

HIGH SCHOOL BULLYING AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

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Research Proposal

The goal of my senior project is to do research as I raise awareness and learn about prevention towards the bullying that happens to youth in high schools across our nation and in particular those right here on the central cost of California. The reason I choose to focus on High School youth is because, this is the group of people that I am most passionate about working with in my future career, they are the ones that I find most interesting to try to understand, high school aged youth are the ones I know that in my life I am called to advocate and stand up for. I think that this age group of people holds the keys to the future generations and we need to pay more attention to what is happening in their lives.

From my understanding high school bulling is a global, national and community problem, all of which will be apart of my research towards understanding and passing on steps towards preventing bullying on high school campuses. I plan to look at this issue in depth and gain knowledge of the effects that it can have on a person and be able to share this knowledge in order to help prevent it from happening. I believe that the effects of something like bullying are not always just short-term, but can also be very long-term to the life of someone. These effects can last for many years way beyond their high school experience. As someone going into the helping people work force, I think and plan to understand the verbal, physical, social and intimidation factors of bullying, which will be beneficial to me and also to anyone else who might happen to have to deal with this in life. I plan on finding out as much as I can on this issue: such as understanding, preventing, detecting, helping and empowering. I plan to do this through the research of books/articles, past sociological research, statistical reported records, and by conducting

my own small case study with a few individuals that I know have been affected by high school bullying right here on the central coast of California.

For the final part of project I plan on trying to help empower high school aged youth by giving a presentation about high school bullying and its effects to one of the Sociology classes right on the San Luis Obispo High School Campus. I have already met with Principal Leslie O'Connor of San Luis Obispo High School and he said that he would allow me to speak/present in one of his classes that that have on the campus. I hope that through my research and help of awareness, that this problem might become less of an issue among youth in high school in particular on the Central Coast. I also hope people will see that the way we treat others daily might have an extreme effect on an individual and that each and every individual life is of great value and worth.

Annotated Bibliography

Bennett, Laurie J., Dunkle, Jason B., Seeley, Ken, Tombar, Martin L., *Bullying in Schools: An Overview*, Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2011, December, <http://permanent.access.gpo.gov/gpo23931/234205.pdf>.

This article seems to be very useful; it stated that the information is based off of researchers from the National Center for School Engagement. They conducted a series of studies to explore the connections between bullying in schools, school attendance and engagement, and academic achievement. This article (bulletin) is a summary of the researchers' findings, and recommendations for policy and practice. The authors compare the results of these studies with the results of the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention report, which is currently viewed as one of the most comprehensive studies on anti-bullying programs worldwide. There also seems to be strategies and programs to combat bullying in schools that are based on the findings from the three studies, which are described. I think that since this is written by the United States Department of Justice that the findings are probably pretty accurate.

Denmark, Florence L., Gielen, Uwe P., Krauss, Herbert H., Midlarsky, Elizabeth, Wesner, Robert W., *Violence In Schools: Cross-National and Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, New York, New York, Springer Science+Business Media, Inc., 2005. Print.

This book addresses that violence in schools has become a serious national and international concern. It lays out that the social response is to have harsher punishment and greater discipline, but is that really what needs to be done? It tells us that we need to think of school violence a public health matter. It looks like this book goes over what school violence is, the causes, prevention and who should be included in the program. I like that it edited by five different people and provides us with an overview of cross-national prospective on the issue of school violence.

Elliott, Delbert S., Hamburg, Beatrix A., Williams, Kirk R., *Violence In American Schools: A New Perspective*, Cambridge, United Kingdom, Cambridge University Press, 1998. Print.

The book starts out by talking about the youth crime epidemic, saying that the violence in the streets and some of our homes has spilled over into the schools. There is a daily basis of many students deal with bullying and they experience pervasive anxiety about violence. This book gives us information on the violence around schools, helps us understand youth violence, school based interventions, community based interventions, and an approach to violence prevention. I think that this book is right in many way, pointing out that in order to understand what is happening in our schools we also need to understand what is going on around the school in our communities and homes.

Farrington, David P., Ttofi, Maria M., *Effectiveness of school-based programs to reduce bullying: a systematic and meta-analytic review*, Springer Science+Business

Media B.V., Cambridge, UK, Published online: 16 September 2010,
http://www.unifi.it/offertaformativa/allegati/uploaded_files/2011/200049/B001764/ttofi%20and%20farrington2011.pdf, DOI: 10.1007/s11292-010-9109-1.

This article presents a systematic review and contrasts and compares results from different studies on the effectiveness of anti-bullying programs in schools. Studies were included if they evaluated the effects of an anti-bullying program by comparing an intervention group who received the program with a control group who did not. Two professors put this work together from Cambridge University, UK. They realized and decided to help us to understand why school bullying has increasingly become a topic of both public concern and research efforts. Many school-based intervention programs have been devised and implemented in an attempt to reduce school bullying. This review includes many evaluations (53 in total) and aims to investigate the effectiveness of program components. I believe that it is very useful to take a look at the works of others and I like that they found a way to combine so much work together into this study.

Farrington, David P., Ttofi, Maria M., *School-Based Programs to Reduce Bullying and Victimization*, Cambridge, United Kingdom, The Campbell Collaboration, Campbell Systematic Reviews, 2009, PDF Open Access Article. DOI: 10.4073/csr.2009.6

This is a program that looks like it clearly defines bullying, they measured the effects of the program, it includes studies, evaluations, and the experiments that took place and a final analysis of the results and lastly a summary of the conclusions of the findings on this study at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. This study wants to show us that School bullying has serious short-term and long-term effects on children's physical and mental health. Various anti-bullying programs have been implemented worldwide and, more rarely, evaluated. I think that this will be interesting to look at clear results, it gives us data to look at and compare regarding bullying and violence in schools. We need this type of stuff to really comprehend what is happening.

Fried, Paula, Fried, Suellen, *Bullies and Victims: Helping Your Child Survive the Schoolyard Battlefield*, New York, New York, M. Evans and Company, Inc., 1996. Print.

