Coping and Survival Skills: The Role School Personnel Play Regarding Support for Bullied Sexual Minority-Oriented Youth.

**Abstract**

BACKGROUND Research has shown that bullying has serious health consequences, and sexual minority-oriented youth are disproportionately affected. Sexual minority-oriented youth include lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning (LGBTQ) individuals. This study examined the bullying experiences of sexual minority-oriented youth in a predominantly rural area of a Midwestern state. The purpose of this study was to have bullied youth describe their experiences and to present their perspectives.

METHODS Using critical qualitative inquiry, 16 in-depth interviews were conducted in-person or online with youth, ages 15-20, who self-identified as having been bullied based on their perceived minority sexual orientation status. RESULTS The role of supportive school personnel was found to be meaningful, and supportive school personnel were mentioned as assisting with the coping and survival among this group of bullied sexual minority youth. CONCLUSIONS Supportive school personnel are crucial to the coping and survival of these youth. All school personnel need to be aware of the anti-bullying policies in their school corporations. They may then work to strengthen and enforce their policies for the protection of bullied youth.