

YOUTH

VOICE

PROJECT

STUDENT INSIGHTS INTO BULLYING AND PEER MISTREATMENT

STAN DAVIS AND CHARISSE L. NIXON

What can we  
do about bullying?

[youthvoiceproject.com](http://youthvoiceproject.com)

# Two eyes work better than one.



Reduce  
mistreatment  
by peers

Reduce the  
harm that  
mistreatment  
can do

# Results from the Youth Voice Project- Charisse Nixon, Ph.D. & Stan Davis

## Quick snapshot

- Youth in grades 5-12 in **31 US schools**
- **N = 13,177 students**
- **Ethnicity: 50% white**  
**Gender: 49% female**
- **AT RISK KIDS – *Frequently* victimized students (approximately 25%) N = 2929**
- **About half of these students report that they were moderately, severely, or very severely affected.**



# The focus of our research:



## WHAT LEADS TO MORE POSITIVE OUTCOMES?

[Youthvoiceproject.com](http://Youthvoiceproject.com)

# Self strategies

“Don’t act like a victim” - most used; least effective

Told them to stop

Told them how I felt

Pretended it didn’t bother me

Walked away

“Seek support” - less often used, more effective

Told adult at school (only 33% of youth did this)

Told friend; Told adult at home

“Don’t think like a victim” - less often used, quite effective  
above grade 5.

“Told myself the behavior was their fault, not caused by anything about me.”

# Self actions YVP

27%

Told adult at school



Told a friend(s)



15%

Remind self not my fault



18%

Pretend not bothered



22%

Told how I feel



32%

Told them to stop



32%

■ Things got better ■ No change ■ Things got worse

# Peer strategies

## Confrontation by bystanding peers

- **least effective** of positive strategies

Peers told mistreaters to stop angrily or calmly

## Included me and spent time with me at school

- **most helpful actions overall**

Walked or spent time with me at school

Talked to me at school to encourage me

Gave me advice (hope)