I choose this book because it seems to be written in the perspective of parents who were trying to understand the dimensions of Bullying, two people who are really concerned. I personally believe that this problem needs more concern from people in authority. The book covers five different types of abuse: physical, verbal, emotional, sexual and sibling. It covers bullying and victims, how to empower children, strategies for adult intervention, solutions and successful methods and lastly challenges for prevention. These seem to be a lot of facts in this book too; like the fact that 160,000 children miss school every day due to the fear of attack or intimidation by other students. We learn that the solutions are not going to be easy because there are so many contributing factors. I think that this book will offer a lot of possible solutions to this societal problem.

Garrett, Anne G., *Bullying in American Schools: Causes, Preventions, Interventions*, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers. 2003. Print.

This book on Bullying in American Schools gives us the understanding that most school violence begins with bullying. We will come to see that the lack of respect for another person's rights (the most common factor in all criminal behaviors), begins with bullying. We will learn that bullying is not just child's play, but a terrifying experience that many children face every day. This book says that it will define bullying, identify myths, tells us about the roots of school violence, identifies the perpetrators and lastly provide useful solutions and strategies. I think that this book will help me understand the serious problems that our American schools are facing.

Hamburger, PhD, Merle M., Basile, PhD, Kathleen C., Vivolo, MPH, Alana M., *Measuring Bullying Victimization, Perpetration, and Bystander Experiences: A Compendium of Assessment Tools*, Atlanta, Georgia, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Division of Violence Prevention, 2011. www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention.

This is an assessment tool that provides a lot of valuable information on how to go about measuring bullying. They want us to see how bullying experiences are defined and measured varies greatly. It tells us that much of the work on bullying has adopted the definition of Daniel Olweus, whose work in the 1990s. According to Olweus, a person is bullied when he or she is exposed repeatedly over time to negative actions by one or more others. This compendium provides researchers, prevention specialists, and health educators with tools to measure a range of bullying experiences: bully perpetration, bully victimization, bully- victim experiences, and bystander experiences. I think that this will be a very useful tool for me to use hand in hand when I access a few people that I know for the case study part of my research.

Orpinas, Pamela, Horne M. Arthur, *Bullying Prevention: Creating a Positive School Climate and Developing Social Competence*, Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2006. Print.

This is a book written for educators, by two people who have years of research in the biological sciences. It is meant to help identify and characterize bullying. In the book they give a practical, effective program for preventing bullying. It is said that the authors offer additional guidance in selecting research based bullying programs and strategies for helping the children who are targets. I believe that this book will offer effective information on why and how to promote a positive school climate and deal with the issues of bullying.

Williams, Kimberly M., *The Peace Approach to Violence Prevention: A guide for Administrators and Teachers*, Lanham, Maryland, Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003. Print.

This book is said to offer easy to follow guidance for implementing violence

prevention strategies in schools and classrooms. They're a lot of case study examples that address this issue. The chapters are structured by the PEACE approach. Personalize, Examine, Advocate, Choose, Evaluate. This is a framework that is said to make sense in any school environment. I find that this might be a very useful and interesting way to approach such a hard issue to deal with, but think that this could be effective.

Outline

I. Bullying in Schools: An Introduction

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Solutions- Don't Ignore the Problem, be Proactive

I. Bullying in Schools: An Introduction

Imagine being afraid to go to school because you have the fear of being ridiculed, not accepted, and not being worth the time of anyone around you. Imagine the fear of being harassed verbally or even being abused physically while trying to be a normal kid like everyone else. What if you felt like no one cared that this was happening to you? What if the teachers and your parents did not do anything about it, or if you even felt like they were adding to the abuse? What if you could not take the abuse anymore? What would you do? “Many children in our nation’s schools are robbed of their opportunity to learn because they are bullied and victimized daily.” (Bullying in American Schools Pg. 68) These are all situations that happen to children across the world and in particular our country on our high school (public and private) campuses. This is something that we should not take lightly or dismiss as child’s play that will be out grown. As The National School Safety Center says, “bullying is the most enduring and underrated problem in American schools today.” (Bullying Prevention: Creating a Positive School Climate and Developing Social Competence Pg. 212) One in seven children is a bully or a target of a bully, according to the National Association of School Psychologists. (Bullying in American Schools)

We need to do something about this. We must not sit back and wait for someone else to speak up. It is time to stand up for those who feel weak, for those who feel abused and unseen. It is time to speak for those who feel like they do not have a voice. The scars that bullying tends leave on a person can last a lifetime. Let’s be a part of preventing these scars. It is time to break the silence to this ^{problem} within our American schools.

Bullying can be defined in many ways, but a simple definition when related to schools is defined as, “unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.” (*Bullying: Implications for the Classroom Pg. 160*) This is a simple definition, but a serious problem with lasting effects. Most experts in the field of bullying agree that there is a debate on a clear definition for the term bullying. But many researchers use Olweus’s definition of bullying, which states, “A student is being bullied or victimized when he is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more other students.” (*Bullying: Implications for the Classroom Pg. 162*) Research suggests that the essence of bullying is not in the actions of the bully but in his or her intentions.

Many times bullying is dismissed as a part of growing up. But the fact is that “one of four children who bully will have a criminal record by the age of 30.” (*Fixing Columbine: The Challenge to American Liberalism Pg. 68*) Research goes on to show that “at least 6 out of 10 bullies go on to become criminals.” (*Fixing Columbine: The Challenge to American Liberalism Pg. 69*) We need to show the victims and bullies that we care, see and want to understand what really is going on. According to Sanders, bullying has been a societal problem for hundreds of years and most predominantly occurs in schools.” We need to raise awareness about this. What causes children to think that being a bully is okay?

