The Meaningful Roles intervention: An Evolutionary Approach to Reducing Bullying and Increasing Prosocial Behavior.

People
Principal Investigator: Bruce J. Ellis
Co-Investigators: Anthony Volk and Dennis Embry

About
A current focus of my research is on development of the Meaningful Roles anti-bullying intervention. We recently published the core theoretical logic behind this intervention (Ellis et al., 2012) and have now completed a two-year pilot study with 7th-8th graders (Ellis et al., 2015). Meaningful Roles, which provides every student in the target school with a job (meaningful role), attempts to work within the goal structures of bullies to substitute effective, evolutionarily-informed prosocial strategies that yield outcomes and incentives that are comparable to those achieved through bullying. In other words, the intervention attempts to work with, instead of against, the powerful goals and motives that underlie and reinforce bullying behavior. Meaningful Roles is currently being evaluated in a randomized trial in the Netherlands (PI: Renee Veenstra; I serve as an external advisor on the project), which funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research. I am currently seeking funding to implement the intervention in schools in Salt Lake City.

Selected Publications