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**Cognitive Pretesting of the 2017 School Crime Supplement
to the National Crime Victimization Survey**

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Abstract

At the request of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the Center for Behavioral Science Methods (CBSM) conducted cognitive testing of the School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The supplement is used to collect data on students' perspectives on school climate including a variety of topics such as the availability of drugs and alcohol, fighting, bullying, and hate related behaviors, and students' perception of how safe they feel in their school. The cognitive testing discussed in this report focused on the section of questions about being bullied in schools. The purpose of this cognitive research was to test new and revised questions for the 2017 School Crime Supplement to the NCVS. This report presents the findings from the 30 cognitive interviews that CBSM conducted between May 2016 and July 2016.

The findings from this study indicate that the questions in the bullying section for the SCS generally performed well. Questions measure various characteristics of bullying experiences, including – but not limited to -- the prevalence of bullying behaviors against the student, the frequency of being bullied, likelihood of repetition, and a power imbalance between the victim and perpetrator. Most questions were easy for interviewers to administer, and easy for respondents to understand and answer. These questions required no revisions. Of those questions that required revisions, some were minor modifications. For the repetition question, an ambiguous phrase was replaced with a clear one to reduce the likelihood of measurement error due to varying interpretations by respondents. A second question with a minor revision was modified to include an additional response option.

The question about a power imbalance was of particular interest. Students' responses to probes indicated that the question would benefit from a new item measuring another dimension of power the original item did not ask about: the ability to influence what other students think of them. Another question of interest was the question measuring the frequency of the bullying, as it is also used to establish repetition. Ultimately, the decision was made to use a new version of the question asked how many days the bullying incidents occurred. A follow up question was added to determine if students who reported experiencing bullying behaviors on only one day experienced multiple repeated behaviors throughout that single day.

Keywords: National Crime Victimization Survey, bullying, screening questions, cognitive interviews, measurement error

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings from the cognitive testing of the 2017 School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Researchers conducted 30 cognitive interviews over three iterative rounds of testing. Cognitive testing focused on the section of questions about students' experiences with bullying in schools. Individuals who had and had not experienced bullying were sought during recruiting. Screener questions asked if the student had ever been bullied, and if so, when the most recent bullying incident occurred. Among the 30 respondents, 16 students were victims of bullying within the last school year, and 14 individuals did not experience bullying in the past school year based on their discussion of their experiences during the interviews, rather than their answers to screening questions or self-identification (see Section 5.1.1 Respondent Selection for recruitment details).

In 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) partnered with other government agencies, including the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), and external stakeholders to form a steering committee that examined federal guidelines and existing research on bullying. After finding that assessment tools used to measure bullying used inconsistent definitions and measurement strategies, the committee created a uniform definition of bullying to make gathering scientific data and establishing comparable trends over time easier. According to the uniform definition, bullying includes two components not measured prior to the 2015 SCS: the bullying behaviors must be repeated or highly likely to be repeated, and there must be an observed or perceived power imbalance between the perpetrator(s) and the victim. The 2015 SCS included a split-ballot experiment that tested two different strategies of integrating this definition into the survey, and cognitive testing focused on one of those strategies: continuing the use of a historic item to capture unwanted, aggressive behaviors, with additional follow-up items to measure the added components of repetition and power imbalance.

The findings from this study indicate that the historic questions in the bullying section for the SCS, with the appended items on repetition and power imbalance, generally performed well. Most questions were easy for interviewers to administer, and easy for respondents to understand and answer. These questions required no revisions. Of those questions that required revisions, some were minor modifications. For the repetition question, an ambiguous phrase was replaced with a clear one to reduce the likelihood of measurement error due to varying interpretations by respondents (see Section 6.2.2 for results). A second question with a minor revision was modified to include an additional response option (see Section 6.3.1).

The question about a power imbalance was of particular interest. The Round 1 question included sub-items measuring three dimensions of power (e.g.: bigger/stronger, more popular, or have more money), as well as a fourth item as a catch-all asking if the bully had "more power than you in another way." Students' responses to probes indicated that the question would benefit from a new item measuring another dimension of power the original item did not ask about: the ability to influence what other students think of them (see section 6.3.2 for results).

Another question of interest was the question measuring the frequency of the bullying, as it is also used to establish repetition. Respondents had trouble answering the Round 1 version of the question. Multiple versions of the question were included for testing in each round to test if one

version was easier for students to answer. In addition to answering the questions about their own experiences, respondents were also given a vignette and asked to answer the questions for the scenario outlined in the vignette. This was done to see how well the questions worked for situations in which the bullying is limited to a specific time frame, rather than occurring regularly throughout the school year. Ultimately, the decision was made to use the version of the question that a majority of the students said was the easiest to answer and was most frequently chosen as the preferred version of the question. This version of the question asked how many days the bullying incidents occurred. A follow up question was added to determine if students who reported experiencing bullying behaviors on only one day experienced multiple repeated behaviors throughout that single day. This follow-up question, though not tested in this study, was modeled after a question that was cognitively tested for the NCVS's 2016 Supplemental Victimization Survey. A third tested question used to establish repetition asked respondents whether they believed the bullying behaviors would happen again.

In addition to exploring the two concepts above (repetition and power imbalance), interviewers probed on most of the bullying questions to identify questions of concern for future testing. We identified an issue with the bullying prevalence question where, when asked during probing, most students reported that they were not thinking about cyberbullying when answering it. While no changes were made to this question in an effort to preserve the trend, this issue will be examined further in future cognitive testing.

2 INTRODUCTION

At the request of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the Center for Behavioral Science Methods (CBSM) conducted cognitive testing of the School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The SCS was first conducted in 1989. It was conducted again in 1995 and 1999, and has been conducted every two years since 1999.

The supplement is used to collect data on students' perspectives on school climate including a variety of topics such as the availability of drugs and alcohol, fighting, bullying, and hate related behaviors, and students' perception of how safe they feel in their school. The cognitive testing discussed in this report focused on the section of questions about being bullied in schools.

Questions measure various characteristics of bullying experiences, including – but not limited to - the prevalence of bullying behaviors against the student, the frequency of being bullied, the location of the bullying, and whether the incident(s) was reported to an adult (see Attachment C for full list of questions in the bullying section).

Researchers conducted three iterative rounds of cognitive testing. The purpose of this cognitive research was to test new and revised questions for the 2017 School Crime Supplement to the NCVS. The results of these cognitive interviews will help inform the final version of the SCS questionnaire, which will be administered in 2017. This report presents the findings from the 30 cognitive interviews that CBSM conducted between May 2016 and July 2016.

3 BACKGROUND

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is a self-report survey conducted annually by the Census Bureau on behalf of the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). Approximately 90,000 households in the United States, totaling 160,000 persons, are sampled and respondents are asked about their experiences with victimization over the past six months. The survey is completed by persons age 12 or older, and provides data on the characteristics of crime, the offender, and the victim's experience with the criminal justice system after a crime occurs. Eligible participants are interviewed every six months, and remain in the sample for three years.

3.1 History of the School Crime Supplement

The School Crime Supplement (SCS) is administered every two years as a supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) to respondents ages 12 through 18 enrolled in school. The first data collection for the SCS was in 1989, providing student level data on alcohol and drug availability, victimization, school rules and punishment, gun and weapon carrying as well as other topics. Although the 1989 and 1995 instruments did not include items on bullying, they did include victimization items that could get at bullying experiences. It was not until 1999 that the first item was added to the questionnaire to specifically measure the prevalence of bullying in schools. In 2005, an entire section consisting of several items devoted to questions on bullying were added to the questionnaire for the first time. The questions in this section had a reference period of the "last 6 months" to examine if students had been recently bullied. However, in 2007, the reference period was changed to "this school year."

With advancement in technology and its widespread use by youth, the SCS was modified to include new items that capture cyberbullying in acknowledgement that bullying can occur not only in a school environment, but through electronic communication like text and instant messaging. The cyberbullying items in each of the subsequent administrations in 2009, 2011, and 2013 were updated in order to stay current with all the potential ways one could mistreat another via electronic means. Questions continued to address behaviors around text messaging and email, and additionally captured bullying through social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), online gaming and the sharing of private information. Between the 2013 and 2015 administrations of the SCS, it was determined that cyberbullying is a means of bullying rather than a distinct type of bullying. As a result, the separate cyberbullying item was removed prior to the administration of the 2015 survey and a new sub-item was added to the follow-up item asking about the location of the bullying incident. The new sub-item in this question asks if the bullying occurred "online or by text?"

In 2014 the uniform bullying definition was created, shedding light on the components of repetition and power imbalance (see section 4.2 for more detail). The Department of Education ensured that the 2015 SCS included bullying items that aligned with the repetition and power imbalance requirement.

For the 2015 SCS, extensive work was completed to evaluate the information collected on bullying during past SCS administrations and modify the survey to better align with the CDC definition of what constitutes bullying. This included developing two versions of CDC definition-aligned items and cognitive testing of these items by researchers in CBSM. The two versions were collected by

using a split sample design incorporated in the 2015 SCS instrument. Based on the results of the 2015 split sample analysis, the decision was made to revert to a single version of bullying questions in the 2017 SCS that would include the historic bullying question series, as well as follow-up questions on power imbalance and repetition. In a continuing effort to better understand the different components of bullying included in the CDC definition, the NCES, BJS, and Census agreed to conduct additional testing in order to revise the bullying questions for the 2017 SCS.

4 LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 What is bullying?

The violence occurring in school systems in the United States with highly publicized incidents of school shootings such as Columbine has led to conversations around the potential impacts of bullying amongst adolescents (Espelage & Swearer, 2011). These tragic incidents have created a call to action amongst not only teachers and school counselors, but politicians as well. Bullying can take place in an array of settings from at school, to in the workplace, or the neighborhood where you live, by both peers and adults. There are inconsistencies in literature about when bullying peaks. Dr. Dan Olweus (1990) argues that bullying is more likely to take place in primary schools than secondary schools. Alternatively, other research suggests that after elementary school, bullying peaks during middle school, and declines during high school (Gallo & Milsom, 2006). While both genders commit acts of bullying, females' behaviors are more psychological, whereas males commit acts that are more physical.

