

Associations Between Victimization and Adolescents' Self-Reported Responses to Peer Provocation Are Moderated by Peer-Reported Aggressiveness

Melanie A. Dirks, Laura A. Cuttini, and
 Addison Mott
 McGill University

David B. Henry
 University of Illinois at Chicago

Many early adolescents experience peer victimization, but little research has examined how they respond to aggression by peers. Thus, in a large sample of early adolescents ($N = 648$; M age = 12.96; $SD = 0.30$; 52.0% female), we examined (1) the associations between peer-reported victimization and self-reported responses to peer provocation, and (2) whether these associations were moderated by peer-reported aggression. In particular, we predicted that the reported use of assertion, a strategy generally viewed as socially skillful, would be associated with less victimization, but only for youth low on peer-reported aggression. Results were consistent with this hypothesis. Moreover, seeking adult intervention was associated with greater victimization for youth high on peer-reported aggression. Implications for research and practice are discussed.

Many early adolescents are victimized by peers (Nansel et al., 2001), an experience associated with a host of negative consequences (Copeland, Wolke, Angold, & Costello, 2013). Research has documented general interpersonal patterns associated with victimization among adolescents; for example, youth who engage in greater externalizing behavior are victimized more (Cook, Williams, Guerra, Kim, & Sadek, 2010), whereas those who behave more prosocially are targeted less (Scholte, Engels, Overbeek, De Kemp, & Haselager, 2007). However, studies examining the links between the behaviors youth use to respond to peer aggression, specifically, and their experience of victimization have told a less consistent story. In particular, although assertive behaviors are generally perceived as socially skillful (e.g., Gresham & Elliott, 2008), and as effective responses to peer aggression (Craig, Pepler, & Blais, 2007; Dirks, Treat, & Weersing, 2010), youth's reported use of assertive strategies has not been consistently linked to lower victimization (e.g., Elledge et al., 2010). Here, we examined

whether one reason for this discrepancy is that the associations between early adolescents' responses to peer aggression and their level of victimization will vary as a function of their peer-reported aggressiveness, hypothesizing that assertive responses would not be associated with lower victimization for youth judged to be aggressive by peers.

Victimization, defined as being treated aggressively by peers, can take many forms, including being provoked physically (e.g., being shoved), verbally (e.g., being called a nasty name), and relationally (e.g., being excluded from a group; Card & Hodges, 2008). Unfortunately, it is a common experience for youth worldwide, with representative surveys of adolescents in 66 countries documenting that 32.1% of respondents reported having been victimized in the last 2 months (Due & Holstein, 2008). Rates of victimization may peak during early adolescence (Nansel et al., 2001), subsequently declining across the teenage years (Craig et al., 2009; Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009). To develop effective intervention and prevention programs, we must identify modifiable correlates of victimization during this period of heightened vulnerability (see Guerra, Williams, & Sadek, 2011).

Research has established links between adolescents' engagement in specific social behaviors and their experience of victimization, suggesting that

The first author would like to thank the late David Henry, beloved mentor and friend, for his support and guidance.

Funding for this project was provided by the Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture (FQRSC 2012-NP-145490) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC 435-2014-0974).

Requests for reprints should be sent to Melanie A. Dirks, Department of Psychology, McGill University, Stewart Biology Building, Office W7/3J, 1205 Dr. Penfield Avenue, Montreal, QC H3A 1B1, Canada. E-mail: melanie.dirks@mcgill.ca

their interpersonal actions may be a key point of clinical leverage. A meta-analysis has documented that adolescents who are victimized exhibit greater aggressive and externalizing behaviors, as well as more internalizing behaviors, including withdrawal and avoidance (Cook et al., 2010). Other studies have identified other behavioral profiles associated with lower victimization during early adolescence, including higher levels of prosocial behaviors such as cooperation (Scholte et al., 2007). Critically, research has shown that how early adolescents behave interpersonally predicts their subsequent victimization and that, conversely, victimization shapes how youth interact with their peers (e.g., Paul & Cillessen, 2003), changes that may have wider implications for social functioning. Thus, as both cause and consequence of victimization, behavior will be an important target for intervention.

In general, research examining the links between adolescents' behavior and their experience of victimization has focused on measuring general interpersonal tendencies (e.g., overall levels of aggressive behavior); however, there will be theoretical and clinical gains associated with conducting more nuanced assessments of how youth manage specific critical situations. Behavior is situation-specific; that is, youth who demonstrate high levels of a particular behavior, relative to peers, in one situation will not necessarily engage in more of that behavior in another (Dirks, Treat, & Weersing, 2007a). For example, adolescents who are more verbally aggressive than their classmates in response to teasing by peers may not be more verbally aggressive than others when managing situations with adults (Shoda, Mischel, & Wright, 1994). Thus, global measures of behavioral frequency will not tell us how youth manage important interpersonal situations. Theoretically, situation-specific assessment of youth's behavior may advance understanding of why some youth succeed socially, whereas others struggle. Youth who experience the greatest interpersonal success may be those who are able to coordinate different types of strategies to meet the demands of the varying interpersonal challenges in their social worlds (Bierman, 2004). Situation-specific measurement may also help us to elucidate the mechanisms linking youth's interpersonal behavior to their experience of victimization by providing a map of which actions in which situations are contributing to, and affected by, harassment by peers. Such information will also be of value clinically by helping to pinpoint specific targets for intervention.

When measuring behavior with respect to social situations, it is critical to choose the most relevant

scenarios. To advance understanding of how and why interpersonal behavior is associated with peer victimization, one of the most important situations is likely to be peer provocation, or being targeted aggressively by peers. Research with younger children has suggested that how youth respond in these moments may escalate the current episode (Mahady Wilton, Craig, & Pepler, 2000) and influence whether the harassment abates or escalates over time (e.g., Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004). Alternatively, youth who experience victimization may learn to respond to peer provocation in maladaptive ways that exacerbate their interpersonal difficulties.

Much of the work on how youth respond to peer provocation has been conducted within the social information processing (SIP) framework articulated by Crick and Dodge (1994). This model comprises a series of cognitive steps occurring between encountering a social situation and enacting a behavioral response. One of the stages is response selection, which is the behavior the individual actually chooses. Many researchers have assessed the responses youth endorse in response to hypothetical situations describing provocation by peers (e.g., Elledge et al., 2010; Visconti & Troop-Gordon, 2010). In the SIP model, response selection immediately precedes behavioral enactment (Crick & Dodge, 1994), and correspondingly, research has suggested that youth's reported responses to hypothetical scenarios are linked strongly to other indices of their interpersonal behavior. For example, youth's selection of aggressive responses predicts peer and parental ratings of their aggressive behavior (e.g., Bellmore, Witkow, Graham, & Juvonen, 2005; Dirks, Suor, Rusch, & Frazier, 2014), and endorsement of assertive and avoidant strategies has been linked to others' judgements of youth's social skillfulness and withdrawal, respectively (e.g., Burgess, Wojslawowicz, Rubin, Rose-Krasnor, & Booth-LaForce, 2006; Dirks et al., 2014). Moreover, several longitudinal studies have found that responding aggressively to hypothetical interpersonal scenarios predicts subsequent aggressive behavior more strongly than do other SIP processes, such as the tendency to attribute hostile intent to the aggressor (Calvete & Orue, 2012; Dodge et al., 2003, 2015). Such findings suggest that response selection is a particularly impactful stage of the SIP model and that assessing how youth respond to hypothetical situations provides important information about their "real-world" interpersonal functioning.

When assessing response selection to peer-provocation scenarios, it is important to present youth

with options representing the full spectrum of responses to this critical situation; if key strategies are omitted, youth's answers are less likely to reflect the behaviors they would actually use. Deluty (1979) argued that researchers can describe a large percentage of possible responses to challenging interpersonal situations using three broad categories: assertion, aggression, and avoidance/submission (see also Miller, Charles, & Fingerman, 2009). Assertiveness is defined as "[expressing] one's thoughts and feelings . . . in a non-hostile way and without violating the rights of others" (Ollendick, 1984, p. 3). Assertive behaviors include asking someone to stop doing something and requesting information. Assertiveness differs from aggression in that the latter is self-expression that is damaging or harmful to others (Deluty, 1979), and can include physical, verbal, and relational aggression (e.g., Wang et al., 2009). In contrast to assertive and aggressive behaviors, avoidant behaviors, such as not doing anything about unreasonable behavior, do not express a person's thoughts or feelings (Deluty, 1979).

