

# Future Expectations, Attitude Toward Violence, and Bullying Perpetration During Early Adolescence: A Mediation Evaluation

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- **Abstract**

**Background:** Hopeful future expectations have been linked to positive developmental outcomes in adolescence; however, the association between future expectations and bullying perpetration has received less attention.

**Objectives:** We examined the relationship between future expectations and physical and relational bullying perpetration and tested a mediation model that linked future expectations with bullying through attitude toward violence.

**Methods:** Structural equation modeling was used to examine the relationship between future expectations and bullying perpetration (relational and physical) and to test whether these relationships were mediated by attitude toward violence in a sample of U.S. seventh-grade students ( $M^{\text{age}} = 12.86$  years,  $N = 196$ , 60% female, 46% African American).

**Results:** Attitude toward violence fully mediated the relationship between future expectations and physical bullying (indirect effects =  $-0.08$ , 95% CI  $[-0.15, -0.01]$ ,  $R^2 = .17$ ). The relationship between future expectations and relational bullying was partially mediated by attitudes toward violence (indirect effects =  $-0.07$ , 95% CI  $[-0.14, -0.002]$ ,  $R^2 = .20$ ).

**Discussion:** Our findings suggest that future expectations can play a role in reducing attitude toward violence and physical and relational bullying perpetration among youth. Interventions that help support the development of future goals and aspirations could play a vital role in bullying prevention efforts.

- **Keywords:** Adolescents; Bullying; ; Growth and development; Mediation; Violence