Although bullying is a relatively recent research topic, there have been several definitions developed by researchers and practitioners. Olweus (1993, pp. 8-9) defines bullying as “aggressive behavior or intentional ‘harm doing,’ which is carried out repeatedly and over time in an interpersonal relationship characterized by an imbalance of power.” Though many researchers have used Olweus’ definition to conceptualize bullying, they do not always assess all three aspects of the definition: intentional aggression, repetition, and a power imbalance. At times, this leads to measures of general aggression rather than bullying (Finkelhor, Turner, & Hamby, 2012; Volk et al., 2017). Due to inconsistencies across these definitions used in the field, a uniform definition was developed for federal agencies.

4.2 CDC's 2014 Uniform Definition of Bullying

The CDC uses a four-step public health model to address bullying (Gladden, Vivolo-Kantor, Hamburger, & Lumpkin, 2014). They identify two modes of bullying: direct and indirect. The direct mode of bullying includes behaviors or acts that occur in the victim's presence, such as pushing or physically harming the victim. The indirect mode addresses indirect communication that may be said about the victim, such as spreading untruthful rumors. The CDC determined that the type of bullying can fall under four broad categories: physical, verbal, relational, and damage to property. Physically harming someone or taking/damaging their belongings are both direct modes of bullying. Relational bullying, for example, is intentionally excluding someone from the group or making them feel unwelcome, and is an indirect channel of bullying. Lastly, verbal bullying can be both direct and indirect.

The CDC partnered with the Department of Education, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and other external stakeholders to form a steering committee that examined federal guidelines and existing research on bullying. The committee studied the inconsistencies in existing bullying definitions and created a uniform definition to make gathering scientific data and establishing trends over time easier. Specifically, the CDC defined bullying as

"any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm," (Gladden et al., 2014, p. 7).

The uniform definition on bullying is a technical definition, which means it should not be applied literally to questionnaires. Instead, researchers have to develop their own questions to measure the various components of bullying. The uniform definition should make it easier to distinguish between aggressive behaviors and bullying. It is important for new research to analyze if students' understanding of bullying agrees with the uniform definition. Results from the CBSM's cognitive testing suggest that repetition and power imbalance are not necessary for a respondent to identify themselves as being bullied.

4.2.1 Repetition

One key component of the new uniform bullying definition is repetition. The CDC defined repetition as "multiple incidents of aggression perpetrated by a single youth (ages 5 to 18) or group of youths over a specified time period or there is strong concern a single aggressive behavior by a youth or group of youths has a high likelihood of being followed by more incidents of aggression," (Gladden et al., 2014, p. 7). This measure is designed to examine if an adolescent has experienced a form of aggressive behavior by a single student multiple times, if there have been multiple occurrences of aggressive behavior by different students which the victim feels are related, or if the aggressive behavior is suspected to reoccur in the future. If a child reports experiencing one-time aggressive behavior by several people, all of which are isolated incidents, this is not considered bullying according to the uniform definition. Although independent incidents do not meet the uniform definition of bullying, the repetition of harmful acts is important, and youth that experience single occurrences of aggressive behavior should not be taken lightly or their experience discounted as being less traumatic. In a study by Mishna, Scarcello, Pepler and Weiner (2005), they examined teachers' perceptions and understanding of bullying. An important highlight of this study is that teachers did not identify repetition as a key component for a student to have been bullied.

4.2.2 Power Imbalance

The second key component of the CDC's definition of bullying is the requirement of a power imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim, which would allow the perpetrator to exert control over their victim. This characteristic could be through their physical size, age, or through bullying someone with a disability. Farrington (2013) describes victims of bullying as being unpopular and rejected by their peers, individuals with low school attainment, low self-esteem, and poor social skills. Those who bully perceive youth who experience problems with socialization as being easier to dominate and control. Farrington suggests that youth who bully are characterized

as individuals who are dominant, assertive, confident, and find pleasure in aggression, although, this may not always be the case. This power imbalance is more likely to take place in settings or situations where an adult is not closely monitoring the behavior of the perpetrator, allowing to take advantage of the lack of higher authority. Power imbalance is often found in other definitions on bullying. Dr. Dan Olweus (1993) defines bullying as when a person is "exposed repeatedly over time to negative actions by one or more individuals and is unable to defend him or herself, excluding cases where two children of similar physical and psychological strength are fighting." When discussing ways to assess an observed or perceived power imbalance, the CDC suggests having respondents report on characteristics of the perpetrator and target of the bullying. Characteristics that can create a power imbalance include physical strength, popularity, and the number of perpetrators involved (Gladden et al., 2014).

5 STUDY METHODOLOGY

5.1 Data Collection

From May to July 2016, 30 face-to-face cognitive interviews were conducted in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area across three iterative rounds of cognitive testing. The cognitive interviewing team for these interviews consisted of seven CBSM staff members. Results from each round informed any changes made to questions tested in the subsequent round. The third and final round of testing was then conducted to assess whether or not all revised questions perform as expected.

5.1.1 Respondent Selection

During recruitment, we targeted respondents who represented a variety of demographic characteristics, including race, gender, age, and grade level. Recruitment efforts concentrated on finding individuals who had experienced bullying within the past school year. Recruitment methods consisted of advertisements through Craigslist.com, flyers posted in libraries, youth centers, local YMCAs, and housing complexes, in addition to a broadcast message sent to all U.S. Census Bureau employees who work at the Suitland headquarters building. Some respondents were referred by other participants, others were told about the study by individuals who saw the advertisements and knew the student would qualify, and some were recruited using personal contacts.

In an effort to test the survey with both bullied and non-bullied students, half of the flyers used to recruit participants focused on students who had an experience they consider to be bullying in the past school year while the other half of the flyers did not mention these criteria. Parents of interested students, as well as some older teenage students, called the number provided on the flyers to answer a set of screening questions. The screener collected information about the students' demographics, as well as information about whether or not the student or parent believed the student was bullied (Has [child] ever been bullied in school, that you know of?), and if so, when the most recent experience they considered to be bullying occurred (see Appendix A for the full screener questions). These screener questions were different from the survey questions being tested in order to avoid biasing the cognitive testing. All interviews were conducted in person in the local metropolitan area (i.e., D.C., Maryland, and Virginia). Each respondent received \$25

cash, and parents who brought respondents to the interview received \$25 cash to compensate them for their travel time.

5.1.1.1 Victims

For the purpose of this study, we use the term “victims” to refer to students whose *discussion* of the incidents they experienced this school year during the interview meet the criteria set in the CDC definition of bullying, rather than their answers to the survey questions about bullying. To meet the criteria of a bullying victim for our testing, respondents must report they experienced at least one of seven bullying behaviors in the SCS, such as being made fun of in a hurtful way or being threatened with harm, indicate that the behavior(s) either happened repeatedly or that they thought the behavior(s) would happen again, and indicate that the perpetrator(s) had more power in at least one of the power dimensions we ask about. The specific behaviors and dimensions of power included in the survey are discussed in depth in Section 6.

A total of 16 respondents were identified as victims of bullying in the past school year based on their responses to the questions measuring bullying prevalence, repetition, and power imbalances.

5.1.1.2 Non-victims

A total of 14 respondents were identified as non-victims in the current school year based on their responses to questions in the bullying section. Using data from the screener questions, we scheduled five participants who had not experienced bullying in the past school year, but had experienced bullying in previous years. This allowed us to test whether respondents notice the time frame referenced in the bullying prevalence question. Two of the 14 non-victims self-identified as victims of bullying during the cognitive interviews. These cases are discussed further in section 7.3.

5.1.2 Respondent Characteristics

Our goal was to recruit a diverse group of students based on school level, sex, race and ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

We aimed to recruit equal numbers of middle and high school students for the study and were successful, interviewing 15 students in middle school and 15 students in high school. We also had an even split for sex, with 15 males and 15 females participating in the interviews. For race, most of the respondents were either black or white, with a handful of respondents identifying as Asian, American Indian, or multi-racial. Only six respondents were Hispanic or of Spanish origin. The socioeconomic status of respondents was more evenly distributed, but leaned toward \$50,000 and above. See Table 1 for a more detailed breakdown.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics by Round

SCS Respondent Characteristics by Round					
		Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Total
Type of School	Middle School (15)	5	5	5	15
	High School (15)	5	5	5	15
Sex	Male	5	5	5	15
	Female	5	5	5	15
Race	White	4	4	5	13
	Black	4	4	4	12
	Asian	1	1	0	2
	American Indian, Multi Race, Unknown	1	1	1	2
Ethnicity	Hispanic	0	3	3	6
	Non-Hispanic	10	7	7	24
Annual Household Income	Less than \$25,000	2	1	3	6
	More than \$25,000, less than \$50,000	0	3	3	6
	More than \$50,000, less than \$100,000	4	2	2	8
	More than \$100,000	4	4	2	10

5.1.3 The Cognitive Interview Protocol

The protocols used in this study focused on respondents’ reactions to new and revised questions about bullying. At the start of the interview, respondents were told that the purpose of the study was to see if the changes made to questions make sense and are easy to answer. Respondents were also told that information they provided would be confidential and their anonymity would be protected. Interviewers then asked respondents to respond to the interview as if an interviewer had come to their home. In addition to the questions on bullying, a subset of SCS questions were included in the protocol to provide context and create a cognitive interview experience that closely resembles responding to the actual survey. The entire SCS questionnaire was not used due to interview time constraints.

After administering the survey questions, interviewers asked respondents probing questions that were designed to address specific testing issues for particular questions. The specific type of cognitive interview consisted of retrospective probing (Willis, 2015). Retrospective probes were asked after the full bullying series of questions were administered because asking a probing question immediately after each survey question (concurrent probing) would disrupt the flow and could lead to bias in later questions since probing questions are asked to have a respondent elaborate on things not included in the question text. There is a trade-off between probing concurrently and retrospectively. With concurrent probing, on the research probes on respondent thought processes immediately after they occur, but this disrupts the flow of the survey and

answering the probes may bias how they respond to subsequent survey questions. While retrospective probing avoids the disruption and potential bias, respondents have to recall their earlier thought processes after a delay, which may make recall more difficult.

While asking the survey questions, interviewers made notes of any response difficulty experienced by respondents, including question incomprehension and the inability to decide on a response. Interviewers also noted questions that were difficult to administer. Difficulty administering questions can stem from multiple factors, including question length and unnatural phrasing.