My goal in this paper is to show bullying is not as simple or clear cut as the definition makes it sound. In my paper, I want to give people an understanding of the social environments and other things that cause bullying to happen, how to prevent and

detect when it is happening, how to help while we empower children and to raise awareness of this problem that seems to be swept under the rug by many. I will give examples of possible solutions and programs that people have already started to do to put a stop to this problem. I also plan on giving some real life examples of people who have told me their stories about their experience with bullying in schools. The reason I choose to focus on high school youth is because; this is the group of people that I am most passionate about working with in my future career. They are the ones that I find most interesting to try to understand. High School aged youth are the ones I know that in my life I believe I am meant to advocate and stand up for. It is a goal of mine to understand family structures and help others understand the real power and influence that they have on our lives. I think that the youth hold the keys to the future generations and we need to pay more attention to what is happening in their lives and the way they treat each other and why.

We need to shine the light of public attention on the people who have been bullied, in order to put an end to it. I don't just want to help the victims of bullies, but also the bullies themselves. Bullies were somehow formed into who they became. Bullies are the product of the homes they grew up in. We need to understand what is causing these homes to produce bullies; we need to get to the root of the problem. There will always be different theories and ideas of what causes victims and bullies, but the first step is to admit a problem when there is one. We need to change something, "bullying and being bullied appear to be important indicators that something is wrong."

Our early experiences can make us bullies, can form us to become victims, we can become bystanders, apathetic towards the lives of others or we can be intercessors and

advocates for those who are oppressed. Bullying is deeply embedded in our culture and lives. In order to make a lasting difference I think that we need to understand the problem we want to fix and the real impact that it is having.

II. Understanding the Problem of Bullying

A. The Problem and Its Impact:

“Bullying can be direct, characterized by open attacks on the victim, or indirect, characterized by social isolation of the victim and exclusion from a group.” (Bullies and Victims: Helping Your Child Survive the Schoolyard Battlefield Pg. 102) It is said by researchers that bullying affects victims, the children who bully and even the peers who observe the bullying. There are so many things that bullies can cause, for example victims of bullying are often rejected by their peers, and are at risk for depression and dropping out of school. Why should a bully have the authority to put another peer in this situation? We must not overlook this anymore. Every life is worth the effort. We need to give an effort to preventing and stopping bullying. Although schools, agencies and pediatricians can do much at the community level to fix the problem of bullying and its effects, “the problem is clearly societal in scope.” (Violence in American Schools: A New Perspective Pg. 78) Bullying cannot be stopped with a single intervention or by a single social agency. Most problems are solved when someone who sees that there is a problem steps in and decides that enough is enough or when they see a situation that is worth fighting for enough to make a stop to it. The key point that I am making is that the problem with bullying is sometimes someone whom notices that there is a problem never steps in to intervene and then the situation is only at risk for getting worse.

Over the past year we have heard in the news about a lot bullying cases happening within our country. We have seen shootings (ex: Newtown, Connecticut killing of many helpless victims. Although it is not clear on the motives of the young man who did this horrendous crime, one might say that he might have had a life that he felt bullied in, as someone who is unseen by others), killings, as well as the level of violence happening in our schools have started to escalate in the public eye. This gets people wondering about the possible bullying that might have happened to the bullies/people who have caused so much harm to other people/victims. One thing that needs to be understood is that no single factor puts a child at risk of being bullied or bullying others. Bullying can happen anywhere (cities, suburbs, or rural towns).

B. Myths and Truths about Bullying:

Bullying like a lot of things in life has its very own truths and myths. A lot of the times, if someone has not done their own in depth study of a specific matter than a lot of what they believe might actually be a myth. The Webster's dictionary definition of Myth is, "a widely held but false belief or idea." (Merriam-Webster) Just because it is widely held, does not mean it to be true, we must use wisdom and discernment. Also, the Webster's definition of Truth is, "that which is true or in accordance with fact or reality." The key term is reality, what is actually the truth? There are a lot of myths and truths about bullying and it is important to look at them and find the truth. Seeking the truth is one of the most important things that can be done to bring about change.

According to leading experts, much of what we have always believed about bullying is wrong, and many of our techniques for dealing with bullies and their victims have simply made the problem worse. But more importantly school bullying will not go

away without intervention. In this section numerous (I picked what I thought were the most important to understand) myths and truths about bullying will be presented in order to better understand matters concerning bullies and their victims. The research for myths and facts is described in the book: *Bullying in American Schools* and online source: *Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence- Facts and Myths*.

Myth: Bullying does not cause any serious harm.

Truth: Bullying is associated with a range of physical and mental health problems, as well as suicide, educational problems, antisocial problems, and relationship problems. Bullying is a public health problem that merits our immediate attention. We must understand that for victims bullying is painful and humiliating experiences that can cause victims to be unhappy, distressed and confused. (*Bullying in American Schools* Pg. 81)

Myth: Reporting bullying will only make the problem worse.

Fact: There is a power imbalance that exists between the child who bullies and the child who is the victim, it is very hard for children who are being victimized to remove themselves from the situation. Adult intervention is required to correct the power imbalance. When no one talks about bullying, children who bully feel they can carry on without consequences. When bullying begins, students should recognize it immediately; keep a log of events and gets parents and teachers involved. Everyone, especially children have a right not to be bullied, harassed, abused or assaulted. Children should be encouraged to be assertive, not aggressive, and to inform a trusted adult about what has happened or is happening to them. (*Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence- Facts and Myths*)

Myth: Bullies are born that way.

Truth: The family is the first context in which children learn about relationships, and lessons learned in the family provide the foundation for future relationships.

Research shows that there is a developmental connection between experiencing or witnessing abuse in the family, and experiencing or perpetuating bullying and abuse in future relationships. The majority of bullying is a learned behavior, and much of the learning occurs in the child's home when the child sees that bullying tactics work to get their way. A bully could have been victimized himself, perhaps by a sibling or another child. When this happens it becomes very easy for a child to turn around and do to someone else what's been done to him or her, because they know exactly how it feels. Through modeling respectful relationships and taking responsibility for the wellbeing of those who are dependent and vulnerable, adults can help to promote healthy relationships and prevent bullying and abuse. (Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence-Facts and Myths) (Bullying in American Schools Pg. 84)

Myth: Children grow out of bullying.