When early adolescents are asked how they manage peer aggression, they give responses broadly captured, conceptually, by these three categories. Bellmore, Chen, and Rischall (2013) asked youth to describe how they responded the last time they were picked on at school. Participants reported they had used assertive bids, such as telling the aggressor to stop or seeking an explanation; aggressive retaliation, such as calling the person mean names; avoidant actions, including doing nothing, ignoring the aggressor, and walking away; and seeking support, such as telling an adult. A second study, in which early adolescents were asked how they would respond to hypothetical situations involving physical, verbal, and relational provocation by a peer, yielded a similar set of responses (Dirks, Treat, & Weersing, 2007b). These studies provide insight into how adolescents manage aggression by peers. The critical next step, for both theory and practice, is to link adolescents' responses to peer-provocation situations to their experiences of victimization.

Associations Between Responses to Peer Provocation and Victimization

Most studies examining the associations between responses to peer provocation and victimization have been conducted with children younger than 12 years. These investigations have not yielded a clear pattern of associations between endorsement

of avoidant strategies and victimization. One study with 8-year-olds found that the selection of avoidant responses was not associated with victimization (Camodeca, Goossens, Schuengel, & Terwogt, 2003), whereas a second with 9- to 11-year-olds found that avoidant responses predicted increased victimization, but only for girls experiencing average and high levels of victimization (Visconti & Troop-Gordon, 2010). In contrast, a third investigation with 10- and 11-year-olds found that the selection of an avoidant strategy was related to less victimization for girls, but more victimization for highly victimized boys (Elledge et al., 2010).

In contrast, selection of aggressive responses has been linked more consistently to greater victimization, although the findings are not unequivocal. Research with children between 5 and 11 years of age has suggested that greater reported use of retaliation is associated with more victimization contemporaneously (Visconti & Troop-Gordon, 2010) and longitudinally (Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004), findings that are broadly consistent with observational work with children of this age documenting that retaliating aggressively when provoked escalates the current incident (Mahady Wilton et al., 2000). On the other hand, a study with 8-year-olds found that victimized children did not differ from their nonvictimized peers in their reported use of aggressive responses (Camodeca et al., 2003), and Elledge et al. (2010) reported that for boys who were not highly victimized the reported use of aggression was associated with *less* victimization.

Findings concerning assertive responses are also not clear-cut, perhaps in part because studies have often integrated these strategies as part of broader constructs. Kochenderfer-Ladd (2004) reported that endorsement of conflict resolution strategies, which included assertive responses such as "tell the kid to stop," predicted lower levels of victimization. Similarly, Terranova, Boxer, and Morris (2010) found that 9- to 11-year-olds who reported low levels of victimization over the school year endorsed greater use of problem-solving approaches than did youth who emerged as victims. On the other hand, Elledge et al. (2010) documented that victims and nonvictims did not differ in their endorsement of the assertive strategy "tell them you don't like it and ask them to stop."

These investigations have advanced understanding of the associations between selection of avoidant, aggressive, and assertive response strategies and victimization; however, the results may not

generalize to older youth. Early adolescents report using different strategies in response to peer aggression than do younger children. For example, research has shown that with age youth become increasingly less likely to turn to an adult for help with interpersonal dilemmas (e.g., Newman, Murray, & Lussier, 2001; Williams & Cornell, 2006), and peers' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of this response decline as youth get older (Dirks et al., 2010), perhaps because this strategy is viewed to be immature. Thus, telling an adult may be associated with more victimization during early adolescence. It may be a "last resort" for youth who are victimized, who may feel that they do not have other options. Alternatively, it may be that engaging in a strategy perceived as ineffective contributes to greater victimization.

The associations between both aggressive and avoidant strategies and victimization may also differ during early adolescence. Although aggressive behavior, in general, has been linked to greater victimization (Cook et al., 2010), this association may be weaker in early adolescence than in childhood (Boivin, Petitclerc, Feng, & Barker, 2010; Cillessen & Lansu, 2015). In addition, research has shown that some 12- to 14-year-olds think that aggressive strategies are an effective response to peer provocation (Dirks et al., 2010). Thus, selection of aggressive strategies may not be associated with greater victimization during early adolescence. Conversely, some research indicates that avoidant and withdrawn behavioral tendencies become increasingly linked to victimization during late childhood and early adolescence (e.g., Boivin et al., 2010). As such, avoidant strategies such as doing nothing and avoiding the aggressor may be associated with greater victimization during early adolescence. Consistent with this supposition, adolescents, and adults who work with adolescents, perceive avoidant strategies to be ineffective solutions to challenging social situations (Bettencourt & Farrell, 2013). Adolescents may view avoidant strategies to be ineffective in part because they are increasingly concerned with autonomy and establishing personal limits (Komolova & Wainryb, 2011); moreover, they perceive resisting or protesting unfair treatment to be more self-affirming than complying (Shaw & Wainryb, 2006).

Correspondingly, adolescents do judge assertive strategies to be effective responses to peer provocation (Craig et al., 2007; Dirks et al., 2010) and to difficult interpersonal situations, more generally (Bettencourt & Farrell, 2013). Such data suggest that the selection of assertive strategies will be

associated with less victimization during early adolescence. However, we posit that the association between selection of assertive strategies and victimization may depend upon an important individual characteristic: a reputation among peers for aggressiveness.

Work with younger children has highlighted that the associations between responses and victimization may vary as a function of individual factors. As reviewed previously, studies by Elledge et al. (2010) and Visconti and Troop-Gordon (2010) have documented that these strategy–victimization linkages may differ for males and females and may also depend upon how victimized the youth was. There are at least two reasons why these Response \times Person interactions may emerge. First, the same behavior, enacted by two different people, may be met with a different reception. For example, statements that sound like playful teasing from an adolescent with a good sense of humor may be construed as verbally aggressive when said by a less funny classmate. The actions of physically attractive youth may be deemed more competent than the same behaviors enacted by less attractive classmates (see Langlois & Stephan, 1977). The relationally and physically aggressive actions of well-liked youth may be perceived as less hostile than those of their less well-accepted peers (Goldstein, Tisak, Persson, & Boxer, 2006). Alternatively, individual differences in the severity of victimization that youth experience may impact the responses they choose. For example, during early adolescence, girls are less likely to experience severe physical victimization than are boys (e.g., Turner, Exum, Brame, & Holt, 2013). In this situation, it may be more acceptable to go to an adult (Williams & Cornell, 2006), suggesting that there might be stronger links between telling an adult and victimization for boys.

A key characteristic that may moderate the associations between strategy selection and victimization is a reputation for aggressiveness among peers. Interpersonal behavior is noisy, with youth often using multiple strategies (e.g., combining aggression and assertion) to manage challenging interpersonal interactions (Dirks et al., 2007b). An adolescent's reputation may provide a framework that helps peers to make sense of this complexity, thereby influencing evaluations of their actions (see Hymel, Wagner, & Butler, 1990). Indeed, research has shown that youth are more likely to view the actions of a hypothetical peer described as physically or relationally aggressive as hostile, compared to a prosocial character (e.g., Goldstein et al., 2006).

These biases may influence how peers perceive the behaviors of youth nominated by peers as aggressive. Assertive strategies may be particularly vulnerable to misinterpretation. As described previously, assertion is conceptually distinct from aggression, and early adolescents are sensitive to subtle differences between assertive and aggressive behaviors in controlled experimental circumstances (Dirks et al., 2010). During real-world interactions, however, the boundaries may be blurry. Assertive statements may contain “an implied threat of highly aversive behavior contingent on non-compliance” (Patterson, Littman, & Bricker, 1967, p. 4); for example, “Don’t do that again” might be heard as a threat of physical or relational retaliation, particularly when delivered by an adolescent with a reputation for aggression.