Finally, interviewers asked all respondents a set of debriefing questions at the end of the interview. The debriefing questions included items about the respondent's overall impressions of the interview and whether they found it easy or difficult. Respondents were given a chance to make any other final comments about the survey, not limited to a specific topic. See Attachment A for the debriefing questions included in the protocols for rounds one through three.

5.1.4 Interviewer Staffing and Training

All interviews were conducted by a team of seven experienced interviewers from the U.S. Census Bureau's Center for Behavioral Science Methods. Interviewers were trained on the SCS protocol prior to the first round of interviews. The team went through the protocol question by question to discuss the purpose of the questions and probes. All interviewers conducted a practice interview to ensure interviewer preparedness before conducting their first interview with a respondent. After changes were made to the protocol between each round, the project lead met with interviewers to discuss all revisions and confirm that the interviewers were prepared to administer the new version of the protocol.

5.1.5 Interview Consent

Parents of all respondents under the age of 18 were required to sign a consent form to allow their child to be interviewed. One respondent was 18 at the time of the interview and was able to sign her own consent form. The consent form provides the rights of the student as a participant in the study and provides authorization for interviewers to audiotape the interview. The form explains that the purpose of the audiotape is to have a complete record of all comments, that it will be used to improve the questionnaire, and that only the staff directly involved in the project will have access to the tape.

Before starting the interview, students under the age of 18 were told that their parents had signed a consent form giving them permission to participate. We explained their rights as a participant using language geared towards 12-18 year-olds. Interviewers made sure the students understood their rights and asked if they were comfortable with the interview being recorded before turning on the tape recorder and beginning the interview. All respondents who participated in the cognitive interviews consented to be audiotaped.

6 COGNITIVE INTERVIEW FINDINGS

In this section, we present the question-by-question findings from the cognitive interviews. Each question is presented with findings from each round, highlighting any changes that occurred from one round to the next. Questions that were not problematic and did not require revisions are included in the report for context. A brief discussion of their performance during testing is included.

In the following sections, when multiple direct quotes are used to illustrate the findings, respondents are referred to using a respondent identifier that indicates which round they were interviewed in (R1, R2, or R3) and whether or not they were a victim of bullying according to the CDC definition (V or NV). For example, a student who was interviewed in Round 1 and was a victim of bullying would have a respondent ID of R1V1, R1V2, etc., whereas a student who was interviewed in Round 2 and was not a victim of bullying would have an ID of R2NV1, R2NV2, etc.

Since both the number and order of the questions changed throughout the course of the study, the question number used in the report is the number that will be used in the final questionnaire. Questions that were included in the testing but removed from the questionnaire are referred to as, “Formerly Q__”. For each question, there is a sentence or two explaining the changes in the question number from round to round. To see the complete question order for each round, see Attachment A, which includes all three protocols.

6.1 Bullying Prevalence

Question 22 measures the types of bullying behaviors the respondent experiences. This item briefly defines bullying as things “students do at school that make you feel bad or are hurtful to you.” It then asks whether they have experienced specific behaviors that make up bullying (such as making fun, spreading rumors, threatening, etc.).

Q22: Round 1 – Round 3 and Final Recommendation (no changes made)

22. Now I have some questions about what students do at school that make you feel bad or are hurtful to you. We often refer to this as being bullied. You may include events you told me about already. During this school year, has any student bullied you? That is, has another student... (Read each category a-g.)		Yes	No
	134	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
a. Made fun of you, called you names, or insulted you, in a hurtful way?	135	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. Spread rumors about you or tried to make others dislike you?	136	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Threatened you with harm?	137	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Pushed you, shoved you, tripped you, or spit on you?	138	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. Tried to make you do things you did not want to do, for example, give them money or other things?	139	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
f. Excluded you from activities on purpose?	140	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
g. Destroyed your property on purpose?	SKIP to		If all categories a-g are marked "No" G_HATE

All 30 respondents answered Q22. To get a better understanding of how students conceptualize bullying, the protocol included retrospective probes asking all respondents to define bullying in their own words and what kinds of behaviors they think count as bullying. Respondents were also asked if there are any types of bullying that should be included in Q22 that we did not ask about. For students who said “yes” to at least one item in Q22, we asked them to provide more details about the bullying behaviors they experienced. Students who said “no” to all items were asked probes to determine if they experienced any of the behaviors on the list but did not consider to be bullying.

Findings for Victims:

All 16 victims (according to the CDC definition) were able to easily answer Q22. During retrospective probing, respondents were asked to tell the interviewer what happened in their bullying experience(s). Based on responses to the items in Q22 and the probe about their experience(s), Q22 performs well to capture victims’ experiences with bullying.

Findings for Non-Victims:

Overall, non-victim respondents were able to easily answer Q22. Of the 14 non-victims who answered this question, nine of them answered “no” to all seven of the bullying behaviors. Respondents who said ‘no’ to all items were asked if any of the things listed in Q22 happened to them that they did not count as bullying. Three students responded yes to this probe, and all three mentioned playful teasing by friends.

R1NV2: “My friends call me names, just playing around.”

R2NV4: “I guess it was kind of like, I don't call it bullying, but if I did something stupid like when we're doing a new sport in PE my friends would make fun of me, but nothing like I really care.”

R3NV9: “I mean if friends do it, it's not really that bad, because it's funny.”

These responses suggest that some students are able to differentiate between listed behaviors that are playful teasing between friends and those that are bullying. These students picked up on the fact that Q22 includes the phrase, “We often refer to this as being bullied,” and therefore did not respond “yes” to any part of Q22.

Five non-victims said yes to experiencing one or more items in Q22. Of these, four of them were referencing one time occurrences that they did not think would happen again – being tripped in the hallway, shoved during a fight while playing football in gym class, someone spreading a rumor, and someone pulling the respondent’s hair. The fifth respondent reported multiple behaviors from different individuals, such as being called a bad name, and experiencing mean behaviors from friends when they are mad at each other. Though some individuals did experience more than one behavior on different days, responses to the power imbalance question later in the survey indicated there was no imbalance between the respondents and the perpetrators.

Two of the five non-victim respondents who reported bullying behaviors self-identified as victims of bullying, even though the behaviors were not repeated and they did not think they would happen again. These cases are discussed further in section 7.3. The other three non-victims who said yes to items in Q22 do not consider their experiences to be bullying. When explicitly asked if she thought the behavior she reported experiencing was bullying, one respondent said, “Not really, I just think it was kind of mean,” (R2NV5). This suggests that some students either do not notice the word “bullied” in the stem, or they forget about it by the time they are answering each individual item.

Respondent Definitions of Bullying:

All respondents were asked, “Can you tell me, in your own words, what it means to be bullied?” Though there were variations in what aspects students chose to focus on in their definitions, all students defined bullying in a similar way. They consider bullying to be intentionally causing harm to someone, whether it’s physical, mental, or emotional harm. Respondents do think that mean and hurtful behaviors done by friends can count as bullying if the friend is doing the behavior intentionally to be hurtful. There were no noticeable differences between definitions provided by victims of bullying and those provided by non-victims.

R2V10: "Somebody targets a certain aspect of you, aspect of your life, aspect of what you hold in your pride, and they know to target that to make you feel weak about yourself, and to make you feel insecure about yourself."

R2V8: "I think like over and over someone picks on you physically, tries to get in your head, or tries to get other people... maybe they just do it for fun, or maybe they do it to try to make themselves feel better."

R1NV3: "Being bullied means to me like somebody is trying to hurt you in some way, or get to your feelings like emotionally, physically, or some type of way make you feel bad about yourself or make you hurt in some way through whatever they can do."

R3NV12: "Trying to discourage someone else so you can feel like the bigger person and be liked by other people. [Bullying is] fighting, calling people insulting names, any way to discourage someone and feel good for yourself."

When respondents were asked what kinds of behaviors they would consider bullying, they generally made comments indicating they thought the list of items included in Q22 was an appropriate list of bullying behaviors. If they did give additional examples, all but five gave variations of the items already included in Q22, or broader terms that refer to those behaviors like "physically harming someone," or "teasing." The remaining five respondents said that we should add cyberbullying or "online stuff" to this list. This suggests that some students were not thinking about possible cyberbullying incidents when responding to Q22. When probed on Q22 and what they were considering, 19 respondents said they were thinking about in-person bullying only, ten said they were thinking about both online and in-person bullying, and one respondent said that they did not know if they had been thinking about online bullying when answering Q22. Since the majority of students were not thinking about cyberbullying when answering Q22, it is recommended to revise the question in future cognitive testing to clarify that the question is asking about both cyberbullying and in-person bullying.

6.2 Repetition of Bullying

The concept of bullying implies a course of conduct, so the screener questions are used to determine if a student experiences repeated experiences from Q22. If respondents said yes to multiple items in Q22, the multiple incidents establish a course of conduct. However, if a respondent reported that they only experienced one of the behaviors in Q22, more information is needed to determine whether they experienced one instance of a harmful behavior, or if they experienced the same harmful behavior repeatedly over time. Questions measuring frequency of bullying are used to establish repetition, a key component of the uniform definition. This set of questions changed the most between rounds so results are presented in sub-sections by round.

6.2.1 Frequency of Bullying

6.2.1.1 Frequency Question Included in Round 1

Original Frequency Question (Formerly Q26 & Q24):

The original frequency question was numbered as Q26 in the Round 1 protocol, Q24 in the Round 2 protocol, and replaced by the series of questions Q24-Q26b in the Round 3 protocol.

26. During this school year, how often were you bullied?

(READ CATEGORIES 1-4.)

- 142
- 1 Once or twice this school year
 - 2 Once or twice a month - *SKIP to: Q28*
 - 3 Once or twice a week, or - *SKIP to: Q28*
 - 4 Almost every day - *SKIP to: Q28*

Round 1 Findings:

The original frequency question in the survey was problematic for multiple reasons. The first issue was that the respondents conceptualized what constituted a bullying incident differently. When answering the original frequency question, most respondents were thinking of how many times they experienced individual incidents of the bullying behaviors listed in Q22. However, two respondents in Round 1 thought of a bullying incident as the overall set of bullying behaviors related to a specific thing. For example, someone spread a rumor about a respondent and she was bullied in multiple ways because of that rumor for multiple weeks. She answered the original frequency question as “once or twice this year,” because that was all one big bullying incident in her mind. The second respondent had an almost identical situation. The behaviors lasted 2 weeks, but she made it clear that she considered it one time, even saying “I’ve only been bullied once in my life, ever,” (R1V4) during probing.