Truth: Research suggests that children who are bullies are more likely to grow to abuse their spouses and are more likely to engage in criminal behavior. Students who bully are more likely to engage in antisocial or delinquent behavior into adulthood. It has been said that without intervention, a significant proportion of youth who bully others in childhood will continue to use their power negatively through adolescence and into adulthood. The destructive lessons learned in childhood about the use of power may shift into dating violence, marital abuse, child abuse and elder abuse. One of the solutions for this would be early identification and intervention of bullying to prevent patterns of

aggressive interactions form forming. (Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence- Facts and Myths) (Bullying in American Schools Pg. 87)

C. Addressing the Problem

Parents and the teachers are the ones who need to take responsibility for their children, their own as well as the ones that are in our care. According to (Bullying Fact Sheet. In Behavioral Interventions: Creating a Safe School Environment), they suggest that if you see your child bullying someone you should put a stop to the behavior immediately, and have your child practice a more appropriate behavior instead. It is really important that our children have appropriate supervision. We need supervision in our homes and in our schools. So many parents are neglecting to properly care for their children. Supervision is a huge part of being a parent or a caregiver. We need to supervise situations in which bullying may occur. If you are not able to be present, try to find someone who can. Before we can address the problem correctly we need be aware of the huge impact adults have on children, many parents need to take parenting classes, and there should be no shame in it. In life we take classes and get degrees in the field that we plan on working in and yet one of the most important jobs of raising children we neglect to learn how to properly do it. As a society we need to reevaluate the way as nation is taking care of our future generations. We need to be aware of our own adult behavior, and that we should model for our child how you would like him to treat others. Treating others how you want to be treated is one of the golden rules that bring harmony to the many difficulties in life. As parents it is necessary to avoid the use of physical punishment (spanking), which may give your child the message that physical aggression

is okay. There are so many things that we can do to address bullying and many believe that one of the first things that we can do is encourage our children, encouragement can change a child's future. Encourage your child to tell a trusted adult about the bullying. Talking to an adult is not "tattling"; it is an act of courage and promotes safety. (Bullying Fact Sheet In Behavioral Interventions: Creating a Safe School Environment)

D. History of bullying on schools:

1. Bulling in American Schools

Historically, our schools have been relatively safe from violence. But, over the past decade there have been many reported incidents of youth crime than any other decade. Although, bullying isn't a new problem, people are becoming more and more aware of its negative impact on kids. Researchers (Dealing with Bullies, *History of Bullying*) have said that in the past bullying was seen as a harmless rite of passage, a normal, unavoidable part of growing up. Bullied children were told, "Don't let it get to you," "You're too sensitive ... toughen up," or that bullying builds character. Not every child is the same, for some character might be building, but for most it causes serious harm. (Dealing with Bullies, *History of Bullying*)

Before 1970 bullying was not considered a serious problem. "It wasn't until Swedish researcher Dan Olweus, completed the first large scale, scientific study of bully/victim problems among school children and youth that the public was alerted to the magnitude of the problem." (Dealing with Bullies, *History of Bullying* Pg. 4) Because of Olweus's study, it opened the eyes of researchers and demonstrated that bully/victim problems were quite a problem in school settings. Today schools are beginning to adopt anti-bullying intervention and education programs. Many states are starting to pass

comprehensive anti-bullying laws. “As of June 2007, a total of 35 states had laws that address harassment, intimidation, and bullying at school.” (Dealing with Bullies, *History of Bullying* Pg. 8)

2. The Columbine Shootings: An Example

On April 20, 1999, two students at Columbine High School of Littleton, Colorado, armed themselves with a sawed off double barrel shotgun and a semiautomatic rifle, drove to their high school and killed twelve of their classmates and one teacher. Then it ended in a double suicide for Eric Harris (19 years old) and Dylan Kelbold (17 years old). The Columbine High School massacre is the deadliest mass murder committed on an American high school campus. There are a lot of theories out there as to why this happened and why these two high school kids decided to kill their fellow students. According to a book entitled (*Fixing Columbine* by Doriane Coleman), it is thought to have been linked to bullying and school violence. Both of the shooters were classified as gifted children and it has been said that they had been victims of bullying for four years. There are similar theories; that say that teachers commonly looked the other way when confronted with bullying at Columbine. Although, David Cullen, author of the 2009 book (*Columbine*), acknowledged that bullying is a common situation in high schools including Columbine, he claimed that the two were not victims of bullying. Cullen said that Harris was more often the perpetrator than victim of bullying. In any case, there was bullying on the campus of some sort, weather these two boys were the victims or bullies themselves we may never know. But it can be said that bullying was not taken as serious enough on this campus as it should have been and that it may have contributed to this tragic event. It is also know that these two boys were seriously

depressed, had a strong need for attention and were considered school outcasts. As adults we must look for these warning signs among our youth and not just think nothing of signs of depression, it is a serious contributor to many tragedies. We need to take a stand and have no tolerance for bullying; we must prevent future situations like this from happening. In the book (*Fixing Columbine*), Doriane Coleman states that “it is impossible to imagine a complete cure for what happened at Columbine, without first recognizing its existence, and second acknowledging that good parenting is necessary to a child’s most successful development.”(*Fixing Columbine* Pg. 123) The family and the parents are the child’s first and best care takers and we should realize that in America we need to once again make raising our children an important priority.