Helped me get away; made a distraction

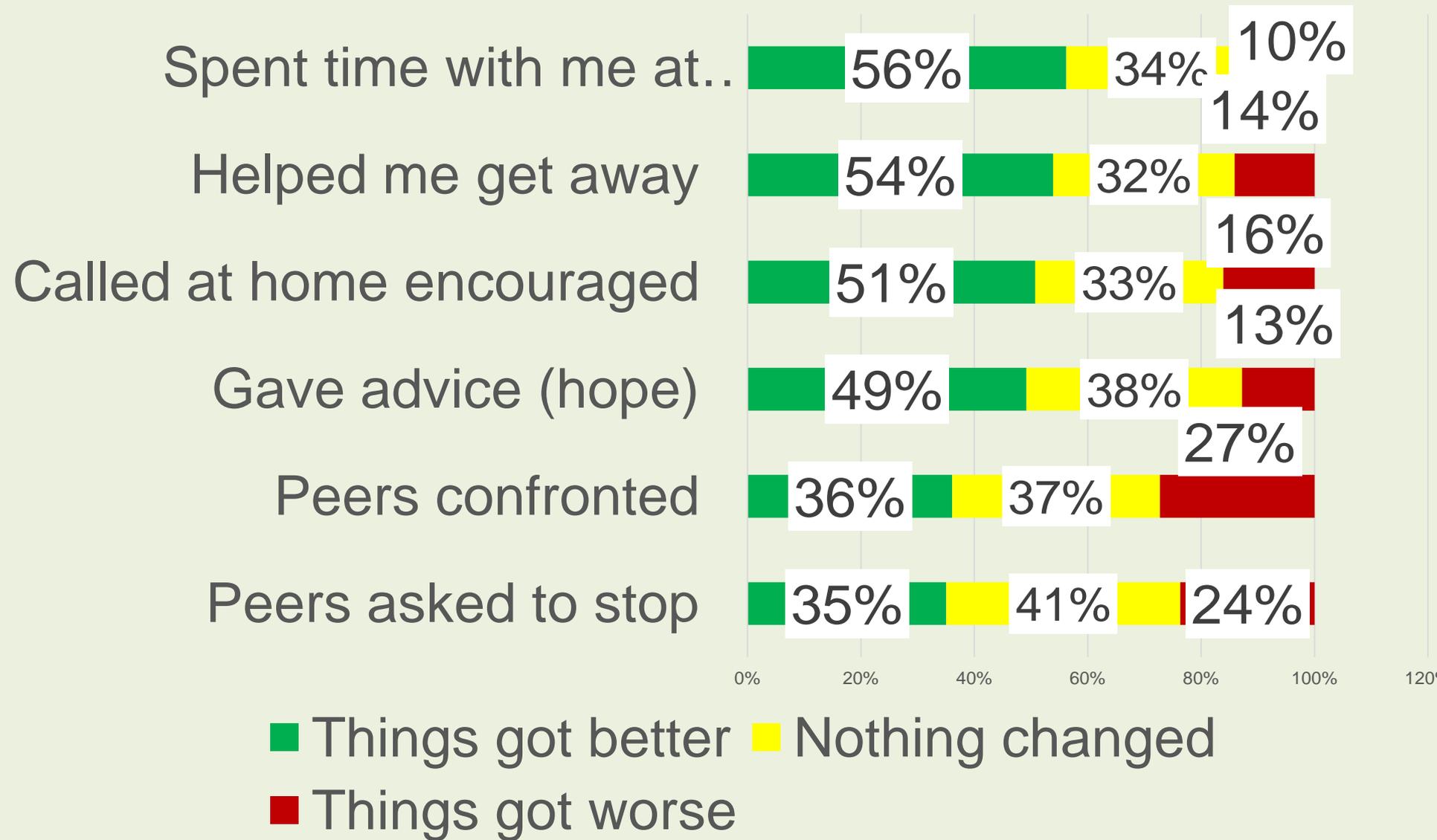
Helped me tell adults

## Encouraged me **Strongly positive effects**

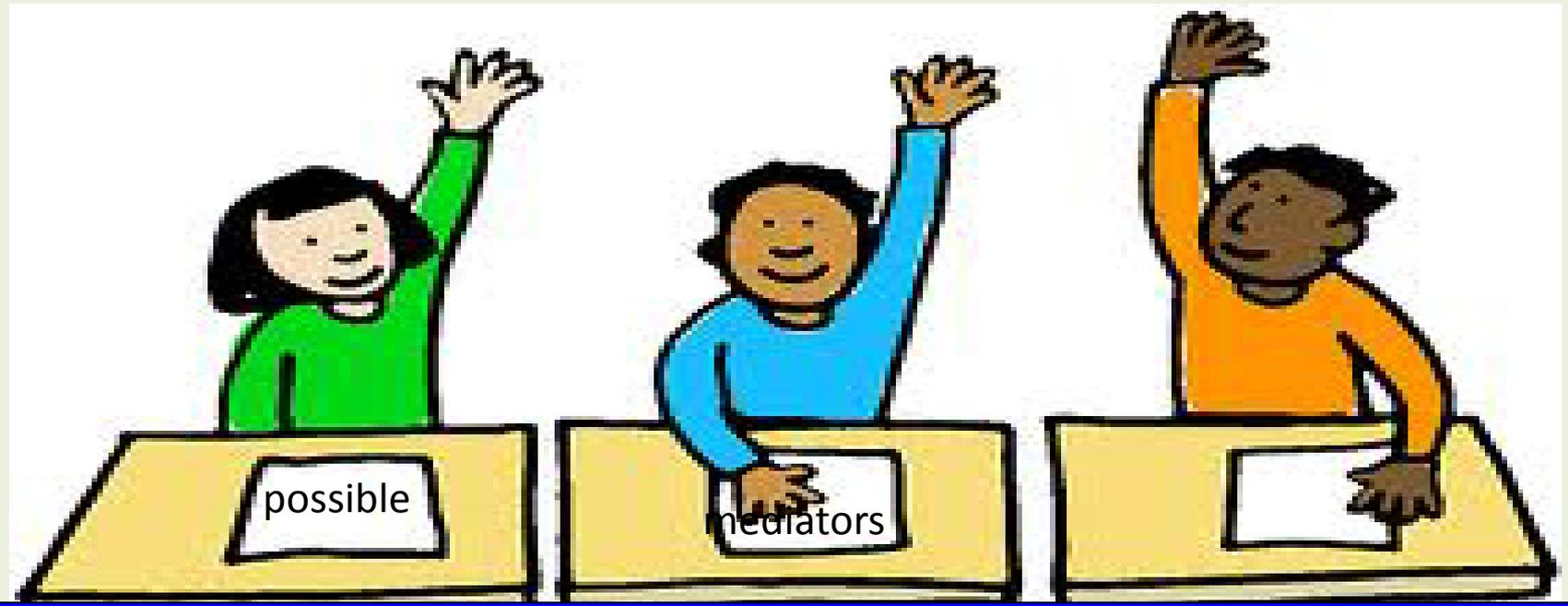
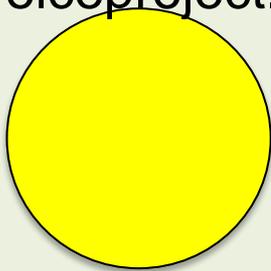
Talked to me at school to encourage me

Called me at home to encourage me

# Effects of peer actions



Grade  
Gender



- ❖ Feel part of the school → Lower trauma
  - ❖ Feel valued and respected → gr 5-12
  - ❖ Feel close to adult at school → Lower trauma
- gr 9-12