Two alternate versions of the frequency question asked during probing helped reveal these issues. The first alternative tested was:

“During this school year, how many times were you bullied?”

- 1 One time
- 2 Two times
- 3 Three to ten times
- 4 More than ten times

After the first five interviews, it became clear that there was a potential issue with asking how many *times* a student was bullied (discussed below), so another alternate version of the frequency question was added to the protocol for the rest of round 1:

“During this school year, how many days were you bullied?”

- 1 One day
- 2 Two days
- 3 Three to ten days
- 4 More than ten days

The issue with how respondents think of a “time” of bullying raised concerns that students would be incorrectly categorized as non-victims because they would not meet the repetition requirement. Therefore, after Round 1, we added an additional question immediately preceding the original frequency question asking if any of the behaviors happened on more than one day (see Added Frequency Question (Formerly Q23) in section 6.2.1.2 below).

The second issue was that some respondents had difficulty when asked to choose one of the given response options from the original version of the frequency question. Respondents who were bullied very frequently or regularly throughout the entire school year had no trouble answering this. Respondents who only experienced one incident or thought of their situation as only one incident had no trouble choosing “once or twice this school year.” As noted above, some of the students selecting this response did so in error but they could easily choose a response option.

For students who experienced bullying multiple times but infrequently, this question was difficult to answer. They did their best to find a response option that fit well enough, but it may not have captured their situation. Respondents were asked why they chose their response option for each version of the question. They were also asked to compare the difficulty levels of the different versions of the question, and which version they preferred.

R1NV3: "It wouldn't be every month, but it wouldn't be every week, so I'd say month. So it'd be like every three months or something like that... so I said once or twice a month to say that." (This respondent experienced multiple bullying behaviors, but did not meet the criteria for bullying because there was no power imbalance. Her discussion of her experiences indicate that she was not bullied, and she does not consider herself to be a victim of bullying.)

R1V1: "More difficult. Because it's over the span of different timelines. Not timelines, but like school year, a month, a week. You need one to compare all of them to." **Interviewer:** "Did these options fit for you?" **R1V1:** "No."

While students were able to easily answer the “how many times” question (first alternative asked during probing), the issue of how students think of an “incident” may affect how they answer this question. To address the issue of how students think of a single bullying incident, we added in the second version of the frequency question to the probing section of the protocol to test with the final four Round 1 respondents (see above for the question wording). The four respondents asked this question during Round 1 were able to easily answer this question.

6.2.1.2 Frequency Questions Included in Round 2

<p><u>Added Frequency Question (Formerly Q23):</u> <i>Former Q23 was added to the Round 2 protocol, numbered as Q23 in the Round 2 and Round 3 protocol, and was removed after Round 3.</i></p>	
<p>23. During this school year, did any of these things happen on more than one day?</p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No - SKIP to: Q27</p>
<p><u>Original Frequency Question (Formerly Q26 & Q24):</u> <i>The original frequency question was numbered as Q26 in the Round 1 protocol, Q24 in the Round 2 protocol, and replaced by the series of questions Q24-Q26b in the Round 3 protocol.</i></p>	
<p>24. During this school year, how often were you bullied? (READ CATEGORIES 1-4.)</p>	<p>142 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Once or twice this school year 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Once or twice a month - SKIP to: Q28 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Once or twice a week, or - SKIP to: Q28 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Almost every day - SKIP to: Q28</p>

Round 2 Findings:

The newly added question, “During this school year, did any of these things happen on more than one day?” was included as an additional indicator of repetition. Respondents had no trouble understanding or answering this question.

The original frequency question (shown as Q24 above) was also problematic for some Round 2 respondents. Since the response options and bullying experiences do not always align, some respondents chose categories that did not fit their actual experiences with bullying. Two students answered the original frequency question as “once or twice this school year,” but answered the alternate frequency questions during probing as “three to ten times,” and “three to ten days.” When probed on their responses, they indicated that since the bullying happened sporadically, it was difficult to answer the bullying frequency question. One respondent (R2V11) said, "It wasn't like it happened one or two times in the year, it was like in two months. It happened a couple of times in those two months, but I don't remember how many times it actually happened. I don't really know. Because it wasn't like repetitive like all the time. But it happened like every other type of day, or like once one week, and then another week it happened more."

Both of these respondents answered “yes” to the newly added question (“During this school year, did any of these things happen on more than one day?”). Therefore, even though they answered the frequency question as “once or twice this school year,” their response that it happened on more than one day would fulfill the repetition requirement, ensuring that they are correctly categorized as victims of bullying.

Vignette:

In Round 2, we added a short vignette to test all three versions of the frequency questions to see how respondents would answer the questions if the bullying happened frequently for a short period of time and then stopped. Students were given a page that contained the vignette below, followed by all three versions of the frequency question (how often were they bullied, on how many days were they bullied, and how many times were they bullied). The order of the three frequency questions was rotated on the handout.

“A group of students made fun of Mark’s shoes every day for the first two weeks of school. Because of this, Mark got his parents to buy him new shoes. When Mark started wearing his new shoes the third week of school, the students stopped making fun of him for the rest of the school year.

Pretend you are Mark. Answer all three questions how you think Mark would answer them.”

All respondents in Round 2 received the vignette. Most students answered the alternate times and days versions of the question in a consistent manner. For example, if they chose “3 to 10 times” for one version, they would choose “3 to 10 days” for the other version. There was some variation depending on if they counted two weeks as 14 days or realized there are only 10 school days in two weeks. A few respondents mentioned that it was harder to answer the “times” version of the question because you do not know how many times he was bullied in a day.

Answers to the original frequency question varied, and respondents had more difficulty choosing an answer. Every answer choice was chosen multiple times. Provided with the same vignette, answer choices ranged from “almost every day” to “once or twice this school year.” Students were probed on why they answered the way they did for each version of the question. For the original version, many students talked through their process of elimination.

R2NV4: "I said once or twice this school year because it was only the first two weeks of school, meaning that it couldn't have been once or twice a month because by the second month it was over, once or twice a week because not every week was he getting bullied, and not every day, because clearly, after the first two weeks it was over."

R2NV5: "Again, because he was bullied for like a week. So once or twice a week, maybe like... I wouldn't say almost every day because that's probably a lot. Because it said he was being bullied for a few weeks, so I didn't pick once or twice a month because after he got his new shoes, they stopped bullying him."

In response to the difficulty respondents had when answering the original frequency question when the bullying only spanned a short period of time, we recommended a new series of questions that first established a time span, and then asked about the frequency of the bullying within that time span. The answer choices for the original frequency question did not seem sufficient, so they were revised to provide options that better aligned with possible frequencies. Two versions of the

revised frequency question were created, so that students whose bullying lasted one month or less received one version of the question with an appropriate fill for their time frame and the applicable answer options, and students bullied for longer than one month received the version with fills and answer options that were applicable for their situation. See question-by-question breakdown below.

6.2.1.3 Frequency Questions Included in Round 3

<p>Added Frequency Question (Formerly Q23): <i>Former Q23 was added to the Round 2 protocol, numbered as Q23 in the Round 2 and Round 3 protocol, and was removed after Round 3.</i></p>	
<p>23. During this school year, did any of these things happen on more than one day?</p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No - SKIP to: Q27</p>

<p>Frequency Question Revision 1 (Formerly Q24): <i>The original frequency question was numbered as Q26 in the Round 1 protocol, Q24 in the Round 2 protocol, and replaced by the series of questions Q24-Q26b in the Round 3 protocol. The series of questions was removed after Round 3.</i></p>	
<p>24. During this school year, what month did the bullying start?</p> <p><i>FIELD REPRESENTATIVE – If the respondent says that the bullying started before this school year, ask the respondent what month school started this year.</i></p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> January 2 <input type="checkbox"/> February 3 <input type="checkbox"/> March 4 <input type="checkbox"/> April 5 <input type="checkbox"/> May 6 <input type="checkbox"/> June 7 <input type="checkbox"/> July 8 <input type="checkbox"/> August 9 <input type="checkbox"/> September 10 <input type="checkbox"/> October 11 <input type="checkbox"/> November 12 <input type="checkbox"/> December</p>

Frequency Question Revision 1 (Formerly Q25):

The original frequency question was numbered as Q26 in the Round 1 protocol, Q24 in the Round 2 protocol, and replaced by the series of questions Q24-Q26b in the Round 3 protocol. The series of questions was removed after Round 3.

25. What month did the bullying stop?

- 1 January
- 2 February
- 3 March
- 4 April
- 5 May
- 6 June
- 7 July
- 8 August
- 9 September
- 10 October
- 11 November
- 12 December
- 13 Still happening

IF START AND STOP MONTH ARE THE SAME, then go to Q26a. Else SKIP to Q26b.

Frequency Question Revision 1 (Formerly Q26a & Q26b):

The original frequency question was numbered as Q26 in the Round 1 protocol, Q24 in the Round 2 protocol, and replaced by the series of questions Q24-Q26b in the Round 3 protocol. The series of questions was removed after Round 3.

26a. During {start/stop month} of this school year, how often were you bullied?

(READ CATEGORIES 1-4.)

- 142
- 1 Almost every day
 - 2 About 3 to 4 times a week
 - 3 About once a week
 - 4 About once or twice in {start/stop month}

SKIP to Q27.

26b. Between {start month} and {stop month} of this school year, how often were you bullied?

(READ CATEGORIES 1-5.)

- 142
- 1 Almost every day
 - 2 About 3 to 4 times a week
 - 3 About once a week
 - 4 About once or twice a month, or
 - 5 About once or twice between {start month} and {stop month}.

Round 3 Findings:

The new series of frequency questions was asked during Round 3, and was only answered by the three victims of bullying who were interviewed in Round 3.

Respondents were first asked what month the bullying started, then what month the bullying stopped. This established the time span, which was used to determine which version of the revised frequency question they were asked and to populate the fills to include the time span in the question and response options. There was some concern about how students would answer these questions if the bullying started prior to the start of the current school year or if the bullying was still happening at the time of the interview, since response options are not read. Probes to address this were included in the protocol.

All three bullied students were able to easily answer the series of questions that asks when the bullying started and stopped, and the frequency of the bullying within that time frame. Their responses aligned with what they said about the situation, and they answered the new series of questions and the alternate “days” version of the frequency question in a fitting way.

