Bully Proofing Your Schools

Jill McDonald, Huron Valley School District
Bully-Proofing Your School:
Elementary, Middle and High School

Jill McDonald, M.Ed.

Safe Schools Conference
Oakland Schools
August 7, 2007
What is Bullying?
Bullying Defined

- Repeated, Negative, Intentional Actions
- Imbalance of Power
- Unequal Emotional Reactions
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal Conflict vs. Bullying</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal power- friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happens occasionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidental</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not serious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal emotional reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not seeking power or attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not trying to get something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remorse—take responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort to solve the problem</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Forms of Bullying and Harassment

- Physical Aggression
- Social/Relational Aggression
- Verbal/Non-Verbal Aggression
- Intimidation
- Racial, Religious, and Ethnic Harassment
- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Orientation Harassment
- Electronic/Cyber Bullying
- Hazing
- Dating Violence

(see handout #1-2)
Vulnerable Groups...

- Special Education Students
- GLBTQ Students
- Minority Students
- Social Isolates or “Loners”
- Overweight Teens
Effects of Victimization

“Bullying not only leads to depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem in students who are targeted, but also causes other students to feel unsafe at school and significantly interferes with learning.”

(Brewster & Railsback, 2001)

(see handout # 3)
Steps of Violence

Bottom line…
Early intervention with bullying and harassing behaviors may prevent violence and other tragic occurrences
“Good schools are proactive and deal with it [bullying] promptly, firmly, and fairly. Bad schools deny it, ignore it, rationalize it, handle it inappropriately, sweep it under the carpet, blame the victim of bullying, blame the parents of the victim of bullying, or make lots of impressive noises but take no substantive action.”

Bullying in American Schools (2003) by Anne G. Garrett
# Healthy Peer Groups vs. Cliques

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Healthy Peer Groups</th>
<th>Cliques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>Exclusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared power among members</td>
<td>Controlling personality at the top</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open system—members can come and go</td>
<td>Closed system—difficult for any new members to join in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible rules and expectations</td>
<td>Strict rules and requirements for membership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General respect for individuality</td>
<td>Less respect for individuality as opposed to group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status within group is fluid</td>
<td>Definite rigid internal hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less pressure to conform</td>
<td>Strong pressure to conform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Power of Cliques

- **Popular Group** (approx. 35% of student population)
  - Perceived to be the “cool” group, powerful, prestigious
  - Their actions command everyone’s attention, including staff and adm.

- **The Fringe** (approx. 10% of student population)
  - Hovers around the popular group -- wannabes -- temp. members
  - Will compromise their values, feelings

- **Middle Friendship Circles** (Majority of kids- approx. 45%)
  - Form small groups of their own - loyal, trustworthy, secure friendships
  - Perceived to be lower in social status

- **Loners** (Approx. 10% of student population)
  - Tend to have no friends, often alone
  - Repeatedly excluded and insulted by peers, low self-concept

(from Clique: 8 steps to Help Your Child Survive the Social Jungle by Giannetti & Sagarese)
“Research and experience suggest that comprehensive efforts that involve teachers and other school staff, students, parents, and community members are likely to be more effective than purely classroom-based approaches.”

Bully-Proofing Your School: What makes this program unique
Four Central Program Concepts

- Design a systemic, comprehensive approach.

- Design the main focus on climate change.

- Teach skills and strategies to build a caring community.

- Emphasize developing the caring community.
Ten Basic Elements

- Staff & Administration acknowledgement and commitment to address the problem
- School-wide policy & discipline plan
- Assessment of current climate
- Formation of team to guide the approach
- Development of a comprehensive plan
- Training of staff
- Training/Interventions with students
- Ongoing Caring Community development
- Parent & community partnerships
- Evaluation of the program
School as Community

“In survey responses from around the world, there was an extremely high correlation between feeling a sense of community and a sense of safety.”