Youth rated as aggressive by peers may also have difficulty enacting assertive strategies effectively. Some youth who engage in aggression are very socially skilled and use these behaviors as part of a repertoire that includes prosocial strategies (Hawley, Little, & Pasupathi, 2002; Sutton, Smith, & Swettenham, 1999). However, these skillful aggressors may not be the ones nominated when peers are asked broad questions about who is aggressive. Although often treated, at least implicitly, as measures of behavioral frequency, what peer nominations of aggression are capturing is individuals’ reputations for that behavior (Bellmore et al., 2005). Reputation is correlated with behavioral frequency, but it is not a veridical index (Anderson & Shirako, 2008), and some youth who behave aggressively may be more likely to be perceived as aggressive than are others. Several lines of evidence suggest that youth who are less socially skilled may be more likely to be nominated as aggressive. Research with early adolescent girls has shown that the presence of positive behaviors reduces peers’ negative evaluations (Nangle & Foster, 1992). Moreover, during later childhood, observed disruptive behaviors, as well as physical and verbal aggression, have been linked to peer nominations of aggression, but observed malicious behaviors (i.e., proactive behaviors intended to harm) have not (Henry & MACS Research Group, 2006). Finally, greater peer-reported aggression is correlated with increased emotion dysregulation and decreased prosociality (Card, Stucky, Sawalani, & Little, 2008).

Such investigations suggest that youth reported to be aggressive by peers may be hostile and disruptive, rather than calculating and skillful. As such, when these youth use assertive strategies,

they may be communicating nonverbal messages that undercut the content of their statements. Indeed, children identified as reactively aggressive are more likely to display angry nonverbal behavior when provoked (Hubbard et al., 2002). Thus, when youth regarded as aggressive use assertive strategies, they may still sound angry and threatening. Taken together, there is reason to expect that the assertive behaviors that are generally viewed to be socially skillful (e.g., Bettencourt & Farrell, 2013) may not be associated with lower victimization for youth who are identified as aggressive by peers. Indeed, Camodeca et al. (2003) found that 8-year-olds identified by peers as both aggressive and victimized endorsed assertive responses to peer-provocation scenarios more frequently than both children reported to be only victimized or only aggressive, and at a rate comparable to children who were viewed as neither aggressive nor victimized.

The Current Study

The goals of the current study were to (1) examine the associations between early adolescents’ responses to peer provocation and their experience of peer victimization, and (2) test whether these linkages varied as a function of peer-nominated aggressiveness. We indexed youth responses to peer provocation using the Peer Provocation Inventory—Multiple Choice, which comprises hypothetical vignettes depicting physical, relational, and verbal provocation by a peer. Each scenario is paired with nine behavioral responses, including assertion (e.g., seeking an explanation), aggression (e.g., physical retaliation, damaging the aggressor’s relationship with others), avoidance (e.g., doing nothing), and telling an adult—based on actual strategies generated by early adolescents (Dirks et al., 2007b).

As reviewed previously, adolescents perceive assertive strategies to be effective responses to peer aggression (e.g., Dirks et al., 2010), suggesting that the selection of these strategies should be associated with less victimization. However, our central hypothesis was that this association would be moderated by peer-nominated aggressiveness, such that the selection of assertive strategies would be associated with lower victimization, but only for youth low on peer-nominated aggression. Previous research led us to hypothesize that telling an adult, as well as avoidant strategies such as doing nothing, may be associated with greater victimization during early adolescence (e.g., Bettencourt & Farrell, 2013; Boivin et al., 2010).

Although research has suggested that the link between greater aggression and increased victimization may be weaker among early adolescents relative to younger children (e.g., Cillessen & Lansu, 2015), the extant literature does not support a clear hypothesis about the direction of this association. Peer-reported aggressiveness may also moderate the associations between these other strategies and victimization. For example, when adolescents with aggressive reputations tell an adult, peers may perceive that the goal is to punish the aggressor, rather than to seek support, which could exacerbate the harassment. Thus, we conducted an exploratory test of these interactions. We also explored whether gender moderated either the direct associations between strategy selection and victimization, or the interactions between strategy selection and aggression.

METHODS

Participants

Participants were 648 early adolescents attending Grade 7 in four secondary schools in a large Canadian city, recruited in three consecutive years: Year 1, $n = 221$, M age = 12.94, $SD = .29$, 50.2% female, 78.7% non-Hispanic White; Year 2, $n = 295$, M age = 12.94, $SD = .31$, 52.5% female, 79.3% non-Hispanic White; and Year 3, $n = 132$, M age = 13.04, $SD = .31$, 53.8% female, 91.7% non-Hispanic White. These data are from the first wave of a planned 3-year longitudinal study.

Forms were sent home to parents of all students in Grade 7 ($N = 1,476$) asking for written consent, with the option of selecting "yes" or "no" to their child's participation. Youth who returned the form were entered in a draw for small prizes, regardless of whether their parent gave consent. One thousand and forty-three (70.7%) parents returned the form, and 715 parents (48.4%) gave consent. Six hundred and forty-eight youth are included in the current analyses. The remaining youth were absent or did not provide data on the measure assessing responses to peer provocation ($n = 28$, 3.9% of final sample), did not provide assent ($n = 9$, 1.3%), had moved ($n = 5$, 0.7%), or were excluded from analyses because the number of raters available for peer-nomination procedures was deemed too low to provide reliable data ($n = 25$, 3.5%).

Measures

Participants' reported responses to provocation were assessed using The Peer Provocation Inventory—

Multiple Choice (PPI-MC; Dirks, Treat, & Weersing, 2011), which consists of 11 scenarios depicting physical, relational, and verbal provocation. Each vignette is paired with nine behavioral responses, based on actual strategies generated by early adolescents (Dirks et al., 2007b), representing the following categories: physical aggression, verbal aggression, damaging the aggressor's relationship with others, ending the relationship with the aggressor (i.e., avoiding the aggressor in the future), doing nothing, seeking an explanation, telling an adult, and stating that the provocation crossed limits. The ninth response combines seeking an explanation and verbal aggression (e.g., "What's your problem?" rather than the less aggressive "Why did you do that?") because many youth generate responses involving both of these categories (Dirks et al., 2007b). In each story, the aggressor was described as "a kid you don't know very well." We identified the aggressor because research has shown that youth's responses to provocation change significantly as a function of who the aggressor is (e.g., Burgess et al., 2006); leaving this information unspecified means that youth are potentially responding to different situations, depending upon whom they imagine. Pilot data suggested that aggression by a less well-known classmate was more common than provocation by a friend. Character gender was matched to participant, because during early adolescence more victimization happens between same-gender peers (e.g., Felix & McMahon, 2006). Age of characters was also matched to participants. Sample items from the PPI-MC are presented in the appendix.

Because previous research has shown that youth often provide responses combining multiple strategies (Craig et al., 2007; Dirks et al., 2007b), participants were asked to choose every strategy they would use in each situation. They received a score for each type of response based on the total number of situations in which that strategy is endorsed (e.g., participants endorsing physical aggression to four vignettes receive a score of four for physical aggression). A subsample of participants ($n = 393$) completed the PPI-MC a second time (an average of 11 days later), and correlations between scores at the two time points indicated adequate test-retest reliability, with r s as follows: physical aggression, .77; verbal aggression, .78; ending relationship with the aggressor, .59; damaging the aggressor's relationship with others, .74; doing nothing, .65; seeking an explanation, .70; telling an adult, .77; stating that the provocation crossed limits, .70; seeking an explanation + verbal aggression, .70, all $ps < .001$.

Construction of specific response variables was based on conceptual and empirical considerations. Previous factor-analytic work with this version of the PPI-MC (Dirks et al., 2014) demonstrated that three strategies—seeking an explanation, stating that the provocation crossed limits, and seeking an explanation + verbal aggression—had strong primary loadings on an assertive factor; another three—physical aggression, verbal aggression, and damaging the aggressor’s relationship with others—formed an aggression factor. Doing nothing and ending the relationship with the aggressor loaded onto an avoidance factor. Telling an adult did not have a clear primary loading. We refit the three-factor model in this data set.¹ The same assertion and aggression factors emerged. Ending the relationship with the aggressor had a primary loading on the third factor, but doing nothing and telling an adult did not load strongly on any factor.