It is important to note that only three bullied respondents answered these questions about their experiences. However, there was an observable range of cognitive abilities among the respondents, and none of them had trouble answering the questions. In addition, their experiences included several scenarios we were concerned about:

- One respondent (R3V15) said that the bullying started in March and ended in June “because school ended.”
- One respondent (R3V16) said that it started in February and is still happening. The interviewer did not need to probe or provide further guidance to determine that it was still happening, even though the question asks for a month and the answer options are read.
- For one respondent (R3V14), the bullying seemed like a consistent thing she has always experienced. She said it has happened all through middle school. As per the interviewer instructions, the interviewer asked her when the school year started and was able to easily use that information to get the start month. For the stop month, the respondent said it’s still happening.

Overall, the new series of questions performed well. During probing, we continued to ask the alternate version of the frequency question, “During this school year, how many days were you bullied?” and this question continued to perform well. Therefore, the sponsors were informed that both options would work well in the final survey. We recommended thinking about what they wanted the frequency questions to measure when deciding which one they would like to use in the final version of the supplement.

6.2.1.4 Frequency Questions: Final Recommendation

<p><u>Added Frequency Question (Q23a): Final Recommendation</u> <i>Q23a was asked as an alternative question during probing in all three protocols, and added as Q23a in the final questionnaire.</i></p>	
<p>23a. During this school year, how many days were you bullied?</p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> One day - <i>CONTINUE</i> to: Q23b 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Two days - <i>SKIP</i> to: Q24 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Three to ten days - <i>SKIP</i> to: Q24 4 <input type="checkbox"/> More than ten days - <i>SKIP</i> to: Q24</p>

<p><u>Added Frequency Question (Q23b): Final Recommendation</u> <i>Q23b was not asked during cognitive testing for the School Crime Supplement. It was modeled after a question used in the NCVS Supplemental Victimization Survey, which was cognitively tested in the Fall of 2015. The question performed well for victims of stalking. The constructs of bullying and stalking have many similarities, which leads us to believe the question, modified to measure bullying behaviors, will perform well for victims of bullying.</i></p>	
<p>23b. In that one day, how many times would you say other students did those things that made you feel bad or were hurtful to you?</p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Once 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Two to ten times 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Eleven to fifty times 4 <input type="checkbox"/> More than fifty times 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Too many times to count (do not read) 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know (do not read)</p>

Final Frequency Questions:

After the final recommendation meeting, CBSM and the sponsors discussed how to proceed with the frequency questions. It was decided the alternate version of the frequency question (“During this school year, how many days were you bullied?”) should be used in the final survey. This version of the question worked well, was easy for students to answer, and was the question that was most frequently chosen as the respondents’ preferred version of the frequency question.

However, we were concerned about missing respondents who only experienced bullying incidents on one day, but those incidents were repeated multiple times throughout the day. To address this, a new question was added as a follow up for students who answer that they were only bullied on one day.

23b. In that one day, how many times would you say other students did those things that made you feel bad or were hurtful to you?

- 1 **Once**
- 2 **Two to ten times**
- 3 **Eleven to fifty times**
- 4 **More than fifty times**
- 5 Too many times to count (do not read)
- 6 Don't know (do not read)

Though this question was not cognitively tested during this study, it was modeled after a question that was cognitively tested by CBSM in 2015 and used in the final version of the 2016 National Crime Victimization Survey's Supplemental Victimization Survey (SVS). The SVS is a supplement on stalking victimization. The constructs of stalking and bullying have many similarities, so both the sponsors and CBSM feel confident that this question is appropriate to use in the final version of the SCS.

It is important to note that this question references "things that made you feel bad or were hurtful to you" rather than bullying. This phrase is used in Q22, followed by "we often refer to this as being bullied." The choice to use this phrase rather than "bullied" in this question is the result of two things. The first is that the stalking question it was modeled after uses the phrase "unwanted contacts or behaviors" rather than stalking. The SVS does not include the word stalking at all, and instead uses that phrase to refer to stalking behaviors throughout the supplement. Since the bullying version of the question was not cognitively tested, it is important that it resemble the stalking question as closely as possible. The second reason for this choice has to do with the fact that some students interpret "times" of bullying as the larger collection of behaviors, rather than each individual incident. While this question uses the word "times," referencing the "things that made you feel bad or were hurtful to you" that they reported in Q22 indicates that the question is asking how many times the individual behaviors occurred.

6.2.2 Potential Future Repetition of Bullying

This question measures one aspect of the first key component of the CDC definition. While the frequency questions measure actual repetition, this question measures the student's perception of potential future repetition. Potential future repetition can be used to meet the criteria if actual repetition did not occur. If the bullying has already occurred multiple times, potential future repetition is not a requirement to meet the repetition criteria. In Round 1, only students who answered the frequency question ("During this school year, how often were you bullied?") with "once or twice the school year" were asked Q24 ("Did you think the bullying would happen over and over?"). In rounds two and three, all respondents who reported experiencing bullying behaviors in Q22 were asked the revised version of the repetition question ("Did you think the bullying would happen again?").

Q24: Round 1

Q24 was numbered as Q27 in the Round 1 protocol.

24. **Did you think the bullying would happen over and over?**

1 Yes
2 No

Q24 Revision 1: Round 2 – Round 3 and Final Recommendation

Q24 was numbered as Q25 in the Round 2 protocol and Q27 in the Round 3 protocol.

24. **Did you think the bullying would happen again?**

1 Yes
2 No

Round 1 Findings:

In Round 1, only three respondents were asked, “Did you think the bullying would happen over and over?” Of those, two responded “yes” and one responded “no.” The student who responded “no” defined the phrase “over and over” as happening every day. Because of this, and the fact that the phrase “over and over” is open to interpretation, we recommended modifying the question by replacing “over and over” with “again” and continuing to test the original version in probing.

Rounds 2 and 3 Findings:

In Round 2, we also changed the skip pattern so that all respondents who reported experiencing bullying behaviors were asked the question, as opposed to only asking respondents who said that the behaviors only occurred once or twice this school year.

We also asked the eight respondents in Round 2 who reported experiencing bullying behaviors both versions of the question. The revised version of the question was asked during the survey portion, and the old version of the question (containing the phrase “over and over”) was asked during probing. Three of the eight respondents answered the two versions of the question differently because the phrase “over and over” was a higher threshold in their mind. When asked what “over and over” means to them, respondents said it means “forever”, “happens every day,” and “consistently.” Even the respondent who just said it means “more than once” seemed to view “over and over” as a higher threshold, because he answered yes to the “again” version and no to the “over and over” version. Two respondents were asked if there’s a specific number that comes to mind when they hear the phrase; one said 5 and the other said 3. Since students do not interpret the phrase consistently and some interpret it as a constant occurrence, using the phrase could affect the data.

In Round 3, we removed the original version of the question from the probing section, as we had sufficient data to confirm that the phrase “over and over” is too ambiguous to be answered consistently by respondents. The revised version of the question caused no problems for respondents, and performed well. Therefore, it was kept in the final version of the questionnaire.

6.2.3 Respondent Thoughts on Repetition as a Requirement for Bullying

Fourteen respondents were either explicitly asked about or made unprompted statements about repetition in relation to bullying. Of those, seven respondents made at least one statement saying that behaviors do not need to be repeated to be considered bullying. The recurring themes were the effect and the intent – if the behavior was intentional and “affects [the victim] a lot” or was very hurtful, they think it can be considered bullying. The other seven respondents think repetition is required, and one-off behaviors are just “picking on” or name-calling. A few of these respondents made comments about how kids will say they’re being bullied when they’re not. As one respondent (R1V4) said, “A lot of people take bullying out of hand. Like ‘Oh my gosh, she called me a name, she’s bullying me.’ But it’s a one-time thing, she didn’t bully you. She called you a name and you got mad about it.” Note that respondents were not specifically asked whether suspected repetition, which fulfills the criteria for repetition under the uniform definition, was an essential part of bullying.

6.3 Power Imbalance

6.3.1 Perpetrators of Bullying

This section discusses the two questions about the perpetrators of the bullying reported by respondents. Question 25 measures whether one or more people did the bullying behaviors reported in Q22. Question 26 is a follow up question asked of respondents who report that they were bullied by more than one person; it asks whether the perpetrators acted alone, together as a team, or both. These questions address the uniform definition of bullying, as multiple, coordinated perpetrators indicate a power imbalance.

Q25: Round 1 – Round 3 and Final Recommendation (no changes made)

Q25 was numbered as Q23 in the Round 1 protocol, Q26 in the Round 2 protocol, and Q28 in the Round 3 protocol.

25. **Thinking about the [time/times] you were bullied this school year, did more than one person do these things to you?**

- 1 Yes
2 No - *SKIP to: Q27*

Q25 Findings:

Twenty respondents were asked this question. Of those, 13 answered “yes,” and seven answered “no.” There were no probes included in the protocol specific to this question, as other open-ended probes about the bullying incidents solicit information relevant to Q25. Interviewers were instructed to note any difficulties respondents had when answering questions, and use an unscripted probe to determine what caused the difficulty. None of the interviewers observed respondents having trouble with this question. Based on respondents’ discussions of their experience (in response to other probes), responses to this question aligned with their experiences.

This suggests that respondents were able to easily understand what the question is asking. Because there were no reported issues with answering this question, no changes were suggested during testing or for the final questionnaire.

<u>Q26: Round 1</u>	
<i>Q26 was numbered as Q24 in the Round 1 protocol.</i>	
26. Did these people act alone or together as a team?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Alone 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Together 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know
<u>Q26 Revision 1: Round 2 – Round 3 and Final Recommendation</u>	
<i>Q26 was numbered as Q27 in the Round 2 protocol, and Q29 in the Round 3 protocol.</i>	
26. Did these people act alone, together as a team, or both?	1 <input type="checkbox"/> Alone 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Together 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Both 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know

Round 1 Findings:

Seven respondents answered the original version of this question in Round 1. Of those, three said the people acted alone, three said the people acted together as a team, and one responded both “alone” and “together as a team.” Since it was pointed out that students can experience bullying perpetrated by individuals as well as groups working together, we revised the question to measure these occurrences.