## Adult strategies

“You should have...” least likely to have positive effects

Told me it wouldn't happen if I acted differently

Told me to stop tattling

**(most harmful adult action)**

“Connection, support and reframing”- most helpful

Listened to me

Encouraged me

Checked back with me over time to make sure I was OK

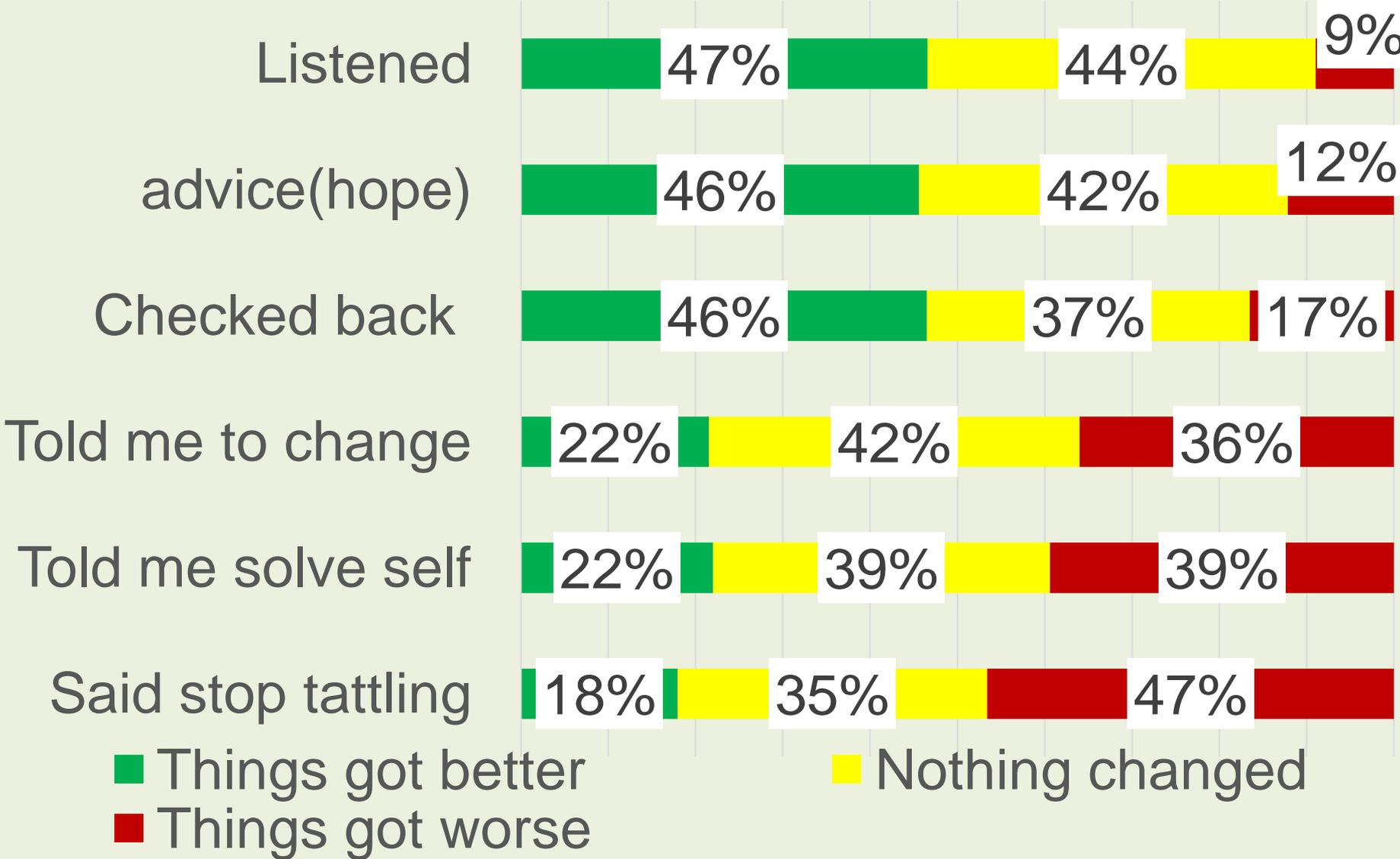
“Direct intervention”- Effects varied widely from school to school. **It matters how we do these.**

Supervision

Punishment/consequences

# ADULT ACTIONS YVP

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%



# Recommendations

- Gather data about belonging, feeling valued, and connection with adults. Affirm and continue successful practices and add strategies as needed.
- Reduce or eliminate “stand up for yourself,” “pretend it doesn’t bother you,” and –especially- “don’t tattle” messages for mistreated youth.
- Build resiliency for all through connectedness and cognitive skill-development.
- Empower and encourage peers to include and support rather than focusing on confrontation by peers
- Examine the effectiveness of “telling adults” and use youth input to improve outcomes of this action. Improve effectiveness of actions to reduce negative behavior.