystanders can retaliate on behalf of their friends through proxy revenge (Frey, Pearson, & Cohen, 2015)

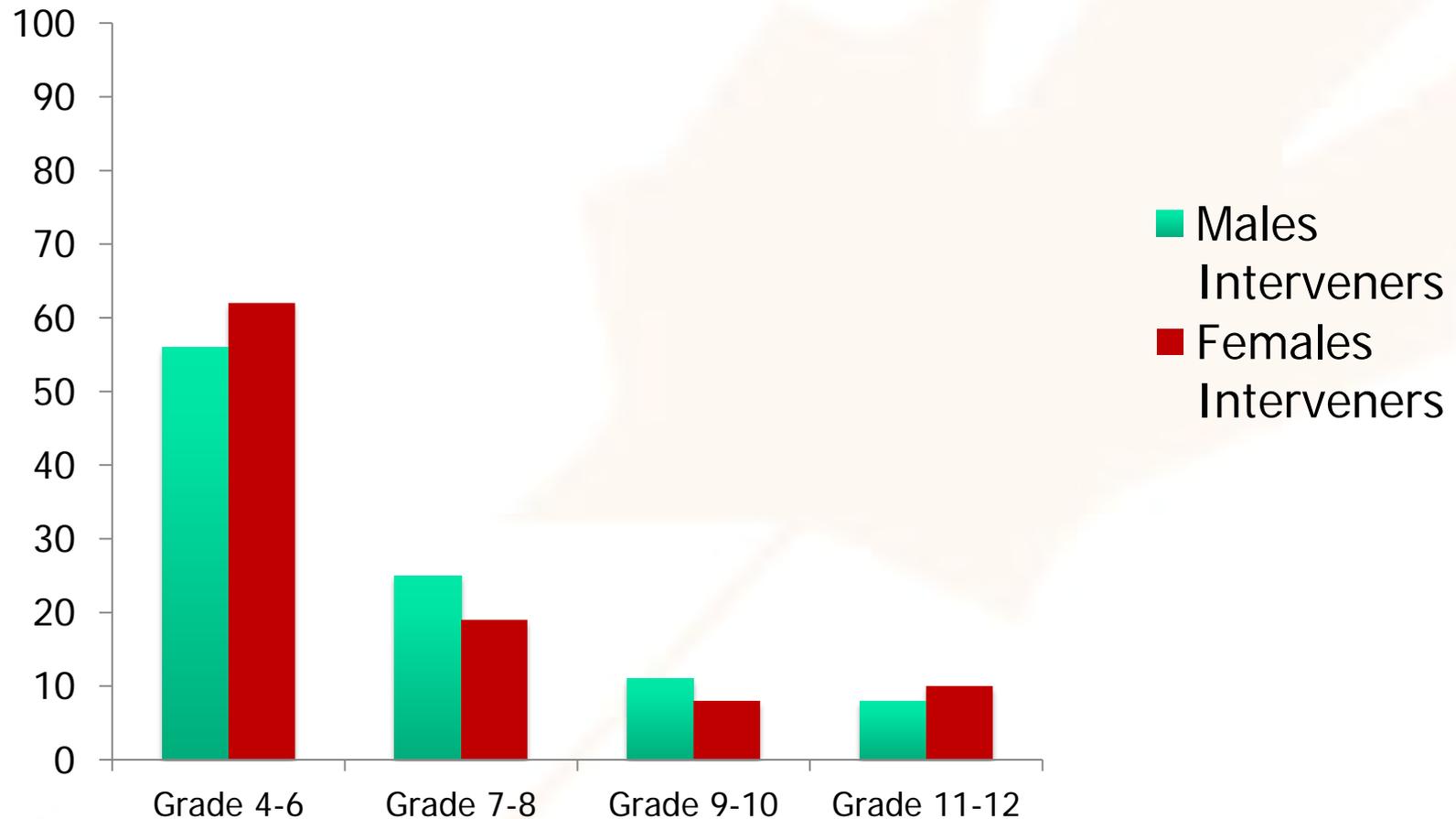


Role of Peers in Bullying

- Most universal bullying prevention programs attempt to change bystander behavior (Bradshaw, 2015)
- A meta-analysis of 11 bullying prevention programs with a specific focus on bystander behavior found that they increased bystander intervention (Polanin, Espelage, Pigott, 2012)