Rounds 2 and 3 Findings:

Seven respondents answered the revised version of this question in rounds 2 and 3. Of those, one answered “alone,” one answered “together as a team,” four answered “both,” and one respondent said she didn’t know. This respondent was upset by the series of bullying questions, as well as the probes, and answered many questions and probes, “I don’t know.” The distribution of responses to Q26 supports our decision to add a separate category for “both.” The revised version of the question performed well, and was kept in the final version of the questionnaire.

6.3.2 Dimensions of a Power Imbalance

This question measures the second key component of the CDC definition. The bullying behaviors a respondent identifies in Q22 are included in the reading of this question. All respondents who report one or more bullying behaviors in Q22 are asked Q27.

Q27: Round 1

Q27 was numbered as Q25 in the Round 1 protocol.

27. Now I have some additional questions about the time [another student/ other students] {behavior₁}, {behavior₂}, and {behavior_x...}. Thinking about the [person/ people] who did these things to you this school year,

a. [Was this person/ Were any of these people/ Was anyone in the group] physically bigger or stronger than you?

Yes	No
1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>

b. [Was this person/ Were any of these people/ Was anyone in the group] more popular than you?

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
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c. [Did this person/ Did any of these people/ Did anyone in the group] have more money than you?

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
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d. [Did this person/ Did any of these people/ Did anyone in the group] have more power than you in another way?

1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
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Q27 Revision 1: Round 2 – Round 3 and Final Recommendation

Q27 was numbered as Q28 in the Round 2 protocol and Q30 in the Round 3 protocol.

<p>27. Now I have some additional questions about the time [another student/ other students] {behavior₁}, {behavior₂}, and {behavior_x...}. Thinking about the [person/ people] who did these things to you this school year,</p> <p>a. [Was this person/ Were any of these people/ Was anyone in the group] physically bigger or stronger than you?</p> <p>b. [Was this person/ Were any of these people/ Was anyone in the group] more popular than you?</p> <p>c. [Did this person/ Did any of these people/ Did anyone in the group] have more money than you?</p> <p>d. [Did this person/ Did any of these people/ Did anyone in the group] have the ability to influence what other students think of you?</p> <p>e. [Did this person/ Did any of these people/ Did anyone in the group] have more power than you in another way?</p>	<table> <thead> <tr> <th>Yes</th> <th>No</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 <input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>2 <input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Yes	No	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>								
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Round 1 Findings:

Due to the specific interest in how students think about power imbalances in relation to bullying, extensive probing was done on Q27 and the different forms of power imbalances. All respondents were probed on Q27, even if they said no to all items in Q22 and skipped all other questions in the bullying section during the survey. Handouts were given to show the full text of the question to aid the retrospective probing process. See page 3 of Attachment B for the handout used during cognitive testing.

Respondents who skipped the follow up questions were shown Q27 and told they would have been asked it if they had been bullied. They were informed that they did not have to answer the survey question, but that the interviewer was going to ask follow up questions about it.

The original four items in Q27 performed well in Round 1. Through probing, we confirmed that students were thinking of family wealth for Q27c (“have more money than you”). As R1NV3 put it, “Like they... have better clothes than me or better... everything than me. More money to spend and that stuff. Come to school way more upper class than me. And always have money every time they need it.” Respondents either mentioned the family’s economic status (“they’re wealthier,”

“they live in a big house and their parents work for a big company”), or having nicer things (“they have better things, like guys who have the best sneakers,” “they always have nice clothes on”).

When asked what the phrase “have more power than you” means in Q27d, some students were unsure of how to answer. One respondent (R1NV2) simply answered, “Honestly, I don’t know.” Two respondents seemed unsure at first, but were able to provide appropriate responses. This suggests that even if the phrase “have more power than you” is vague, students are able to figure out what the question is asking based on the context and the other items in the question.

R1V3: "What do you mean by power? I think power means to me that they have more experience doing things that they do, so when you try to do it ... they'll be stronger in it. You can't stop me because I'm better than you."

R1V6: "At first I didn't know, but I'm trying to think about - it could either go back to A [physically bigger / stronger] or B [(more popular] and they could get people to contribute to the bullying." ... "Especially B, if they are popular, they are more liked, and they can get more people on their side to contribute."

Aside from repeating the forms of power in the Q27 items, students kept mentioning influence as another form of power. This was often tied to popularity, but seemed to be a distinct concept in their minds.

R1V4: "When I thought of it, when the girl was being mean to me, I thought she had more power because she had a bigger mouth. So therefore she had more power because she had more power to tell more people stuff. But now, I don't think she had more power than me now, because she just didn't. Power in the school - power and popularity and stuff. And power of how many people will believe her, power of how many people she can get to turn on you."

R1V5: "More power as in... they have the power like physical power, and like I said... power and ability to like say who gets this and whose team this person is on, and who gets the work in class sometimes. Who sits where in the cafeteria sometimes."

The power imbalance question resulted in a false negative in Round 1 (this case is discussed in depth in Section 7.2). Though the respondent was clearly bullied, she said no to all four items in Q27, which resulted in her being categorized as a non-victim. This, coupled with the emergence of the theme as influence as power but distinct from popularity, resulted in the addition of a new item for Q27. After Round 1, we added the following item to Q27: “[Did this person/ Did any of these people/ Did anyone in the group] have the ability to influence what other students think of you?”

Prior to Round 1, researchers questioned whether a group of students working together to bully an individual created a power imbalance. A probe was included to determine if students saw a group against an individual as a power imbalance. Through both responses to the specific probe and comments made when answering other probes, it was clear that all ten respondents think that a group working together creates a power imbalance. The false negative in Round 1 would not have

occurred if groups working together were considered a form of a power imbalance. Therefore, we recommended considering using the indication of a group of bullies as another form of power in the criteria. We suggested continuing to probe on this in future rounds before deciding if any changes were necessary. This is discussed more below in Section 6.3.3: “Groups Working Together as a Power Imbalance.”

Round 2 and 3 Findings:

In Round 2, we added a probe asking students to say, in their own words, what the new item on influence was asking. Students were able to easily answer Q27d during the survey, and were able to accurately interpret what the question was asking during probing.

R2V11: "I think the question is asking like if what they do will influence what other people think. Like their thoughts of you, if they want to hang out with you, if they.... They'll have their own perception of you without really knowing you."

R2NV7: “Maybe like that bully kid telling his or her friends bad things about me, like '[R2NV7] has this or that about her,' then they'll think that too and they'll make fun of me for having whatever that is." **Interviewer:** “Can anyone do that?”

R2NV7: "It depends on who you are. If you're popular then people will listen to you, if you say someone's weird then they'll think, 'oh, they have to be weird.' But if someone weird says something, then no one will listen, because they're weird.”

Respondents in Round 2 and 3 gave similar responses as respondents in Round 1 to the probes that were used in all three rounds. They were able to easily answer and understand Q27a-e. Respondents agreed that the four specific items that we ask are ways that bullies can have power over someone. Respondents made comments like “They’re good examples,” (R2NV4), and “Yeah, I believe they are good questions,” (R2V8).

The power imbalance question did result in one more false negative in Round 2. This respondent (R2V13) said no to all items. However, when he was giving his interpretation of Q27d (influence), he referenced his own situation, saying that his bully had the power to influence some students, just not the majority. This suggests that he applied his own threshold to the extent of influence necessary for him to answer “yes” to Q27d. This case is discussed further in Section 7.2.

No additional changes were made to Q27 after Round 1.

6.3.3 Groups Working Together as a Power Imbalance

Of the 30 respondents, 29 were asked probes about whether or not they think a group of students working together to bully an individual has more power over that individual. One respondent was not asked the question due to time constraints. However, this respondent mentioned “the power of numbers” many times during his interview, suggesting that he does think that a group creates a power imbalance.

Twenty-eight of the 29 respondents said that they think a group of students working together has more power over the individual. The only respondent not agreeing (R3NV14) answered, “No,

because they've sunk to a lower level." The 28 respondents who answered yes were asked if they still think the group working together has more power, even if everyone in the group and the individual being bullied are about the same size, about as popular, had about the same amount of money, and the same ability to influence others. All respondents still thought that the fact that the group was working together against an individual created a power imbalance. For this reason, we recommend using responses to Q25 ("...did more than one person do these things to you?) and Q26 ("Did [they] act alone, together as a team, or both?") to determine when respondent is bullied by a group working together. This can be used as an additional indicator of a power imbalance when a respondent answers "no" to Q27a-e, but says that more than one person bullied them and they acted together as a team (or both). This would eliminate false potential false negatives of bullying for this situation.

6.3.4 Respondent Thoughts on a Power Imbalance as a Requirement for Bullying

It was often hard to determine whether or not kids thought a power imbalance was necessary for bullying. Many kids made conflicting statements; comments imply that they think a power imbalance is necessary but then they say things like "anyone can bully anyone". Respondents were asked a series of probes about whether bullying could occur with various power differentials. For example, they were asked if a student could bully someone bigger or stronger than them, or if a less popular student could bully a more popular student. Multiple respondents said that anyone can bully anyone, but that it's rare for a smaller or less popular student to bully a bigger or more popular student because they'd fear retaliation. While it is possible, it is unlikely.

R2V11: "Have I heard that before...? No... [thinks, laughs]. I mean I think it's possible, but I haven't ever heard of that."

R2NV5: "She could, it probably wouldn't end very well. She could blackmail or something. I just don't see that ending well."

Students' thoughts on this requirement are unclear because there are so many dimensions of power. In addition to the four forms of power that we ask about, students talked about confidence, attitude, intelligence, relationships with teachers, among other things, as ways students can have power over someone. Respondents said that it really just depends on who the people involved are and the ways in which the different types of power intersect. For example, a less popular student can bully a more popular student if they're bigger or stronger, or a student with less power in general can bully someone if they have that attitude or willingness to be mean and do bullying behaviors.

An interesting theme that came up was bullying to gain power. Multiple students mentioned this without any probing from interviewers, specifically that kids bully to gain power and popularity. One said that students will not bully if no one else is around because it won't make them more popular. One girl gave an example of a kid who wasn't popular/had little power, but then he started being a bully, used that behavior to increase his status and popularity, and was accepted into the popular group. One student (R2V11) said that some people bully to feel like they have power over someone, even if they don't; "Yeah. I don't know if it's [to feel like they have power over someone]... people say they do it to make themselves feel better. You just want to make yourself have more power than the other person even though they're the same."