Thus, we combined seeking an explanation, stating that the provocation crossed limits, and seeking an explanation + verbal aggression to form one index of assertive responding, by assigning participants a score of 1 for each situation in which they endorsed any combination of the strategies identified as assertive and no other responses (e.g., a response in which the participant endorsed seeking an explanation and physical aggression did not count). The same algorithm was applied to the three aggressive strategies to compute an aggression score. Given the results of the factor analysis, we created separate variables for doing nothing and ending the relationship, along with telling an

adult, by assigning a score of 1 each time a participant selected only that strategy. For each response type, scores were totaled across situations. Of the total number of responses endorsed (7,128), 34.2%, 15.0%, 8.4%, 2.0%, and 1.0% were categorized as assertive, aggressive, doing nothing, telling an adult, and ending the relationship, respectively. Because the final three strategies were endorsed infrequently, these variables were dichotomized, such that participants who never endorsed the response received a score of 0 and those who endorsed it once or more scored 1.

Victimization and *aggression* were assessed with peer nominations. Participants read five descriptions of victimization: physical, “hit, pushed, or kicked by other kids”; verbal, “teased, called names, or made fun of by other kids”; relational, “other kids gossip about or say bad things about him/her behind his/her back” and “excluded by a group of friends or given the silent treatment”; and general, “picked on by other kids” (Crick & Bigbee, 1998; Ladd & Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2002). Four items captured aggression: physical, “physically hurts others (e.g., hitting, pushing)”; relational, “does things to damage or hurt other people’s social relationships, for example, by spreading rumors about them, gossiping, or saying mean things behind their back”; and “uses their friendships as a way of being mean to others; for example, by telling people they won’t be their friend, excluding people from a group, or giving people the silent treatment”; and verbal, “says mean things or threatens other kids” (De Los Reyes & Prinstein, 2004). Each item was paired with a list of participating students, and participants were asked to circle the name of every person who fit the description. Order of names on rosters was always randomized, and participants never appeared on their own lists.

The specific procedures used to assign names to peer-nomination rosters varied across schools. In the first school ($n = 30$), school administrators expected that all students would know each other; thus, all participants were included on the rosters for all items. The second school ($n = 183$) included two academic “streams,” and youth were not expected to know students outside their own stream, so each item was paired with a roster of all participating students in the same stream. In the third and fourth schools ($ns = 194, 241$), youth rotated through classes with all other students in their grade, making it infeasible to include every name on each roster. Thus, each item was paired with a random subset of 60 participants. A

¹We used exploratory structural equation modeling (ESEM; Asparouhov & Muthén, 2009), which allowed us to specify the number of factors, but permits all items to load on all factors. This approach is advantageous because many measures do not show “simple structure,” that is, each item loading on only one factor (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2009; see Dirks et al., 2014). In a confirmatory factor-analytic framework, unanticipated cross-loadings are set to zero, which can distort the factor structure and result in significant post hoc model modification. This analysis was conducted in MPlus 7.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2010). A CF varimax rotation was applied. The three-factor model provided adequate fit to the data: $\chi^2(12) = 44.09, p < .05$; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .064 (90% confidence interval (CI) = .045–.085), comparative fit index (CFI) = .98. Primary factor loadings for each strategy were as follows: Factor 1, physical aggression (.55), verbal aggression (.91), damaging the aggressor’s relationship with others (.48); Factor 2, seeking an explanation (.90), stating that the provocation crossed limits (.77), seeking an explanation + verbal aggression (.64), telling an adult (.26); Factor 3, ending relationship with the aggressor (.73), doing nothing (.28). All $ps < .01$. The largest cross-loading of a strategy to a second factor was seeking an explanation + verbal aggression on Factor 1 (aggression), .39, $p < .001$.

different subset of names appeared with every item, and all participants appeared on approximately the same number of peer-nomination forms. Previous work has shown that the use of random subsets yields comparable data to complete lists (Bellmore, Jiang, & Juvonen, 2010). After completing their nominations, youth were given a list of all participating students in their school or stream and asked to cross out the name of anyone they did not know (Bellmore et al., 2010). When people's names were crossed out, they were not counted as having been on those rosters. The percentage of students who participated in each stream and school ranged from 41.8% to 56.1%. The mean number of raters per item was 33.

Participants' scores for each item were calculated by adding up the number of nominations they received and dividing by the number of raters. Exploratory factor analysis indicated that all victimization items and all aggression items each loaded on a single factor explaining 75.0% and 69.0% of the variance, respectively. All factor loadings for victimization exceeded .80 and all factor loadings for aggression exceeded .77. Thus, we created overall scores for both constructs by computing participants' total scores for all relevant items, $\alpha_s = .91$ for victimization and .84 for aggression.

Procedure

All procedures were approved by the relevant research ethics board. Written consent/assent was obtained from all parents and youth. Data were collected in the spring so that participants had had a chance to get to know each other. Measures were administered to participants in groups. Research assistants provided close supervision to ensure confidentiality and were available to help participants who had difficulties reading the questionnaires. We returned to schools for additional visits to collect data from participants who had been absent.

Data Analysis

We tested our questions using linear regression models with victimization as the dependent variable. In the first model, predictor variables were gender and peer-nominated aggression. Subsequently, we added youth's endorsement of response strategies and then the two-way interactions between each strategy and peer-nominated aggression. A reflected inverse transformation was applied to peer-nominated aggression and

victimization to reduce positive skew and kurtosis. Continuous predictor variables were mean centered. School and cohort (i.e., year of enrollment) were included as effect-coded covariates in all models to control for mean-level differences.

We then examined whether associations varied by gender. It was not possible to test gender interactions for all five strategies in one model due to multicollinearity. Thus, we constructed five models that included cohort, school, gender, peer-nominated aggression, endorsement of the five response strategies, the three-way interaction between gender, peer-nominated aggression, and one of the response strategies, and all component two-way interactions. All analyses were conducted in MPlus 7.0 using a robust maximum-likelihood estimation procedure (MLR; Muthén & Muthén, 2010).

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and correlations among study variables are presented in Table 1, and analytic results are reported in Table 2. Gender was associated with victimization, such that boys were rated as more victimized than were girls. Greater peer-nominated aggression predicted higher victimization. Including youth's responses to peer provocation in the model explained an additional 5.0% of the variance in victimization, $F_{inc}(5, 635) = 11.04, p < .01$. Reported use of aggressive responding was associated with lower victimization, whereas telling an adult was associated with more victimization. There were no direct associations between victimization and endorsement of any other strategy.

Next, we added the two-way interactions between response endorsement and peer-reported aggression to the model, which explained a further 2.0% of the variance in victimization, $F_{inc}(5, 630) = 4.51, p < .01$. These interaction terms were significant for telling an adult (Figure 1), assertion (Figure 2), and doing nothing (Figure 3). We unpacked these interactions using the recentering strategy outlined by Whisman and McClelland (2005). We created three aggression variables: centered at the mean (average), one standard deviation above the mean (high), and one standard deviation below the mean (low). We then computed separate models that included one of the aggression variables, response endorsement, their respective interaction, and all covariates. In each model, the main effect of response endorsement represents the association between that response and victimization at that level of aggression.

