

Using Athletics to Mitigate the Negative Relational Outcomes Bullying Has On Youth with Disabilities

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Abstract : Studies have demonstrated that middle and high school students with disabilities are more likely to experience bullying than other student groups. The high rates of bullying victimization observed among youth with disabilities can result in severe socio-emotional consequences. These socio-emotional consequences often manifest in detrimental impacts on the students' personal relationships. Past studies have indicated that participating in extracurricular athletic activities can have several socio-emotional benefits for students with disabilities. Given the findings of past studies demonstrating the positive relationship between mental health and participation in sports among students with disabilities, it is possible that participating in athletics could have a moderating relationship on the severity of the impact that bullying has on a student's relationships with family and friends. Using the National Crime Victimization Survey/School Crime Supplement (NCVS/SCS), this study employs an ordinal logistic regression to determine if participation in extracurricular athletic activities mitigates the damaging impact bullying has on the personal relationships with friends and family among students who have disabilities. This study identified statistically significant results suggesting that students with disabilities who participate in athletics reported reduced levels of negative personal relationships resulting from bullying compared to their peers who did not participate in athletics.

Keywords : disability, inclusion, bullying, relationships

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