6.4 Location of Bullying

Q28: Round 1 - Round 3 and Final Recommendation (no changes made)		
<i>Q28 was numbered as Q28 in the Round 1 protocol, Q29 in the Round 2 protocol, and Q31 in the Round 3 protocol.</i>		
<p>28. Still thinking about all of the times that you were bullied, where did the bullying occur? Did it occur ...</p> <p><i>(READ CATEGORIES) Mark (X) all that apply</i></p> <p>Where is the other place where bullying occurred?</p>	<p>143</p> <p>168</p> <p>169</p> <p>173</p> <p>146</p> <p>144</p> <p>145</p> <p>211SCS</p>	<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> In a classroom at school?</p> <p>2 <input type="checkbox"/> In a hallway or stairwell at school?</p> <p>3 <input type="checkbox"/> In a bathroom or locker room at school?</p> <p>4 <input type="checkbox"/> In a cafeteria or lunch room at school?</p> <p>5 <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhere else inside the school building? – Specify _____</p> <p>6 <input type="checkbox"/> Outside on school grounds?</p> <p>7 <input type="checkbox"/> On the way to or from school such as on a school bus or at a bus stop?</p> <p>8 <input type="checkbox"/> Online or by text?</p>

Rounds 1 to 3 Findings:

Across all rounds, 20 students were asked this question. All 20 respondents were able to understand what the question was asking, and were able to easily answer the question. Three respondents said yes to, “somewhere else inside the school building?” When asked where that other place was, one said in the theater, one said in the gym, and the third said outside on the track. The third respondent seemed to miss the fact that this item specifies “*inside the school building.*”

Probes for this question focused on the final item, bullying that occurs online or by text. Respondents were asked to tell us in their own words what it means to be bullied online or by text. They were also asked probes to determine if they considered bullying online or by text that occurs when they are not at school but related to school, and if they would include those incidents in the earlier survey questions asking about bullying that happens at school.

All respondents defined bullying that happens online or by text appropriately. Many acknowledged that it is the same thing as bullying that happens in person, but it occurs on the internet. As one respondent (R1V6) put it, “It’s like bullying in person except for the physical ... During online attacks it can be the same thing - they can insult you, make fun of you, have people gang up on you and do it together, throw hurtful words to you whether it is your religion, your sexuality, your nationality.” Respondents think of social media apps as well as bullying via text, email, or on websites. A few respondents said that most cyberbullying occurs on social media these days, rather than in private text messages. They mentioned apps such as Kiik, Snapchat, Instagram, and Brighten, among others. Students also said it was common for cyberbullying to occur in group chats or group text messages.

Respondents considered bullying perpetrated by classmates online or by text to be related to school, even if the behaviors are done outside of school. Their comments indicate that the lines are blurred when it comes to bullying in school and online.

R1V4: "Well I feel like everything is tied into school because we all go to the same school, and everything happens at school, and it all goes home, and then it happens on social media. So yeah, it's all tied in to school."

R2V10: "Yes, it's from the same person. It carries over, from school to cyber and vice versa."

R2NV7: "Yeah. It's the same person, right? You know each other through school, and you're hearing about what they're doing outside of school, but it still comes back to school."

6.5 Reporting to Adults

<u>Original Question Q29: Round 1 - Round 3 and Final Recommendation (no changes made)</u>	
<i>Q29 was numbered as Q29 in the Round 1 protocol, Q30 in the Round 2 protocol, and Q32 in the Round 3 protocol.</i>	
29. Did you tell a teacher or some other adult at school about being bullied?	147 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Yes 2 <input type="checkbox"/> No

Round 1 to 3 Findings:

Across the three rounds, 20 respondents heard this question. No issues with answering were reported by the interviewers. Of these respondents, 10 answered 'no' to this question. The cognitive probes for this question centered on a 'no' response, to determine the reasons why a student who had experienced bullying behavior would not report it.

Of the 10 respondents that answered 'no,' six had said they hadn't told an adult because they didn't believe it would be helpful. There were multiple reasons given: (1) the adult would have no way to really help them, (2) the adult would be uninterested in helping them, or (3) the adult's help would involve telling the perpetrator's or the victim's parents, which was an unwanted outcome.

R1V1: "Because there's no one you really go to and trust enough. The counselor is always there but is there nothing the counselor can really do."

R1V5: "Because teachers don't really do nothing. They'll probably ask to talk about it with you, but they probably wouldn't do nothing. They have like a million talks and they do nothing."

R1V6: "I don't really talk to teachers because they just brush it off or are disrespectful generally."

R2V8: "Because there's no one you can really trust. The guidance counselor doesn't sound really helpful. If they went to the kid and told them someone said they were being bullied by them, then [the bully would] probably come right to me and call me a snitch and everything."

R2V9: "Whenever you tell an adult they are so quick to get you a mediation and that might not be what you want." This respondent also added that adults sometimes call your parents and you may not want your parents involved.

Four respondents said they prefer to handle their issues themselves. Some also felt that the bullying behaviors they experienced were not serious enough to be worth going to an adult.

R1V1: "...but there is nothing the counselor can really do. It's more you have to do it yourself," (continuation of quote above).

R1V3: "Because I can handle it."

R2V10: "No, because it's not really that big of a deal. What they say didn't really affect me too much."

R2NV5: "Because it really didn't get to me too much for me to tell them. If it got to me and they kept doing it, I'd probably tell someone."

Because there were no reported issues with this question, we suggest leaving it the same.

6.6 Effects of Bullying

Q30: Round 1 - Round 3 and Final Recommendation (no changes made)					
<i>Q30 was numbered as Q30 in the Round 1 protocol, Q31 in the Round 2 protocol, and Q33 in the Round 3 protocol.</i>					
30. This school year, how much has bullying had a NEGATIVE effect on: (READ ANSWER CATEGORIES)	lot	Not	Not very	Somewhat	A
		at all	much		
a. YOUR school work.					
b. YOUR relationships with friends or family.		1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. How you feel about YOURSELF.		1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. YOUR physical health for example, caused injuries, gave you headaches or stomach aches.		1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>

Round 1 to 3 Findings:

Twenty respondents across three rounds heard this question. No interviewers reported issues with answering the question. Twelve respondents were asked what the phrase “had a negative effect” meant to them in the stem of this question. All 12 had a good understanding of the phrase ‘negative effect,’ providing variations of a definition of something that can hurt you emotionally, mentally, or physically, and noted that your emotional state can affect how well you do in school and how you relate to others. One respondent felt that being physically hurt had to do more with the perpetrator’s actions toward the victim.

Five respondents said bullying affected at least one aspect of their life ‘a lot.’ None of them reported that bullying had affected their physical health, only school work (“I used to be a straight A student, and now, I’m just passing classes” (R1V7); “When I tried to do my schoolwork all I could think about is if all the people around me are talking about me” (R2V9)), relationships (“You’re so angry that you don’t want to say anything. Your friends tap you on the shoulders and you’re just freaking out. It definitely affects your family life because when you come home and you’re angry and you don’t want to deal with anyone” (R1V1)), or their feelings towards themselves (“I mean like this is like my whole life. This is not the first time I’ve been bullied. People commenting on your physical appearance, that was the big one for me. That just brings you down the most... A lot is like the depression part. I mean I was depressed for a while. It can be like you don’t even want to live anymore, stuff like that. That part,” (R2V11)).

Because there were no reported issues with answering this question, we have no changes to suggest.

6.7 Hate-related Bullying

Q31: Round 1 - Round 3 and Final Recommendation (no changes made)

Q31 was numbered as Q31 in the Round 1 protocol, Q32 in the Round 2 protocol, and Q34 in the Round 3 protocol.

31. When you were bullied in school this year, did you ever think it was related to...		Yes	No
a. YOUR race?	200SCS	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
b. YOUR religion?	201SCS	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
c. Your ethnic background or national origin - for example, people of Hispanic origin?	202SCS	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
d. Any disability you may have – such as physical, mental, or developmental disabilities?	203SCS	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
e. YOUR gender?	204SCS	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
f. YOUR sexual orientation - by this we mean gay, lesbian, bisexual, or straight?	205SCS	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>
g. YOUR physical appearance?	206SCS	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>

Round 1 to 3 Findings:

Twenty respondents across three rounds heard this question. No interviewees reported issues with answering the question. Ten respondents answered ‘no’ to all items, and the cognitive probes were created to find out why they had answered that way. Two respondents said these factors were the same for both herself and for her perpetrators. Two respondents said that these differences just did not come up during bullying, and one respondent said that her bullies must have known that picking on those factors would be mean ("Because I wouldn't think nobody in my school would talk about somebody's race or religion. I guess they know it's not nice to do that.").

The respondents who answered ‘no’ to all of these items were asked if they felt they would have to be absolutely certain that the incident was because they had one of these characteristics for them to say “yes”. Four of the respondents said they would answer ‘yes’ to any of these items if they had any hunch that it was for that reason, and they knew that the bullying they experienced wasn’t

for any of these reasons. One respondent was unsure if they would say yes or no in that case. One respondent just knew that their bullying experience wasn't related to any of these reasons.

Because none of the respondents had issues answering, and because the majority of respondents that were asked said they wouldn't have an issue reporting 'yes' even if they only had a gut feeling that the bullying was for one of these reasons, we felt the question could be kept with no changes.

7 NOTEWORTHY CASES SUPPORTING RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Overall Performance of Questions Measuring Key Components of the CDC Definition

Overall, the series of questions designed to identify victims of bullying performed well. Of the 30 interviews, the survey questions produced two false negatives where students who met the criteria for bullying were classified as non-victims based on their responses to the bullying questions. See section 7.2 for a full discussion of these 2 interviews. The questions that resulted in the false negatives were revised during testing to reduce the likelihood of measurement error.

The questions were effective at correctly categorizing respondents as non-victims when they did not meet the criteria for bullying victims, even when respondents indicated that they self-identified as victims through comments made during the interview. Two respondents considered themselves victims even though their discussion of their experiences made it clear that they did not meet the criteria in the official definition. These cases are discussed below in section 7.3.