TABLE 1
Zero-Order Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.	17.
1. Gender	—																
<i>Responses to Peer Provocation</i>																	
2. Assertion	.11**	—															
3. Telling an adult	-.02	.05	—														
4. Doing nothing	-.08*	.11**	.07	—													
5. Ending relationship with aggressor	.03	-.06	.06	.06	—												
6. Aggression	-.22**	-.25**	.01	-.03	.17**	—											
<i>Peer-Nominated Victimization</i>																	
7. Physical	-.36**	-.08*	.14**	.05	.00	.13**	—										
8. Verbal	-.29**	-.08*	.18**	.00	-.02	.06	.70**	—									
9. Relational aggression I	-.04	-.07	.11**	-.01	.02	.09*	.54**	.68**	—								
10. Relational aggression II	-.10*	-.06	.18**	-.03	.00	.03	.64**	.70**	.63**	—							
11. General	-.28**	-.07	.18**	.02	-.01	.05	.75**	.84**	.66**	.73**	—						
12. Overall	-.27**	-.12**	.18**	-.01	.00	.08*	.74**	.85**	.82**	.78**	.83**	—					
<i>Peer-Nominated Aggression</i>																	
13. Physical	-.30**	-.15**	.00	-.06	-.04	.29**	.41**	.29**	.35**	.21**	.29**	.34**	—				
14. Verbal	-.22**	-.14**	-.03	-.08*	-.01	.29**	.31**	.25**	.43**	.19**	.25**	.34**	.75**	—			
15. Relational I	.10*	-.13**	.01	-.10*	.03	.17**	.17**	.17**	.53**	.17**	.15**	.33**	.47**	.65**	—		
16. Relational II	.13**	-.10*	.00	-.10**	.05	.08*	.11**	.14**	.48**	.14**	.11*	.27**	.35**	.54**	.75**	—	
17. Overall	-.10*	-.17*	-.01	-.09*	.02	.26**	.30**	.25**	.54**	.22**	.24**	.39**	.69**	.85**	.87**	.78**	—
Mean (SD), Min-Max		3.83, (2.69), 0-11				1.68 (2.09), 0-10	0.04 (0.07), 0-0.55	0.07 (0.10), 0-0.72	0.08 (0.09), 0-0.60	0.04 (0.06), 0-0.44	0.05 (0.09), 0-0.72	1.18 (0.15), 1-1.72	0.02 (0.05), 0-0.43	0.04 (0.07), 0-0.67	0.05 (0.07), 0-0.52	0.03 (0.04), 0-0.31	1.10 (0.12), 1-1.64
Percentage coded as 1	52.0%		12.0%	47.8%	10.5%												

Notes. Gender was dummy-coded with boys = 0. "Responses to peer provocation" are participants' endorsement of strategies on the Peer Provocation Inventory—Multiple Choice. Assertion and aggression are continuous variables capturing the number of times participants endorsed responses involving only those strategies. Doing nothing, telling an adult, and ending the relationship are dichotomous variables coded such that 0 = strategy never endorsed and 1 = strategy endorsed at least once. Relational I victimization/aggression is "other kids gossip about or say bad things about behind his/her back"/"does things to damage or hurt other people's social relationships, for example, by spreading rumors about them, gossiping, or saying mean things behind their back." Relational II victimization/aggression is "excluded by a group of friends or given the silent treatment"/"uses their friendships as a way of being mean to others; for example, by telling people they won't be their friend, excluding people from a group, or giving people the silent treatment." General victimization is the item "picked on by other kids." Overall victimization/aggression is the total of the victimization/aggression items. A reflected inverse transformation was applied to both variables to reduce skewness and kurtosis.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 2
Standardized Coefficients Linking Responses to Peer Provocation and Peer-Nominated Aggression to Peer-Nominated Victimization

	Model 1 ($R^2 = .23$)	Model 2 ($R^2 = .28$)	Model 3 ($R^2 = .30$)
Cohort 1	-.01	-.02	-.01
Cohort 2	.04	.04	.04
School 1	.06	.02	.03
School 2	-.19**	-.16**	-.16**
School 3	.08	.09	.09
Gender	-.24**	-.25**	-.26***
Peer-nominated aggression	.35**	.39**	.43***
<i>Responses to Peer Provocation</i>			
Assertion		-.03	-.02
Aggression		-.09*	-.08*
Doing nothing		.01	-.01
Telling an adult		.17**	.18**
Ending the relationship		.00	-.01
<i>Interactions between Peer-Nominated Aggression and Response</i>			
x Assertion			.09*
x Aggression			.00
x Doing nothing			-.10*
x Telling an adult			.11**
x Ending the relationship			-.02

Notes. Cohort and school were effect-coded variables. Gender was dummy-coded with 0 = boys. "Responses to peer provocation" are participants' endorsement of strategies on the Peer Provocation Inventory—Multiple Choice. Assertion and aggression are continuous variables capturing the number of situations in which participants endorsed responses involving only those strategies. Doing nothing, telling an adult, and ending the relationship are dichotomous variables coded such that 0 = strategy never endorsed and 1 = strategy endorsed at least once.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Results indicated that endorsement of telling an adult was not associated with victimization when aggression was low, $\beta = .06$, $p > .05$, but was associated with greater victimization when aggression was moderate, $\beta = .17$, or high, $\beta = .27$, $ps < .01$. Greater endorsement of assertion was associated with lower peer victimization when peer-nominated aggression was low, $\beta = -.13$, $p < .01$, but not when peer-nominated aggression was average, $\beta = -.02$, or high, $\beta = .08$, $ps > .05$. Doing nothing was not associated with telling an adult at low, moderate, or high levels of aggression, $\beta s = .07$, $.00$, $-.06$, $ps > .05$.

Finally, we constructed the regression models examining whether gender moderated the associations between strategy endorsement and victimization. There was a significant interaction between gender and endorsement of telling an adult,

$\beta = -.14$, $p < .05$. We re-ran the model separately for boys and girls and found a significant association between the reported use of telling an adult and victimization for boys, $\beta = .23$, $p < .01$, but not girls, $\beta = .09$, $p > .05$. No other Response x Gender interactions were significant, and none of the two-way interactions between response and peer-nominated aggression were qualified by a three-way interaction with gender.

DISCUSSION

We examined the associations between victimization and early adolescents' reported use of five strategies in response to hypothetical provocations committed by a same-gender classmate they did not know well: assertion, telling an adult, doing nothing, ending the relationship with the aggressor (i.e., avoiding him/her in the future), and aggression. As hypothesized, links between selection of assertive strategies and victimization varied as a function of a reputation for aggressiveness. Specifically, reported use of assertive strategies was associated with lower victimization, but only for early adolescents rated low on aggression by peers. Research has suggested that adolescents perceive assertive behaviors to be effective responses to peer aggression (Bettencourt & Farrell, 2013; Craig et al., 2007; Dirks et al., 2010). Our results, however, suggest that there may be important qualifiers to this general conclusion. Assertive behaviors may not be associated with positive social outcomes for all youth, or alternatively, some youth who are experiencing significant interpersonal problems may nonetheless be engaging in social behaviors that would appear to be appropriate.

Although adults often recommend that youth seek help from a grown-up when they experience victimization (see Visconti & Troop-Gordon, 2010), few of our participants reported relying exclusively on this strategy. Moreover, endorsement of telling an adult predicted greater victimization, although this association was only present for boys. This gender difference may be driven, at least in part, by the fact that boys are more likely to be targeted physically than are girls (e.g., Turner et al., 2013), and such circumstances may make it more likely that they seek adult intervention (Newman et al., 2001). Interestingly, one study found that boys view telling an adult to be a more effective response to peer aggression than do girls (Dirks et al., 2010). Boys experiencing higher levels of victimization may accrue benefits from turning to an adult in these situations, such as receiving support

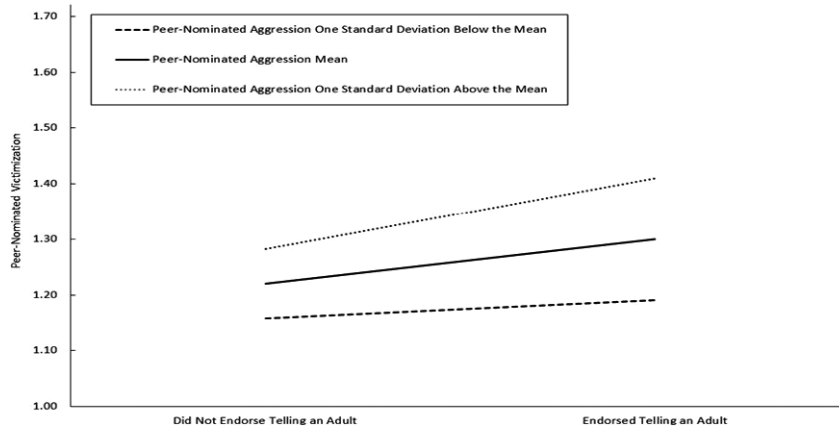


FIGURE 1 Associations between youth’s endorsement of telling an adult in response to peer provocation and peer-nominated victimization as a function of peer-nominated aggression.