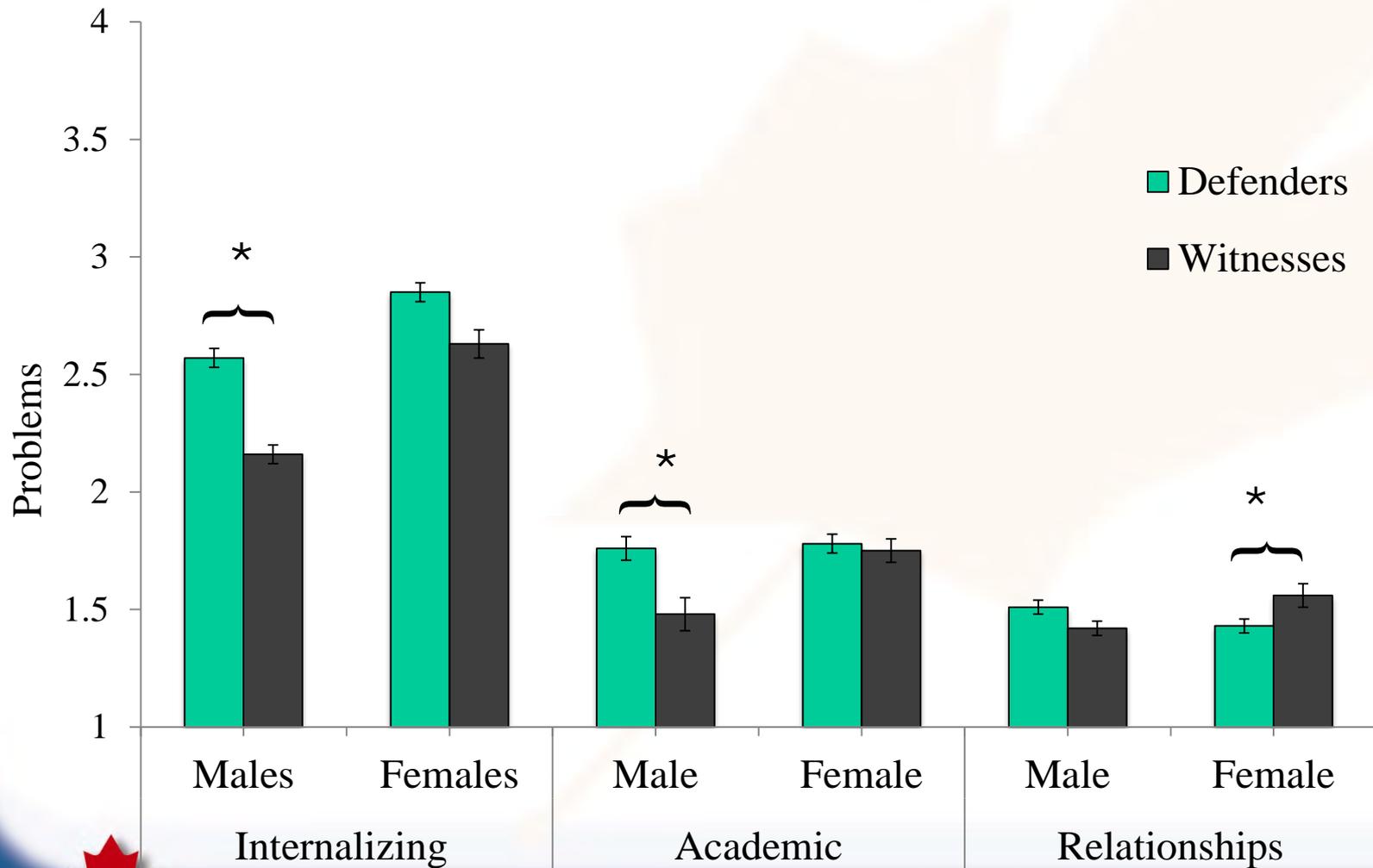
Proportion of Youth who Intervene



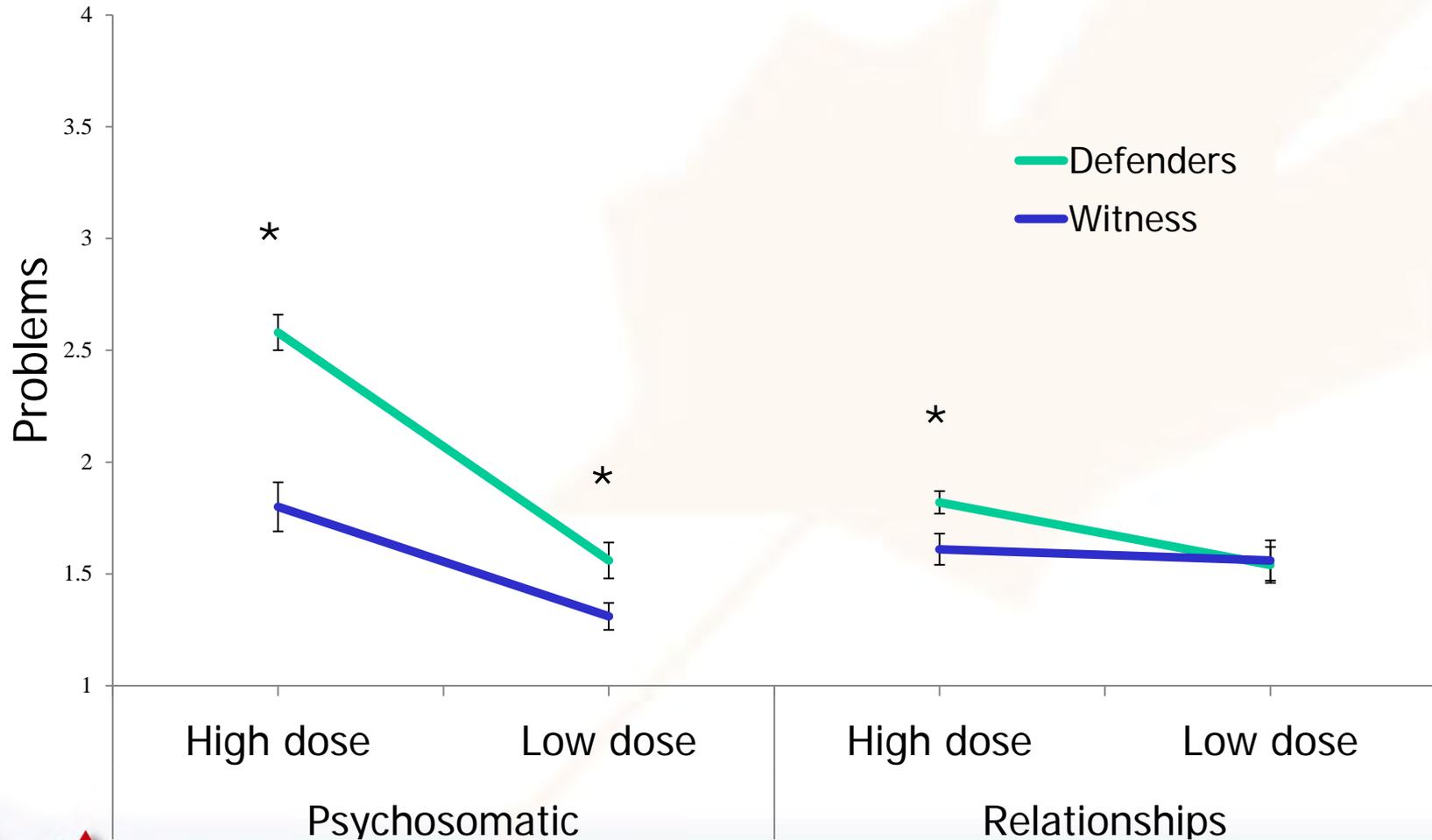
Interveners: Why They Intervened



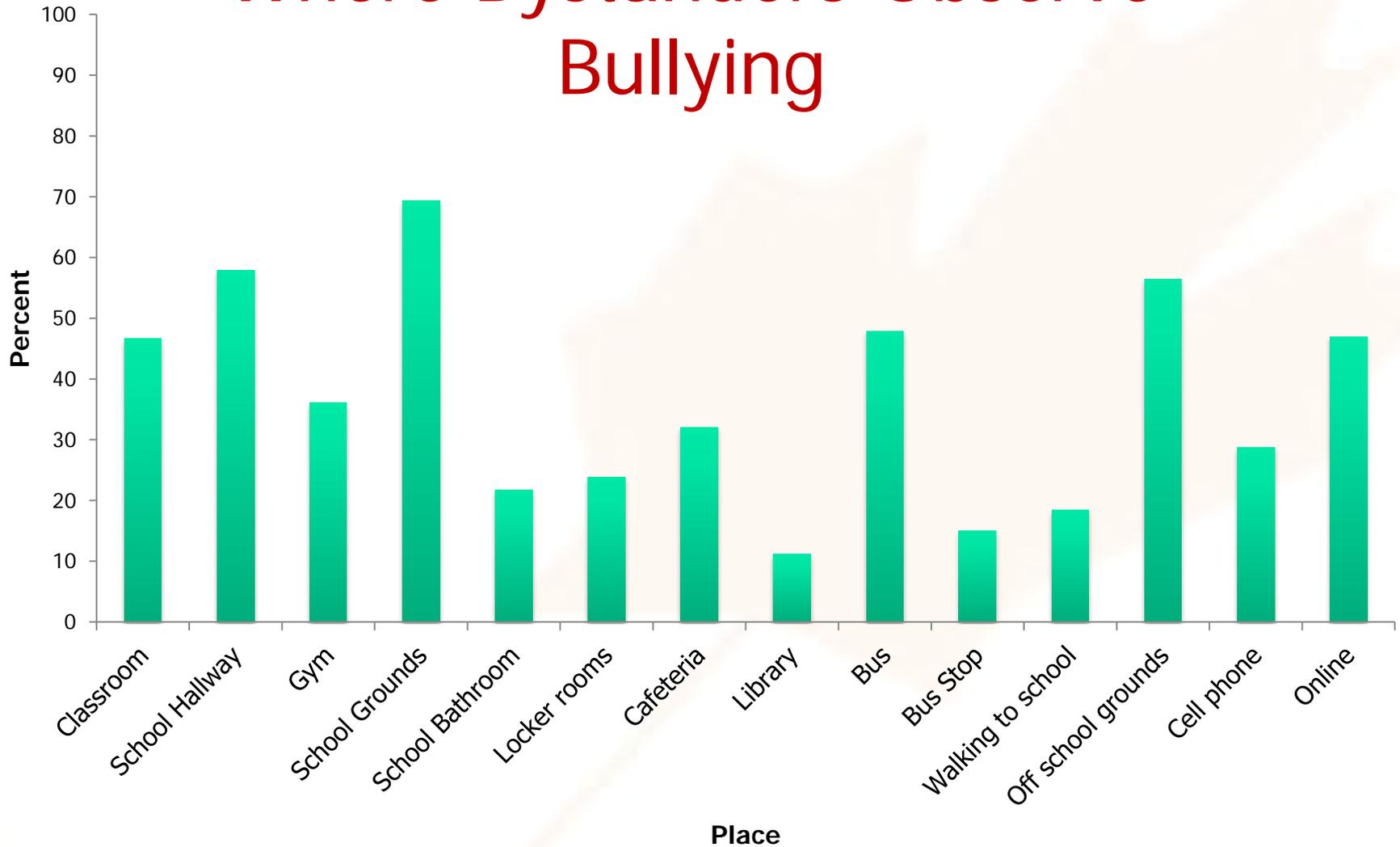
Psychosocial Difficulties and Defending



Effects of Intervening Relate to Pervasiveness



Where Bystanders Observe Bullying



Brain Scans of Defenders

- Defending behaviour is associated with brain activation in areas associated with emotional empathy and perspective taking.
- Displayed more activity in the supramarginal gyrus (SMG) and in the middle frontal gyrus (MFG).
- Emotional empathy is related to the mirror neuron system and facilitates the motor representation of other people's emotions accompanied by affective reactions to the emotion.



Interventions need to address the trauma
experienced by all involved in bullying



What does not work in addressing the trauma of bullying!

1. Zero tolerance punitive practices
2. Avoiding social media
3. Addressing bullying with celebrity not expertise.
4. One time interventions