III. Effects of Social Environments on Bullying

A. The Interdependence of Bullying with Neighborhood and Family Conditions

One study done on bullying and violence in American Schools by D. Elliot, B. Hamburg and K. Williams goes into depth in their Book, *Violence in American Schools*, about how and why an analysis of family and neighborhood conditions is essential to an understanding of bullying and school violence. Research from this book suggests that community influences such as poverty, socioeconomic inequality, family composition and neighborhood disorder/change all have an effect on the child and bullying within schools. It was found that; “the absence of affluent neighbors had a much stronger effect on child development than the presence of low income neighbors.” (*Violence in American Schools* Pg. 145) The neighborhoods in which children and adolescents grow and develop play very influential roles in young people’s relationship with violence and bullying. (*Violence in American Schools*)

Experiences within the family provide the foundation for children's violent behavior. Initial causes of violence within the family have been traced to weak family bonding, ineffective monitoring/ supervision, parental indifferences/rejection, and exposure to violence in the home and acquiring values that support or tolerate the use of bullying. (Violence in American Schools) Many bullies are produced in the home, shaped by a combination of factors, including lack of parental warmth, attention, poor supervision and parental modeling of aggressive behavior. Many childhood bullies are abused at home and witness a parent abuse his spouse or other siblings. (Bullying in American Schools)

The effective functioning of schools, free from violence and bullying, is largely dependent on the effective functioning of families and communities. (Violence in American Schools) Strategies designed to address school bullying must recognize the interdependence of school violence with neighborhood and family conditions. Initiatives that rebuild and strengthen families and neighborhoods, such as community development corporations, should be considered. (Violence in American Schools)

B. Social Media and Norms

One of the most recent new forms of bullying has been influenced by our advancement in technology and media. This new type of bullying is called cyber bullying. Cyber bullying can be defined as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices." (Cyber bullying Research Center) Cyber bullying is a problem affecting a meaningful proportion of youth as they embrace online communication and interaction. Basically, youth tend to do what others are doing, largely in order to fit in, as they try to figure out who they are and what

they stand for. Social norming has to do with modifying the environment, or culture within a school, so that appropriate behaviors are not only encouraged, but also perceived widely to be the norm. Schools must work to create a climate in which responsible use of Facebook and instant messaging programs are encouraged. Shaping of social norms is directly related to modifying the overall school climate or culture. (Cyber bullying Research Center) Creating a climate that does not tolerate bullying requires challenging and changing the attitudes, perceptions and behaviors of parents, teachers, coaches and other adults that contribute to and reinforce bullying. Many researchers believe that permanent, large-scale behavior change is best achieved through changing community norms, a process that requires time and patience. (Bullying Prevention Resource Guide) Students tend to accept negative behavior if their peers, especially influential peers, accept and endorse it too. Many might not realize, but it's not normal to act like a bully. Kids often become bystanders because they "don't know what to do and they have an sense that if they do it wrong, they're going to be next." ('Social norms' strategy aims to tame bullying) The big danger is they lose empathy and begin to think that bullying is just a fact of life. We need to take a stand and change the normal! When we change, everything changes.

C. Peer Influences

Adults play a clearly significant role in meeting children's needs, but research suggests that children also play an important part in addressing their own needs and overcoming the difficulties and injustices. (Bullying Implications for the Classroom, Ch. 6) A bystander can also play a crucial role by reinforcing those who bully or by defending those at risk of bullying. Unfortunately many bystanders fail to take positive

action because: they do not know what to do or they are fearful or that they may do the wrong thing and cause even more problems. It may be easier for a bystander to turn away, however if they do offer comfort to the bullied classmate or express in some way they do not support this kind of behavior, then attitudes can change. (Bullying Implications for the Classroom, Ch. 6) Defending the victim can result in huge benefits for the whole school community, it takes courage, but it is possible. A key aim in school antibullying interventions is to change the behavior of children who bully and to offer coping strategies to bullied children to empower them in bullying situations. (Bullying Implications for the Classroom, Ch. 6)

Only between 10 and 20% of youth actively intervene to help someone being bullied and approximately 30% of victims of bullying suffer in silence from the effects of bullying (Bullying Implications for the Classroom, Ch. 6) There is evidence that peer support is an effective method for improving the quality of peer relationships. According to *Bullying Implications for the Classroom*, the peer support system is perceived as beneficial to the school as a whole for the following reasons: Peers are able to detect bullying at a much earlier stage than adults can, young people are more able to confide in peers than adults, peer supporters gain valuable social skills and self-confidence, over time the school is perceived as a community that cares. (Bullying Implications for the Classroom, Ch. 6) “It was found that 82% of pupils who used peer support reported that they found it helpful in giving them strength to cope with bullying.” (Bullying Implications for the Classroom, Ch. 6, Pg. 184) As a student of Sociology I have learned that the norms of one’s culture can differ extensively from those of another, and this can radically affect the ways in which young people learn to behave toward one another. By

looking at the development of cultures and peer support systems we can learn to support these children as adults in their lives. There is a growing appreciation of the role that adolescents might play in learning new skills and adults supporting peer support.

IV. Detecting and Preventing Bullying

A. Verbal Bullying

Verbal abuse is the most common form of bullying. Verbal abuse is defined as, “the use of words as cruelty to someone’s physical, moral or mental wellbeing. (Bullies and Victims, Ch. 4, Pg. 202) Verbal abuse intends to harm, to cause pain, involves intensity, is used to gain power over another person, attacks the vulnerability of the victim, leaves the victim feeling isolated and exposed. (Bullies and Victims, Ch. 4) It is common for bullying to blame themselves for the labels they acquire. The power of words to harm cannot be underestimated and more often than not, verbal abuse can lead to physical abuse. Adults’ need to make it know that name-calling, teasing and gossip can be damaging. Victims need to know that they do not deserve to be teased. (Bullies and Victims, Ch. 4) Students with disabilities or differences of any kind are targets for verbal abuse and deserve special protection by adults!