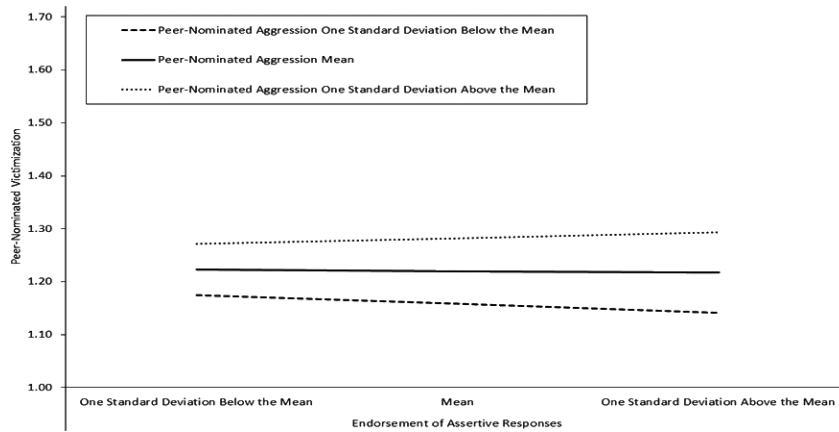


FIGURE 2 Associations between youth’s endorsement of assertive strategies in response to peer provocation and peer-nominated victimization as a function of peer-nominated aggression.

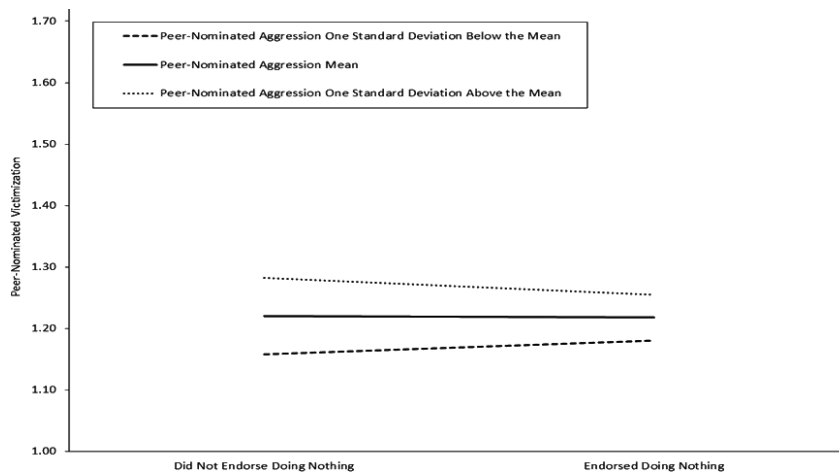


FIGURE 3 Associations between youth’s endorsement of doing nothing in response to peer provocation and peer-nominated victimization as a function of peer-nominated aggression.

that may alleviate feelings of loneliness and isolation (see Aceves, Hinshaw, Mendoza-Denton, & Page-Gould, 2010).

A significant interaction between the reported use of telling an adult and peer-nominated aggression revealed that the association between telling an adult and higher victimization was stronger for youth rated as aggressive. Here again, it may be that youth experiencing higher levels of victimization who are also viewed as aggressive are targeted more severely, although studies using latent class analysis to classify youth as either victims or aggressive victims have not clearly established that the latter group experiences greater victimization than the former (e.g., Giang & Graham, 2008; Williford, Brisson, Bender, Jenson, & Forrest-Bank, 2011). It could also be that for youth whom peers judge to be aggressive, as well as for boys, telling an adult exacerbates their harassment by peers. Perhaps seeking adult intervention is interpreted as hostile under these circumstances. Additional work with longitudinal data is necessary to untangle these possibilities.

As with telling an adult, few youth endorsed either doing nothing or ending the relationship (i.e., ignoring the aggressor in the future), a finding that is consistent with adolescents' evaluations of avoidant strategies as inept solutions to interpersonal problems (Bettencourt & Farrell, 2013). Given this perception, we predicted that these responses would be associated with greater victimization. This hypothesis was not supported, but analyses revealed a significant interaction between selection of doing nothing and peer-nominated aggression, such that for youth low on peer-nominated aggression, endorsement of doing nothing was associated with greater victimization, whereas for those high on peer-nominated aggression, it was associated with less victimization. This pattern should be interpreted with caution, because none of the simple slopes was significant; that is, selection of this strategy did not actually predict victimization at low, average, or high levels of aggression. It will be important to attempt to replicate this pattern in other samples. This interaction did not emerge for ending the relationship and victimization, possibly because this strategy was endorsed so infrequently.

Although work with younger children suggests that aggressive retaliation may exacerbate victimization, we found that greater endorsement of aggressive strategies predicted lower victimization. Some early adolescents view aggressive strategies

to be effective responses to peer provocation (Dirks et al., 2010), and the reported use of aggressive retaliation to provocation has been linked to less victimization in some circumstances (e.g., when endorsed by boys who were not highly victimized; Elledge et al., 2010). Moreover, research has suggested that many youth engage in aggressive behavior in specific situations, as part of a repertoire that includes other social strategies, such as assertion (Dirks et al., 2014). These "bistrategic" individuals may experience better social outcomes than do youth who are more broadly aggressive (see Hawley et al., 2002). It is important to note that inspection of the zero-order correlations (Table 1) reveals that the selection of aggressive strategies was associated with greater victimization. Thus, endorsement of aggression may be linked to less victimization only after accounting for variance shared with peer-reported aggressiveness. Our results, and the literature more broadly, hint that the links between aggressive behavior and victimization are complex, and may vary as a function of characteristics of individuals and situations.

In summary, for three of the five strategies studied we found that the associations with victimization varied as a function of peer-reported aggressiveness, a pattern that has implications for both research and practice. These results suggest that rather than focusing on the direct links between youth's interpersonal behavior and their social outcomes, there may be utility in determining whether the relationships between strategies and important adjustment indices vary systematically across individuals. Clinically, these findings suggest that characteristics of individuals be considered when advising adolescents on how to respond to peer aggression. Before firm recommendations are made, it will be necessary to examine the prospective associations between response endorsement and victimization. Research with younger children suggests that strategy selection predicts subsequent victimization (e.g., Kochenderfer-Ladd, 2004), but the specific behaviors that are linked to greater victimization may differ in adolescence, and importantly, even a strategy broadly perceived to be effective, such as assertion, may not be equally effective for all adolescents. Future work should identify other moderators of the associations between interpersonal behavior and social adjustment; in particular, it may be beneficial to pinpoint factors that contribute to aggressive behaviors being more favorably received by peers, such as sociability and engagement in prosocial behaviors (e.g., Puckett, Wargo Aikins, & Cillessen, 2008).

A number of limitations of the current work must be noted. First, we measured youth's responses to peer provocation using hypothetical vignettes. We chose this approach because of its primary strength: we could present participants with multiple, standardized situations. However, this method also has limitations. Although research has established that youths' responses to hypothetical vignettes converge with others' ratings of their behavior (e.g., Dirks et al., 2014; Dodge et al., 2015), these measures index what youth would do. As such, youth's intentions may influence their responses to hypothetical scenarios more than their retrospective reports of behavior in actual situations. It will be critical to attempt to replicate our findings using methodologies that capture youth's behavior when they experience victimization. Hypothetical vignettes also do not provide access to many critical components of interpersonal behavior, such as facial expressions and tone of voice, nor do they capture youth's ability to enact interpersonal strategies. Thus, it will also be important to use observational procedures to develop a more detailed picture of the quality of the behaviors in which youth are engaging. In addition, our vignettes clearly specified the identity of the aggressor. We made this choice because behavior is relationally bound, and who the aggressor is changes youth's responses (e.g., Burgess et al., 2006). Specifying the aggressor's identity, though, means that our findings may not generalize to other victimization situations, including cross-gender victimization, which may require different types of responses.

Second, the effect sizes observed in this study were small. However, youth's selection of responses explained a significant variability in victimization, and data were obtained from multiple informants, so estimates were not inflated by shared method variance. Third, we relied on peer reports of victimization. We used peer nominations so that responses to provocation and victimization were measured using different informants and because there is some evidence that self-reports may overestimate victimization (e.g., De Los Reyes & Prinstein, 2004). Nonetheless, the findings may change if a different informant is used. Finally, a significant number of available students did not take part, which could affect the validity of peer-nomination measures and generalizability of the findings. These concerns are mitigated somewhat by the correspondence of the results to our central hypothesis.

