



For Immediate Release
May 26, 2010

International & Canadian Experts
Available for Interviews

May 27th and 28th leading Canadian and International experts will gather in Hamilton, Ontario at McMaster University, to understand why and discuss next steps in violence prevention, including: world leading Canadian research on neuroscience, mental health, interpersonal relationships, and anti-bullying strategies that span infancy to adolescence.

In Canadian schools, bullying happens every 7.5 minutes in the playgrounds and every 25 minutes in the classroom. These statistics paint a very alarming and 'un-Canadian' picture of childhood in Canada. Unfortunately, we are not the only ones who are noticing.

Recently the World Health Organization (WHO) ranked Canada in the bottom third of the 40 developed nations studied, according to their latest survey on *Health Behaviours of School-Aged Children*. The survey, which is based on children's reports of bullying and victimization.

Although the statistics are alarming, the human impact is heartbreaking – children who are victimized can be emotionally scarred for life. For those who survive, and recent media reports remind us that many don't, the consequences can be devastating and long lasting.

Thursday May 27th and Friday May 28th leading Canadian and International researchers, will gather with community organizations and educators of Canada to examine the most current research and findings in a quest to advance solutions and strategies that can protect our children and create a world where everyone is able to live, learn, play and work in safe and healthy relationships.

Unique to the world, Canada has created PREVNet (the Promoting Relationships Eliminating Violence Network), that brings together an unparalleled network of more than 60 researchers, and 70 graduate students, from 21 universities, and 50 national

partner organizations, all committed to advancing research and practice to create a world without bullying. Led by scientific co-directors Drs. Debra Pepler (York University) and Wendy Craig (Queen's University), this powerful group is gathering to find and implement the solutions Canada needs.

This two day gathering entitled *"Health Relationships, Healthy Development, Healthy Communities"* is being held in Hamilton, Ontario at McMaster University and is, co-hosted by PREVNet and the Community-University Research Alliance for the Prevention of Bullying, mac-cura.ca led by Dr. Tracy Vaillancourt. Feature presentations will include an international panel discussion on next steps in violence prevention, as well as world leading Canadian research by Canada's best researchers on :

- International panel to discuss next steps in violence prevention – including Dr. Rowell Husemann, University of Michigan, USA; Dr. Marion Underwood, University of Texas at Dallas, USA; Dr. Charles Cunningham, McMaster University, Canada and Dr. Debra Pepler, York University, Canada.
- Children's Mental Health & Healthy Relationships – Dr. Shelley Hymel, UBC will speak to the role of interpersonal relationships in fostering a child's social-emotional and academic growth and how children must navigate two different social worlds – the worlds of adults and the worlds of peers.
- Strengthening Parent-Teen Relationships to Reduce Youth Aggression and Enhance Healthy Adjustment: An Attachment Based Intervention – Ms. Karla Braber and Dr. Marlene Moretti, Simon Fraser University
- The Role of Adults in Promoting Health Relationships – exploring the multiple ways that adults can promote healthy relationships to support healthy development – Dr. Debra Pepler, York University
- Neurobiology of Abuse – exploring the connections between physical pain and social pain and their overlapping development by Dr. Tracy Vaillancourt, Ottawa
- Special presentation by Nico Archambault, winner of *So You Think You Can Dance Canada!*, and passionate advocate for bullying prevention.

- And, much much more! Please see attached summary of presenting researchers and their topics of study.

With all sessions open to the media, and all researchers available for interviews, this is an unprecedented opportunity to step inside our best and most current research to advance solutions for bullying and take an active step to affect change for Canada, and the world.

Beyond the heart break that is the human cost of bullying, and the tragic stories of death we hear again, and again, the WHO estimates the economic costs of interpersonal violence for Canada at \$9 billion annually.

It is time for Canadians to take a stand against bullying, and stand up for our children, and our country. Please join us on May 27th and 28th to learn the most recent findings and solutions so that together we can make a difference. Meet firsthand the researchers who are using science to inform practice, and meet the organizations who are on the front lines every day implementing solutions and strategies to protect our children.

For More Information contact:

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What We Know About Bullying Today

It is not a right of passage. It is a relationship problem that needs to be addressed with relationship solutions. Bullying is defined as repeated aggression in which there is an imbalance of power between the child who bullies and the child who is victimized. Children who bully learn to use power and aggression to control and distress others. Children who are victimized become increasingly powerless and find themselves trapped in relationships in which they are abused.

It does not end at childhood. Bullying is a form of abuse at the hands of peers that can take different forms at different ages – physical, emotional, sexual or social. Research now shows that as individual's age, bullying often continues in the form of dating aggression, crime, aggression in sport, sexual harassment or workplace harassment.

Current interventions are not working. Just over half of the evaluated school based program interventions report positive outcomes in reducing bullying, and 15% of them report negative results – they actually make the problem worse. We need to come

together with common understanding and informed strategies to address bullying in ALL the places where children live, learn, play and work.

Bullying and Social Neuroscience

We now know that there is a connection between physical pain and what we experience as social pain, and that both activate similar regions of the brain. These recent studies help explain why it is that being bullied hurts so much and the possible evolutionary role that this pain takes.

Adults and Peers are children's best chance for change and help. When peers intervene, a bullying episode can end within 10 seconds. The most effective strategy for children is to tell an adult.

About PREVNet

PREVNet (The Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network) is a leading global network of researchers and organizations that work together to promote healthy relationships and prevent bullying. Founded by leading Canadian researchers Dr. Wendy Craig, Professor Department of Psychology, Queen's University, and Dr. Debra Pepler, Distinguished Research Professor of Psychology, York University, PREVNet is a New Initiative of the Networks of Centres of Excellence, and comprises researchers and graduate students from over 20 universities in 11 disciplines working in collaboration with over 50 youth-serving organizations in the fields of education, health, community, recreation, arts, media, and technology. PREVNet's vision is that one day everyone will live, learn, play and work in safe and healthy relationships.

Contact us at www.prevnet.ca

About mac-cura.ca

MAC-CURA (Community-University Research Alliance for the Prevention of Bullying) is an equal partnership between community partners and university researchers who are working together to tackle the problem of bullying. Using a community-based effort that enlists the aid of all citizens in Hamilton, Ontario, the primary efforts of this Community-University Research Alliance are:

1. building community awareness and understanding of the serious impact that bullying has on children and youth;
2. examining the prevalence of bullying both within and outside the school context;
3. investigating the factors that influence bullying and victimization;
4. carefully evaluating the effectiveness of community-based interventions to reduce bullying;
5. disseminating best practice approaches to reducing bullying; and

6. building capacity that will permit a long-term commitment to this problem.

Contact us at www.mac-cura.ca

- The complete conference agenda and speakers list is available at www.prevent.ca
- Tip sheets for adults, children, and youth, with great tools and strategies, are available for download at www.prevnet.ca.