B. Physical Bullying

How many times have you heard the expression, “Boys will be boys”? It’s interesting that often a phrase like this can be used to justify cruelty. “Physical Bullying/Abuse includes punching, poking, strangling, suffocating, burning, poisoning, hair pulling, excessive tickling, biting, stabbing, shooting, etc. ...” (Bullies and Victims,

Ch. 3) Physical aggression is the most widely recognized and publicized form of bully behavior. The increase in aggression among youth has a new and deadly twist, the ready availability of handguns. It is said that criminologists are convinced that the major factor in the rise of deaths by juveniles is the increased use of guns today. The prevalence of firearms adds a new dimension to the terror of bullying. (Bullies and Victims, Ch. 4) Our greatest problem is our indifference to the consequences of physical cruelty. Children's reports of physical bullying must be taken seriously. Finally media violence must be challenged and parents should use their authority over the exposure of violent programming to their children. It cannot be said enough, parents need to see that the family environment and what is allowed in the home plays a huge role in the development of appropriate versus aggressive behavior. (Bullies and Victims, Ch. 4) Parents need to fight to have homes that do not promote violence in anyway at all.

C. Social Bullying

Social bullying happens when a child is humiliated or demeaned in front of her peers. Being publicly embarrassed and ostracized is one of the worst types of bullying, because everyone is there to witness it. When no one sticks up for a victim, they can begin to feel utterly and completely alone. Over time, they may begin to believe that he or she is a loser or that he or she is unlovable. There are two kinds of social bullying: nonverbal and psychological. "Nonverbal social bullying is when kids point, stare, laugh, make faces, roll their eyes, make the loser sign with their hand, or stick up their middle finger." (Social, Relational, and Emotional Bullying) A child can be singled out and ridiculed without a single word being spoken. "Psychological social bullying is when kids exclude, isolate, shun, ostracize, ignore, or turn their back on someone." (Social,

Relational, and Emotional Bullying) Some of the most impactful things that can happen to individuals are effects that happen to their emotions/relations and this is related to social bullying. “Relational bullying entails intentionally damaging the social status of the victim.” (Social, Relational, and Emotional Bullying) A relational bully often has the interpersonal skills needed to harm another person’s relationships and turn him/her, over time, into a social outcast. The bully will convince their peers to exclude or reject a particular person. This can have a devastating effect because the rejection comes at a crucial time, when making and strengthening social connections is an important developmental task. The development of strong relationships is important throughout all of life, but it is said to be especially important during our youth. (Social, Relational, and Emotional Bullying) Relational bullying is hard to detect. If the bully has successfully hidden their hateful behavior, most teachers and parents will have a hard time believing that such a sweet child would do such a mean thing. The emotional bully uses manipulation to get what they want. As responsible adults and peers who want to stop bullying we must be on the lookout for bullying manipulation.

Adults need to discuss the different types of emotional/social abuse and impress upon children the damage that these behaviors can cause. Teachers need to also be on the lookout and parents need to be more sensitive to the painful exclusion that can occur, even within their homes, when they have other children over together. Just because there is no tangible evidence of this type of bullying, there are many children out there who are suffering from social bullying. (Bullies and Victims, Ch. 5)

D. Intimidation Bullying

Intimidation is a form of bullying that can be used together with the 3 mentioned forms of bullying or it can also be separate in and of its self. Some people that we meet in life can come across as intimidating from the very first time we encounter them, it can be a part of their persona. Intimidation can also be very intentional, as in the case of bullying. Intimidation from our focus is, “when a bully threatens someone else and frightens a person, makes someone timid; fills with them fear, enough to make him or her do what the bully wants.” (Types of Bullying Pg. 3) In schools many teachers only recognize physical bullying behavior, but they need training in recognizing hidden forms of intimidation. There are many indirect forms of intimidation such as social exclusion, spreading rumors and name-calling. Above all, children are more likely to intimidate and exploit if they believe that aggression and intimidation is necessary in order to “win”, or if their families view aggression positively. (Bullying in American Schools: A Social-Ecological Perspective on Prevention and Intervention) Conflicts are less likely to occur if teachers and parents can see the early warning signs of conflict, we need to be aware and ready to intervene. Classroom interventions that target peer aggression will need to include families, by keeping them informed of the rules and social skills that will be used to govern interactions in the classroom. (Bullying in American Schools: A Social-Ecological Perspective on Prevention and Intervention) All adults involved in the life of a youth need to communicate and work together in order to raise our youth to the best of our ability. We need to really open our eyes and see, open our ears to really hear, as well as set good examples, because the children are watching us, just as we are to watch them. The use of intimidation and victimization can be reduced in classrooms where teachers and parents’ model caring and trust, and victims are assured that adults will come to their

defense if needed. (Bullying in American Schools: A Social-Ecological Perspective on Prevention and Intervention)

V. The Effects of Bullying – The Short and Long Term

When looking into any type of abuse, whether it be bullying within youth or adults, one might ask, why does someone become a victim or a bully? There are many possible answers. Reaching out to work with victims is really important, because their withdrawal can lead to social scars, depression and possible suicide. Victims need an opportunity to give a voice to their pain. It is really important that we make it okay for victims to talk about what has happened to them and expose the bully. (Bullies and Victims, Ch. 9) Victims need to be acknowledged, supported, and empowered. Young people know better than the rest of us how high the cost of bullying is. They need to understand that it is within their power to reduce the toll of it. (Bullies and Victims, Ch. 9)

Many parents worry about their children's future, wondering how their children will handle problems. According to research there are six different types of interactions in which adults can make a difference in the lives of our youth. (Bullies and Victims, Ch. 10) All of them require adults to take responsibility for what is happening around them. Once you get involved in the process of becoming an agent of change, you will come up with many ideas of your own and tap into others' as well. People who get concerned become people who dream of a kinder world where adults and young people join hands to become peacemakers then that is when we will really see the change that needs to take place.