In spite of these limitations, this study provides evidence that the associations between youth's reported responses to provocation by a same-gender classmate and their experience of victimization vary as a function of their peer-reported aggressiveness. Given the complexity of interpersonal behaviors, there may not always be straightforward, direct links between behavioral strategies and interpersonal outcomes. Identifying moderators of these associations will translate into a deeper understanding of interpersonal behavior during adolescence. More broadly, elucidating how youth make sense of the behavioral displays of their peers, as they integrate information across individuals and their actions to draw inferences about behavioral intentions and outcomes, may provide nuanced insight into how and for whom specific behaviors are associated with interpersonal success or sanction.

APPENDIX

Sample Vignette and Responses From the Peer Provocation Inventory—Multiple Choice

You are on your way back to class after picking up something at the office for your teacher. You are just about to walk back into your classroom when you hear two boys standing together at the back of the room, talking about you. You hear one boy tell a story about something really mean that you did to him on the way home from school yesterday. You know you did not actually do what the boy said. The other person is really shocked, and says that what you did was terrible, and that he is surprised that anyone wanted to be friends with you.

<i>Response</i>	<i>Response Category</i>
Go right up to him and shove him	Physical aggression
Yell at him	Verbal aggression
Never speak to him again	Ending relationship with aggressor
Tell lies about him	Damaging the aggressor's relationship with others
Say nothing and walk away	Doing nothing
Say "Why are you saying that?"	Seeking an explanation
Tell the teacher that he said things about me that aren't true	Telling an adult
Say "That's not true"	Stating that the provocation crossed personal limits
Say "What's wrong with you?"	Seeking an explanation + verbal aggression

REFERENCES

- Aceves, M. J., Hinshaw, S. P., Mendoza-Denton, R., & Page-Gould, E. (2010). Seek help from teachers or fight back? Student perceptions of teachers' actions during conflicts and response to peer victimization. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *39*, 658–669. doi:10.1007/s10964-009-9441-9
- Anderson, C., & Shirako, A. (2008). Are individuals' reputations related to their history of behavior? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *94*, 320–333. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.94.2.320
- Asparouhov, T., & Muthén, B. (2009). Exploratory structural equation modeling. *Structural Equation Modeling*, *16*, 397–438. doi:10.1080/10705510903008204
- Bellmore, A., Chen, W. T., & Rischall, E. (2013). The reasons behind early adolescents' responses to peer victimization. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *42*, 275–284. doi:10.1007/s10964-012-9825-0
- Bellmore, A., Jiang, X. L., & Juvonen, J. (2010). Utilizing peer nominations in middle school: A longitudinal comparison between complete classroom-based and random list methods. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, *20*, 538–550. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2010.00640.x
- Bellmore, A. D., Witkow, M. R., Graham, S., & Juvonen, J. (2005). From beliefs to behavior: The mediating role of hostile response selection in predicting aggression. *Aggressive Behavior*, *31*, 453–472. doi:10.1002/ab.20094
- Bettencourt, A. F., & Farrell, A. D. (2013). Individual and contextual factors associated with patterns of aggression and peer victimization during middle school. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, *42*, 285–302. doi:10.1007/s10964-012-9854-8
- Bierman, K. L. (2004). *Peer rejection: Developmental processes and intervention strategies*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Boivin, M., Petitclerc, A., Feng, B., & Barker, E. D. (2010). The developmental trajectories of peer victimization in middle to late childhood and the changing nature of their behavioral correlates. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, *56*, 231–260. doi:10.1353/mpq.0.0050
- Burgess, K. B., Wojslawowicz, J. C., Rubin, K. H., Rose-Krasnor, L., & Booth-LaForce, C. (2006). Social information processing and coping strategies of shy/withdrawn and aggressive children: Does friendship matter? *Child Development*, *77*, 371–383. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00876.x
- Calvete, E., & Orue, I. (2012). Social information processing as a mediator between cognitive schemas and aggressive behavior in adolescents. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *40*, 105–117. doi:10.1007/s10802-011-9546-y
- Camodeca, M., Goossens, F. A., Schuengel, C., & Terwogt, M. M. (2003). Links between social information processing in middle childhood and involvement in bullying. *Aggressive Behavior*, *29*, 116–127. doi:10.1002/ab.10043
- Card, N. A., & Hodges, E. V. (2008). Peer victimization among schoolchildren: Correlations, causes, consequences, and considerations in assessment and intervention. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *23*, 451–461. doi:10.1037/a0012769
- Card, N. A., Stucky, B. D., Sawalani, G. M., & Little, T. D. (2008). Direct and indirect aggression during childhood and adolescence: A meta-analytic review of gender differences, intercorrelations, and relations to maladjustment. *Child Development*, *79*, 1185–1229. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2008.01184.x
- Cillessen, A. H., & Lansu, T. A. (2015). Stability, correlates, and time-covarying associations of peer victimization from Grade 4 to 12. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, *44*, 456–470. doi:10.1080/15374416.2014.958841
- Cook, C. R., Williams, K. R., Guerra, N. G., Kim, T. E., & Sadek, S. (2010). Predictors of bullying and victimization in childhood and adolescence: A meta-analytic investigation. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *25*, 65–83. doi:10.1037/a0020149
- Copeland, W. E., Wolke, D., Angold, A., & Costello, E. J. (2013). Adult psychiatric outcomes of bullying and being bullied by peers in childhood and adolescence. *JAMA Psychiatry*, *70*, 419–426. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2013.504
- Craig, W., Harel-Fisch, Y., Fogel-Grinvald, H., Dostaler, S., Hetland, J., Simons-Morton, B., Pickett, W. (2009). A cross-national profile of bullying and victimization among adolescents in 40 countries. *International Journal of Public Health*, *54*, 216–224. doi:10.1007/s00038-009-5413-9
- Craig, W., Pepler, D., & Blais, J. (2007). Responding to bullying: What works? *School Psychology International*, *28*, 465–477. doi:10.1177/0143034307084136
- Crick, N. R., & Bigbee, M. A. (1998). Relational and overt forms of peer victimization: A multiinformant approach. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *66*, 337–347. doi:10.1037/0022-006x.66.2.337
- Crick, N. R., & Dodge, K. A. (1994). A review and reformulation of social information-processing mechanisms in children's social adjustment. *Psychological Bulletin*, *115*, 74–101. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.115.1.74
- De Los Reyes, A., & Prinstein, M. J. (2004). Applying depression-distortion hypotheses to the assessment of peer victimization in adolescents. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, *33*, 325–335. doi:10.1207/s15374424jccp3302_14
- Deluty, R. H. (1979). Children's Action Tendency Scale: A self-report measure of aggressiveness, assertiveness, and submissiveness in children. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *47*, 1061–1071. doi:10.1037/0022-006X.47.6.1061
- Dirks, M. A., Suor, J. H., Rusch, D., & Frazier, S. L. (2014). Children's responses to hypothetical provocation by peers: Coordination of assertive and aggressive strategies. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *42*, 1077–1087. doi:10.1007/s10802-014-9862-0
- Dirks, M. A., Treat, T. A., & Weersing, V. R. (2007a). Integrating theoretical, measurement, and intervention