Three respondents seemed to miss the phrase "We often refer to this as being bullied," in the stem of Q22 (bullying prevalence). These individuals did not consider themselves to be victims of bullying, but said 'yes' to one or more items in Q22, which asks about things other students do that were mean or hurtful to them. During probing, it became clear that the experiences they reported were not bullying, but rather things like the aftermath of a falling out with a friend, or being part of a fight during a football game in gym class. The follow up questions about repetition and power imbalances worked well to identify them as non-victims.

7.2 False Negatives

R1V4:

This respondent (a female in 9th grade) answered "yes" to Q22a ("made fun of you, called you names, or insulted you, in a hurtful way?") and Q22b ("spread rumors about you or tried to make others dislike you?"). When asked, "During this school year, how often were you bullied?" she answered "once or twice this school year." She said she did think that the bullying would happen over and over. So her self-report met the repetition criteria for bullying.

This student's responses and discussion of her experiences during probing highlighted the issue of some respondents thinking of a "time" or an occurrence of bullying differently than other respondents (discussed in section 6.2.1 Frequency of Bullying). Although this respondent reported multiple bullying incidents that spanned multiple weeks, she considered it a single "time" of bullying, since all of the incidents were related to the initial incident that started the bullying. The

respondent's interpretation of what constituted being bullied "one time" highlighted an issue with the original frequency question. However, since she answered yes to Q24 ("Did you think the bullying would happen over and over?"), her responses did meet the criteria for repetition.

However, this respondent said no to all of the power imbalance questions, which meant her self-responses did NOT meet that criteria and she would have been misclassified as a non-victim. However, in response to survey questions, the respondent did say that more than one person did these things to her (Q25), and that they worked together as a team (Q26). At the time of testing, the team perpetrator concept was not an indicator of a power imbalance in the SCS, though it was recognized as a form of a power imbalance according to the CDC uniform definition. The survey sponsors later revised which questions used to establish their power imbalance criteria in response to CBSM reports (see section 6.3.3 for recommendation). Thus, the respondent answered all the survey items correctly, in accord with her experiences discussed during probing. If the team perpetrator concept is applied to determine a power imbalance, she would be screened in as a victim; if not she would be screened out as a victim.

R2V13:

This respondent (a 10th grade male) answered yes to Q22b ("spread rumors about you or tried to make others dislike you?"). He said that the bullying occurred "once or twice a month," and was done by one other student. The student said that he did not think the bullying would happen again because he reported it to adults who intervened and put an end to it. This respondent said no to all power imbalance questions, which resulted in him being categorized as a non-victim.

When asked what Q22d ("Did this person have the ability to influence what other students think of you?") was asking, in his own words, the respondent referenced his own bullying incident. He said that his bully could influence some people, but the majority of people would not have been influenced by his bully. He said that he was thinking of the bully's close friend group when asked who his bully could influence. Although the respondent said "no" to Q22d, his comments during probing indicate that his bully did have the ability to influence what other students think of the respondent. The respondent's comments suggest that he was interpreting Q22d as asking if the bully could influence what most students or a lot of students thought of the respondent, rather than any students.

7.3 Self-identified Victims Who Correctly Screened Out

R1NV1:

This 10th grader considered herself a victim of bullying. She said "yes" to Q22a, has another student "made fun of you, called you names, or insulted you, in a hurtful way?" For the question asking, "During this school year, how often were you bullied?" she answered "once or twice this school year." When asked if she thought the bullying would happen over and over, she responded "no." The student said that only one student bullied her, although during probing she mentioned the main perpetrator's friends laughing and making fun of her at the time of the incident. The respondent answered "no" to the power imbalance questions about size, popularity, or power in

some other way, and said, “I don’t know” to the power imbalance question about having more money.

During probing, the respondent mentioned multiple times that the incident was a one-time thing. When asked about what happened, the respondent said that a girl made fun of her and pulled her hair when she walked past her in the hallway, and then the girl’s friends started laughing at her as she walked past them. This upset the respondent, so she told the Dean. The Dean suspended the girl who pulled her hair “because he doesn’t tolerate bullying.” The fact that the Dean labeled this incident as bullying is further evidence that individual’s conceptualizations of bullying vary, and that school policies and responses to bullying may not be limited to incidents that meet the CDC’s criteria for bullying.

Though this respondent incorrectly self-identified as a victim based on the uniform definition, her definition of bullying aligned with other students’ definitions. As previously discussed, almost half of the respondents do not think repetition is a requirement for bullying. This student’s view on repetition as a requirement is what resulted in her incorrectly self-identifying as a victim. When asked what behaviors count as bullying, R1NV1 said:

"Messing with someone, calling them names, pushing them, physically harming a person and messing with them, constantly, not stopping. I feel like that's bullying. But bullying is also a one-time thing, like it's not just something that's constant. It's something that can happen maybe once to make a person feel really bad about themselves."

R2NV6:

This respondent (a 6th grade female) answered Q22a (“made fun of you, called you names, or insulted you, in a hurtful way?”) and Q22d (“pushed you, shoved you, tripped you, or spit on you?”). For the question asking, “During this school year, how often were you bullied?” she answered “once or twice this school year.” When asked if she thought the bullying would happen again, she responded “no.” The student said that only one student bullied her. The respondent did indicate that there was a power imbalance between herself and the other student, saying yes to the item about being bigger or stronger, and the item about having the ability to influence what other students think of her.

When discussing the incident, the respondent said an 8th grader tripped her in the hallway and called her a name. She said the 7th and 8th graders in her school “always bully 6th graders” in this way. This respondent did not think repetition was a requirement for bullying; she thinks that behaviors that only happen once can still be considered bullying because the perpetrator is intentionally hurting someone. Though she self-identified as a victim of bullying, she did make a distinction between her experience and that of kids who get bullied consistently. She said, “Well I was bullied once, but not like that, I wasn’t really bully-bullied. It’s kind of difficult to remember because if you got bullied a lot, you’d remember it like that.”

8 TESTING THE SCHOOL CRIME SUPPLEMENT BROCHURE

During Round 3 interviews, the sponsors asked us to solicit feedback on the student version of brochure about the School Crime Supplement that is included in the advanced mailing materials for the NCVS (see pages 14-15 of Attachment B for brochure). For the final seven interviews, respondents were shown the student version of the SCS brochure and then asked a set of probing questions on their thoughts about the brochure. Respondents were asked what their first impressions of the brochure were, if they would read the brochure if a parent gave it to them, what stands out about the brochure, if there is anything they dislike about it, and what the phrase “Stay tuned!” at the bottom of the brochure means to them.

Overall, reactions to the brochure were positive. Multiple respondents said that they liked the question and answer style of the brochure because they seemed like questions someone chosen for the survey would probably ask, and the answers tell them what is about to happen in the survey. Students mentioned that the questions, “What will the survey ask me?” and “Will anyone find out what my answers are?” stood out to them as important information. When asked if they would read the brochure if their parent gave it to them, two respondents said they would not read it, one said she would “because it’s colorful,” three said they would “probably read it,” and one said “maybe.”

Only two respondents said yes when asked if there was anything they did not like about the brochure. One critique was visual, and was due to the brochure being printed on standard printer paper rather than how the official brochure would appear. The other respondent said that the answer to the question, “Why am I being asked to complete this survey?” is somewhat difficult to understand and suggested rewording it. Another respondent thought the questions were appropriately written for the intended audience (meaning in the words of 6th to 12th graders) but that the answers seemed like adults are answering the questions and that the answers should also be in “our own words.” A third respondent, who had just finished 10th grade at the time of the interview, thought the brochure targeted a younger audience than him. When probed on this, he was referring to visual aspects of the brochure; this student liked the content in the brochure.

Since the sponsors were particularly interested in respondents’ reactions to the phrase “Stay tuned!” at the bottom of the brochure, all respondents were asked what the phrase meant to them. All respondents understood that the phrase meant that they would be hearing more about the SCS in the near future. Five of the seven respondents were asked if they liked the phrase being used in the brochure, and all five said that they did like it.

9 CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the findings from this study indicate that the original questions for the SCS to the NCVS were a strong start. Many of the questions performed well and required no revisions. Of the questions that required revisions, two involved minor tweaks. The phrase “over and over” was replaced with “again” in the repetition question, and the question asking if the multiple bullies were working alone or together as a team was modified to allow respondents to report that both of those occurred. Other questions had more substantial revisions. A new item was added to the power imbalance question, and the original frequency question was replaced by two new questions.

The frequency question was problematic and went through many revisions. Respondents had trouble answering every version of the question. Because the frequency question is so important in deciding who is considered a victim of bullying, any possible source of respondent confusion is problematic. Though the series of frequency questions tested in Round 3 appeared to work well, the question asking how often a student was bullied in a given time frame was still more difficult to answer than asking how many days a student was bullied during the school year.

Due to time constraints, this phase of testing was limited. The decision was made to focus mainly on the repetition and power imbalance questions, but to also collect data on other potential issues to identify questions of concern for future testing. While revising the bullying prevalence question (Q22) was not within the scope of this project, we identified an issue with the question where most students are not thinking about cyberbullying when answering it.

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Appendix A: 2017 SCS/NCVS Cognitive Interview Recruitment Protocol

SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL CRIME SUPPLEMENT

IF MORE THAN ONE CHILD: *Let's start with the oldest child first.*

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
4. How old is that child? (Verify child is 12 -18)				
5. What is that child's name?				
6. Is _____ male or female?				
7. What grade is _____ in?				
8. Is _____ Hispanic?				
9. Please choose one or more races that _____ considers him/herself to be. White Black or African American Asian American Indian or Alaska Native Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander				
10. Does _____ speak English fluently?				
11. What city or town does _____ live in?				
12. Does _____ attend public school, attend private school, or is [he/she] homeschooled?				
13. Has _____ ever been bullied in school? (That you know of)				
13b.[IF YES TO 13] When did the most recent bullying incident occur? (their best guess is fine)				
14. Has _____ ever bullied another student at school? (That you know of)				
15. If necessary, would you be able to bring _____ to our office in Suitland, MD to be interviewed?				

IF MORE THAN ONE CHILD: *Now let's talk about the [second/third/fourth] oldest child.*

16. In order to make sure that we recruit students from a variety of backgrounds, my last question is about your household's annual income. Is your household's annual income....

a. above \$25,000?

1 Yes 2 No - *skip to conclusion*

b. Is it above \$50,000?

1 Yes 2 No - *skip to conclusion*

c. Is it above \$100,000?

1 Yes 2 No

17. How did you hear about the survey?