As we have went over, we see that it can take place in schools, neighborhoods, families, and on the Internet. It can lead to serious problems for both the victim and the perpetrator. Short term effects can for example be the following; any number of psychological problems such as extreme depression, loss of self-esteem, trouble sleeping, bet wetting, anxiety about going to school or going to social events, truancy, and drop in grade average. In addition, victimized children may develop psychosomatic issues, which are bodily complaints that have no physical cause. (Bullying in School: An Overview of types, effects, family characteristics, and intervention strategies) It is understood that the short-term effects of bullying vary from child to child. It is also possible that the victims might become angry and develop anger and frustration problems. This shows us that being bullied is a very stressful for kids and also that it is very stressful for everyone. Even if you were not bullied as a child there is a good chance that you may have been on the receiving end of adult bullying. The difference between being an adult victim compared to a child victim is that when you are a child victim you have no opportunity to remove him/her from the situation. A child is stuck going to the same school day after day, year after year. A child is powerless to change the situation without the help of those who love and care for him/her. (Short-Term Effects of Being Bullied)

The research shows that there are now over two decades of studies showing the negative long-term effects of bullying at both the psychological and societal levels. (Short & Long Term Effects of Bullying) While physical bullying is often dealt with harshly by schools, verbal and relational/ social bullying can be more damaging, the long-term effects of this type of bullying can last into adulthood. Research shows that for the most part, physical damage heals readily, what is far more difficult to mend is the

wound that bullying victims suffer which is the damage to their self-concepts, to their identities. When someone is the repetitive target of bullying damages your ability to view yourself as a desirable, capable and effective individual. (Short & Long Term Effects of Bullying) There are two bad outcomes that come from learning to view yourself as a less than desirable, incapable person. The first is that it becomes more likely that you will become susceptible to becoming a depressed and or angry and or bitter adult. As a child when you learn that you are not safe in this world you can start to feel relatively powerless to defend yourself, you are being set up for learned helplessness and depression. (The Long Term Effects of Bullying) It would be great if the average person was possessed of unshakable self-confidence, but this just isn't how identity works. Identity is a social process. Bullying teaches people that they are not part of the group, that they are outcasts and outsiders. It is hard to doubt the reality of being an outcast when you have been beaten or publicly humiliated. In the long term, bullying reduces occupational opportunities, builds feelings of anger and bitterness, desire for revenge, difficulty trusting people, interpersonal difficulties, increased tendency to be a loner, perception of self as easy to victimize, overly sensitive and self-esteem problems. (The Long Term Effects of Bullying)

People who have been bullied have been dis-empowered. Feelings of personal safety have been violated and their own competency and adequacy has been brought into question. In order to feel good, they need to break through this and gain power back, not power others can give them. No other people can do this for him or her, people have to decide to empower themselves, they need to find an out let for this, and everyone is different. (The Long Term Effects of Bullying)

VII. Empowering Children and Adults

A. Restorative Justice Model

Early intervention has been advocated as the most appropriate way to prevent bullying. “Restorative justice is a form of conflict resolution and seeks to make it clear to the offender that the behavior is not condoned, at the same time as being supportive and respectful of the individual.” (Bullying and Victimization in Schools: A Restorative Justice Approach Pg. 2) There is no single path that leads a child to bullying others or to being bullied. Social relationships are important for regulating social life. This is a central part of the practice of restorative justice. Restorative programs are about nurturing positive feelings such as interest and excitement and providing ways to discharge negative feelings such as shame. (Bullying and Victimization in Schools: A Restorative Justice Approach) Restorative justice, through valuing relationships, challenges everyone involved. This is important. To sustain any change in the way schools operate lies in each party questioning, their own beliefs and practices. The central theme to be addressed is the use of punishment and control in achieving behavioral compliance. These practices value domination. In contrast, restorative justice values relationships of non-domination. (Bullying and Victimization in Schools: A Restorative Justice Approach)

B. Class Room Management

This is about putting an end to bullying. It’s about protecting students and their right to learn and enjoy school without being threatened, terrorized, or picked on. It’s about stepping in and saying, “I’m a trusted adult, and you will not be bullied. Not on my watch.” (Bullying In the Classroom: The Ultimate Guide to Stopping It) In schools, the

teachers must commit themselves to protecting each student's right to learn and enjoy school. "It's important that teachers and parents are familiar with their school's bullying policy, if there is one. When should a student be referred? What circumstances constitute suspension? What about expulsion?" (Bullying In the Classroom: The Ultimate Guide to Stopping It) All teachers need to be clear on these matters so they can accurately communicate the policy to your students and their parents. It is important that we work to build a caring climate in the classrooms and the school as a whole. It is the job of the teachers and school administrators to be on the lookout for all types of bullying in their school and classroom. (The Peach Approach to Violence Prevention) It is important for teachers to make a promise to their students that if they are the victims of bullying, they will take care of it. It's the teacher's job to take care of it. It is their job to protect them and make it go away when it happens in the classroom and at school. (Bullying In the Classroom: The Ultimate Guide to Stopping It)

C. Examples of Successful Anti-Bullying Programs

A good anti bullying program is essential for the prevention of bullying, harassment, and violence in the student population. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, as an example, has been in use for over 20 years throughout the world. The most important thing is to try a program, work the program, record your progress as you go and follow up frequently so you can assess how the program is doing. If you do not get the results you desire, try, work, record and follow up again. We should not give up because these are our kids. (Bullying Prevention, Creating a Positive School Climate and Developing Social Competence) Many programs fail simply because they are not

implemented properly. The *Bullying Prevention Program*, is designed for students in Grades K-12, works on school, classroom, and individual level to deter bullying. (Bullying Prevention, Creating a Positive School Climate and Developing Social Competence) According to this program, developing class rules, having class meetings, and reinforcing positive behaviors are the key aspects of the *Bully Prevention Program*. Teachers, students and parents work to improve peer relations and classroom climate. (Bullying Prevention, Creating a Positive School Climate and Developing Social Competence) The *Bullying Prevention Program* has been successful in reducing new victimization incidents and has helped bully and victim problems. (Olweus) (Bullying Prevention, Creating a Positive School Climate and Developing Social Competence)

There is also a program that the University of Illinois developed, called the *University of Illinois School Bullying Taskforce*. They developed this for grades 2 -12 in order to assist school administrators, faculty, and staff in designing bullying prevention programs that are tailored to their school. (Bullying Prevention, Creating a Positive School Climate and Developing Social Competence) They send out surveys to figure out the school climate and attitudes, and are also asked to identify what types of bullying occur at the school, and then the *Taskforce* tailor a program to fit the schools community and needs. (Bullying Prevention, Creating a Positive School Climate and Developing Social Competence) Most schools have different needs and it was found that this *Taskforce* is very successful in assisting the needs of a specific situation. It's important to understand that all schools and situations are different, with different needs.