- models of youth social competence. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 27, 327–347. doi:10.1016/j.cpr.2006.11.002
- Dirks, M. A., Treat, T. A., & Weersing, V. R. (2007b). The situation specificity of youth responses to peer provocation. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 36, 621–628. doi:10.1080/15374410701662758
- Dirks, M. A., Treat, T. A., & Weersing, V. R. (2010). The judge specificity of evaluations of youth social behavior: The case of peer provocation. *Social Development*, 19, 736–757. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9507.2009.00559.x
- Dirks, M. A., Treat, T. A., & Weersing, V. R. (2011). The latent structure of youth responses to peer provocation. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, 33, 58–68. doi:10.1007/s10862-010-9206-5
- Dodge, K. A., Lansford, J. E., Burks, V. S., Bates, J. E., Pettit, G. S., Fontaine, R., & Price, J. M. (2003). Peer rejection and social information-processing factors in the development of aggressive behavior problems in children. *Child Development*, 74, 374–393. doi:10.1111/1467-8624.7402004
- Dodge, K. A., Malone, P. S., Lansford, J. E., Sorbring, E., Skinner, A. T., Tapanya, S., Pastorelli, C. (2015). Hostile attributional bias and aggressive behavior in global context. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 112, 9310–9315. doi:10.1073/pnas.1418572112
- Due, P., & Holstein, B. E. (2008). Bullying victimization among 13 to 15 year old school children: Results from two comparative studies in 66 countries and regions. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 20, 209–221. doi:10.1515/IJAMH.2008.20.2.209
- Elledge, L. C., Cavell, T. A., Ogle, N. T., Malcolm, K. T., Newgent, R. A., & Faith, M. A. (2010). History of peer victimization and children's response to school bullying. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 25, 129–141. doi:10.1037/a0020313
- Felix, E. D., & McMahon, S. D. (2006). Gender and multiple forms of peer victimization: How do they influence adolescent psychosocial adjustment? *Violence and Victims*, 21, 707–724. doi:10.1891/0886-6708.21.6.707
- Giang, M. T., & Graham, S. (2008). Using latent class analysis to identify aggressors and victims of peer harassment. *Aggressive Behavior*, 34, 203–213. doi:10.1002/ab.20233
- Goldstein, S. E., Tisak, M. S., Persson, A. V., & Boxer, P. (2006). Children's evaluations of ambiguous provocation by relationally aggressive, physically aggressive and prosocial peers. *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, 24, 701–708. doi:10.1348/026151005x64055
- Gresham, F. M., & Elliott, S. N. (2008). *Social skills improvement system rating scales*. manual, MN: NCS Pearson.
- Guerra, N. G., Williams, K. R., & Sadek, S. (2011). Understanding bullying and victimization during childhood and adolescence: A mixed methods study. *Child Development*, 82, 295–310. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01556.x
- Hawley, P. H., Little, T. D., & Pasupathi, M. (2002). Winning friends and influencing peers: Strategies of peer influence in late childhood. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 26, 466–474. doi:10.1080/01650250143000427
- Henry, D. B., & Metropolitan Area Child Study (MACS) Research Group. (2006). Associations between peer nominations, teacher ratings, self-reports, and observations of malicious and disruptive behavior. *Assessment*, 13, 241–252. doi: 10.1177/1073191106287668
- Hubbard, J. A., Smithmyer, C. M., Ramsden, S. R., Parker, E. H., Flanagan, K. D., Dearing, K. F., Relyea, N., & Simons, R. F. (2002). Observational, physiological, and self-report measures of children's anger: Relations to reactive versus proactive aggression. *Child Development*, 73, 1101–1118. doi:10.1111/1467-8624.00460
- Hymel, S., Wagner, E., & Butler, L. J. (1990). Reputational bias: View from the peer group. In S. R. Asher & J. D. Coie (Eds.), *Peer rejection in childhood* (pp. 156–188). New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Kochenderfer-Ladd, B. (2004). Peer victimization: The role of emotions in adaptive and maladaptive coping. *Social Development*, 13, 329–349. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9507.2004.00271.x
- Komolova, M., & Wainryb, C. (2011). "What I want and what you want": Children's thinking about competing personal preferences. *Social Development*, 20, 335–352. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9507.2010.00589.x
- Ladd, G. W., & Kochenderfer-Ladd, B. (2002). Identifying victims of peer aggression from early to middle childhood: Analysis of cross-informant data for concordance, estimation of relational adjustment, prevalence of victimization, and characteristics of identified victims. *Psychological Assessment*, 14, 74–96. doi:10.1037/1040-3590.14.1.74
- Langlois, J. H., & Stephan, C. (1977). The effects of physical attractiveness and ethnicity on children's behavioral attributions and peer preferences. *Child Development*, 48, 1694–1698. doi:10.2307/1128538
- Mahady Wilton, M. M., Craig, W. M., & Pepler, D. J. (2000). Emotional regulation and display in classroom victims of bullying: Characteristic expressions of affect, coping styles and relevant contextual factors. *Social Development*, 9, 226–245. doi:10.1111/1467-9507.00121
- Miller, L. M., Charles, S. T., & Fingerma, K. L. (2009). Perceptions of social transgressions in adulthood. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B, Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 64, 551–559. doi:10.1093/geronb/gbp062
- Muthén, L. K., & Muthén, B. (2010). *Mplus user's guide*. Los Angeles, CA: Muthén & Muthén.
- Nangle, D. W., & Foster, S. L. (1992). The effects of a positive behavioral context on the social impact of aggressive behavior. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 20, 543–553. doi:10.1007/BF00911239
- Nansel, T. R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R. S., Ruan, W. J., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among US youth. *Journal of the American*

- Medical Association*, 285, 2094–2100. doi:10.1001/jama.285.16.2094
- Newman, R. S., Murray, B., & Lussier, C. (2001). Confrontation with aggressive peers at school: Students' reluctance to seek help from the teacher. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93, 398–410. doi:10.1037/0022-0663.93.2.398
- Ollendick, T. H. (1984). Development and validation of the Children's Assertiveness Inventory. *Child and Family Behavior Therapy*, 5, 1–15. doi:10.1300/J019v05n03_01
- Patterson, G. R., Littman, R. A., & Bricker, W. (1967). Assertive behavior in children: A step toward a theory of aggression. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development*, 32, 1–43. doi:10.2307/1165737
- Paul, J. J., & Cillessen, A. H. (2003). Dynamics of peer victimization in early adolescence: Results from a four-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Applied School Psychology*, 19, 25–43. doi:10.1300/J008v19n02_03
- Puckett, M. B., Wargo Aikins, J., & Cillessen, A. H. N. (2008). Moderators of the association between relational aggression and perceived popularity. *Aggressive Behavior*, 34, 563–576. doi:10.1002/ab.20280
- Scholte, R. H., Engels, R. C., Overbeek, G., De Kemp, R. A., & Haselager, G. J. (2007). Stability in bullying and victimization and its association with social adjustment in childhood and adolescence. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 35, 217–228. doi:10.1007/s10802-006-9074-3
- Shaw, L. A., & Wainryb, C. (2006). When victims don't cry: Children's understandings of victimization, compliance, and subversion. *Child Development*, 77, 1050–1062. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8624.2006.00918.x
- Shoda, Y., Mischel, W., & Wright, J. C. (1994). Intraindividual stability in the organization and patterning of behavior: Incorporating psychological situations into the idiographic analysis of personality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67, 674–687. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.67.4.674
- Sutton, J., Smith, P. K., & Swettenham, J. (1999). Bullying and "theory of mind": A critique of the "social skills deficit" view of anti-social behaviour. *Social Development*, 8, 117–127. doi:10.1111/1467-9507.00083
- Terranova, A., Boxer, P., & Morris, A. (2010). Responding to peer victimization in middle childhood: What is a victim to do? *Journal of Aggression, Conflict and Peace Research*, 2, 15–24. doi:10.5042/jacpr.2010.0533
- Turner, M. G., Exum, M. L., Brame, R., & Holt, T. J. (2013). Bullying victimization and adolescent mental health: General and typological effects across sex. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 41, 53–59. doi:10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2012.12.005
- Visconti, K. J., & Troop-Gordon, W. (2010). Prospective relations between children's responses to peer victimization and their socioemotional adjustment. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 31, 261–272. doi:10.1016/j.appdev.2010.05.003
- Wang, J., Iannotti, R. J., & Nansel, T. R. (2009). School bullying among adolescents in the United States: Physical, verbal, relational, and cyber. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 45, 368–375. doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2009.03.021
- Whisman, M. A., & McClelland, G. H. (2005). Designing, testing, and interpreting interactions and moderator effects in family research. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 19, 111–120. doi:10.1037/0893-3200.19.1.111
- Williams, F., & Cornell, D. G. (2006). Student willingness to seek help for threats of violence in middle school. *Journal of School Violence*, 5, 35–49. doi:10.1300/J202v05n04_04
- Williford, A. P., Brisson, D., Bender, K. A., Jenson, J. M., & Forrest-Bank, S. (2011). Patterns of aggressive behavior and peer victimization from childhood to early adolescence: A latent class analysis. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 40, 644–655. doi:10.1007/s10964-010-9583-9