5. Individual solutions – all need support
6. Ignoring adults' bullying and relationships



Practise Implications

1. Recognize the signs of trauma
 - Concern over safety
 - Overwhelmed by fear or sadness
 - Difficulties learning or concentrating
 - Avoiding people or places
 - Feeling self-conscious
 - Shame and guilt



Be Trauma Responsive

- They aren't trying to push buttons
 - Be affirming and accommodating
- They worry about what will happen next
 - Provide structure and predictability
- It is how they feel that matters
 - Not one event, accumulation
- Need to feel good about something
 - Opportunities to set and achieve goals



Be Trauma Responsive

- Direct connection trauma and learning
 - Focus on safety and the task
- Self regulation is challenging for students with trauma
 - Break tasks down and take regular breaks
- Ask them what they need
- It is about warmth, authenticity, and compassion



It is more than programs, it is about the moment-to-moment interactions and the relationships



What is a Nurturing Classroom Environment?

A nurturing environment is one in which the teacher:

- Teaches and reinforces prosocial behaviour, self regulation, and skills for adulthood.
- Monitors and limits opportunities for negative behaviour
- Minimizes toxic and stressful events (e.g., bullying).
- Provides students with a sense of being cared for, valued, and appreciated for unique characteristics



Teachers are Leaders in the Social System of the Classroom

Teachers shape relationships in the classroom by:

- Modeling the relationship styles they expect
- Managing interaction patterns and activities through social architecture
- Scaffolding self regulation and effective social strategies
- Promoting the productive engagement
- Helping students with relationship difficulties to develop social capacities that enhance how they are perceived
- Promote different dimensions of status (e.g., creativity, caring and interpersonal skills, humour, etc.)



At the end of the day... it is all about

Creating environments and relationships
that support optimal development of
children and youth!