D. Making School Environments Safer

School violence must be addressed on multiple levels, including school, home and community. Prevention and intervention are interrelated and should always be carried out together within a school and community. (Violence in Schools- Cross National and Cross Cultural Perspectives) The bullying problem in schools will not go away on its own. The reason is obvious; there are lots of bullies in the world, and lots of role models for our children in their own homes and communities and in angry personalities that they see in the media. (Bulling in American Schools) Adult behavior is crucial to the success of any anti bullying initiative; we cannot look away when we see it. Bullying is the most underrated problem in our schools today. The most important thing is not the action but the effect on the victim. (Bulling in American Schools) No one should ever underestimate the fear that a bullied child feels. Therefore, I will say it again, it's very important that our schools work with students, parents and the community to eliminate bullying. The response to bullying must be part of a much larger effort. Creating and sustaining a healthy school environment requires commitment from everyone. Over time, schools will identify problems, then analyze them and make necessary changes. Even as schools find successful solutions to one set of problems, new challenges arise. A school's attention to the healthfulness of its environment will evolve and adapt to changing circumstances. (Bulling in American Schools) We must work together and let the victims know that they are not in this alone.

VII. A Local Case Study: Lauren and Holly stories and experiences

A. Lauren's Story

Lauren (the names of people used in this research paper are changed for the protection of the real lives involved) is a young foster youth living in San Luis Obispo County; she is currently a sophomore in high school in the San Luis Obispo High School Community. Lauren is a friend of mine whom I also have some experience in being a not just a friend, but also a mentor in her life. She has shared with me her experience with bullying and I believe that this is a good example of what is happening in San Luis Obispo County.

She was attending a high school in the North part of our county and was constantly being picked on, constantly getting in fights with other people who have harassed her for many years. She has gotten in trouble for defending herself because no one else would. All of her life she has had been raised thinking that physically fighting back is an okay way to deal with problems. Her parents were in real gangs; she has been a foster youth since she was in elementary school. Her home environment has never been consistent of or what one would call healthy to grow up in. Her life has not been easy, she is an extremely sweet girl and deserves to be taken care of, by parents who love her, by a school that will stand up for her and not blame her for being bullied. She explained to me that the school said that they could not prevent the kids from bullying her, because she was also an instigator of abuse. There might be some truth in this, but they are nonetheless abandoning her and blaming the victim for the bullying. We need to stop blaming the victims because this will never change anything. We must show our youth we will not abandon them in our schools, even if their parents and families have. Lauren eventually ended up changing high schools because of being bullied and she is doing much better. She has not bullied at her new school and she has been the cause of any

herself. But many times students do not have the opportunity to change high schools and it should not be necessary. We need to change our schools and not just move our students because the school is failing to help and prevent bullying from happening to their students. Lauren ended up adjusting well to her new school. But, We cannot forget the students who are unable to change schools and who are not this lucky.

B. Holly's Story

Holly recently just graduated high school from one of San Luis Obispo Counties high schools in the south part of the county. She is an active, outgoing, smart, pretty and friendly young lady. She currently is attending Cal Poly as a freshman. From the looks of her you could never tell that she was a victim of extreme bullying as a child and into her freshman year of high school that is still affecting her emotionally today. She is an example case of what the long-term effects of bullying can do to an individual.

As a freshman in high school Holly was constantly called fat, and a tomboy by her fellow peers. The school administrators did not do anything about it, even though she told them that it was happening. Her self-worth and esteem are still affected by this. From her freshman year to sophomore year of high school she starved herself, because of her fear what the kids would call her at school and she lost 60 pounds. This could have ended up badly; we are lucky she is okay. She has kept the weight off, but she still sees herself as fat and ugly (even though she is not) and constantly needs reassurance that she is beautiful, herself worth is still hurting.

I know that this type of situation is very common and our schools need not overlook peer name-calling or harassment any longer, as adults we need to stand up for

the victims of this type of abuse and not overlook this any longer. Holly and youth in her situation deserve to not have to deal with bullying as a long-term effect over their lives.

VIII. Summary and Conclusion

Solutions- Don't Ignore the Problem, Be Proactive

It all comes down to the fact that we need to protect our children, both the bully and the victim. The bully needs to be taught that it is not okay to hurt another peer and the victim needs to be taught that what one person says about them does not make it the truth, and it's not okay that they are being hurt like this. (Bulling in American Schools)

As we have seen, there are many factors that may contribute to bullying and victimization; such as family atmosphere, peer influences and school climate.

Intervention must be implemented not only with the bully and victim, but we must include peers, school, parents, community and society. (Bulling in American Schools)

One of the most fundamental things that we can learn is that leadership is essential for change. Unless the adults in the school change their attitudes and behaviors, the students will not. We need to work together to discourage bullying and respond to it when it happens.

It is now time to break the silence and put a stop to this. There have been many school shootings and violence that our children are experiencing with other children. The recent events have been so tragic. Instead of standing around and ignoring the problem, we need to become more proactive and start taking control of the situation. It starts in the homes, it has to start with the parents, and spread to the teachers and other adults in the

lives of children. We need to empower our children, and as adults we need to be an example to them, because they are watching even when we don't realize it. (Bulling in American Schools) The bottom line is adults and our societies are not taking the problem of bullying seriously enough. Let's take it seriously! I believe that Theodore Roosevelt said it best, "Knowing what's right doesn't mean much unless you do what's right." Bullying is not okay; let's take a stand against it.

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