Creating Emotionally Safe Schools (2001) by Jane Bluestein, Ph.D.
The Student Population
(see handout #4)

- Bullies and/or Victims: 15%
- Bystanders: 85%
A Silent or a Caring Majority?
(continued handout #4)

- **Students in a Silent majority:**
  - stay silent when they witness bullying incidents
  - don’t take a stand against negative behaviors
  - don’t reach out to victims
  - don’t support peers in standing up against bullying
  - fail to ask adults for help

- **Students in a Caring majority:**
  - speak up and take a stand against bullying and harassing behaviors
  - reach out to victims of bullying
  - support one another when standing up against negative behaviors
  - Ask adults for help
**BPYS Strategies**

**ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL**
- H Help
- A Assert
- H Humor
- A Avoid
- S Self-Talk
- O Own It

**HIGH SCHOOL (HA)2 SORT**
- H Help
- H Humor
- A Assert
- A Avoid
- S Self-Talk
- O Own It
- R Rehearse
- T Talk It Over
Bully-Proofing Your School Focuses on Building the Caring Majority

- **Individual Activities** (Interventions with bullies, victims and bystanders, student strategies)

- **Classroom Activities** (Lesson plans teaching skills/strategies, clearly defined expectations)

- **School-Wide Activities** (Full student/staff participation, comprehensive effort)
The Good News is...

Up to 50% or greater reductions in bullying behaviors have been reported by students who previously reported they were bullied or had bullied others when comprehensive, school-wide anti-bullying efforts are implemented.

Dan Olweus
“Pop Quiz”
Bullying and Harassment

1. An occasional negative action, an equal level of power, and making an effort to solve a problem are all indications of:
   a. normal conflict     b. bullying and/or harassment

2. In one survey with more than 60,000 3rd through 12th grade students, what is the ratio of students who report they don’t feel safe in school?
   a. 2 in 5 students   b. 2 in 10 students   c. 2 in 25 students   d. 2 in 50 students

3. Approximately 85% of the students in any school are regularly the:
   a. Bullies   b. Victims   c. Bystanders   d. Victims and/or bullies

4. Research confirms that being the target of bullying and harassment can result in: (circle all that apply)
   a. lowered academic achievement and less ability to concentrate
   b. poor attendance, higher drop-out and failure rates
   c. physical health problems, such as head/stomach aches, insomnia and anxiousness
   d. increased risk of substance abuse, depression, and suicide
   e. social problems and/or severe withdrawal
   f. feelings of desperation and/or rage

5. The following is true about a bullying student: (circle all that apply)
   a. A bully typically demonstrates little emotion or anguish
   b. The bully commonly feels justified and believes that the victim “deserves it.”
   c. People bully in order to try and have power over another person
   d. Bullies try to publicly humiliate others and force them to be submissive
   e. Most bullies suffer from low self-esteem
   f. Bullies depend on other people to stay quiet about their behavior toward others.

6. Almost 80% of boys and over 85% of girls report experiencing (in school) some form of:
   a. bullying   b. hazing   c. physical aggression   d. sexual harassment

7. Even though bystanders report that they think bullying and harassment is wrong and that they think people should take a stand against it, when it comes time to intervene, they usually stay silent.
   True    False

8. Over time, bystanders can become desensitized to repeated bullying and become more aggressive themselves.   True    False

9. The following are reasons why bystanders fail to stand up against bullying and harassing behaviors or why some even participate in negative group behaviors (circle all that apply):
   a. Don’t want to be targeted themselves
   b. Can get caught up in the crowd’s behavior during an incident
   c. Don’t feel confident enough to stand up to the aggressor(s)
   d. Sense of “empathy” is dulled over time
   e. Don’t know what to do to help- don’t want to make things worse

10. Bystanders in a school can make a difference in ending bullying and harassment.   True    False
Just Released!
Bully-Proofing for High Schools

Every day in high schools across our nation, students get bullied and harassed; the fact is that some degree of it happens in every school, every day, everywhere. Although adults would like to believe that teens have grown out of these negative behaviors by the time they reach high school, numerous studies show that students across our country report that they are fearful in their schools and neighborhoods. Some common forms of harassment among teens include verbal and physical aggression, intimidation, cyberbullying, public humiliation, sexual harassment, dating violence, and hazing, to name a few.

Research has shown that unchecked bullying has academic, physical and emotional consequences for students. Bullying, harassment, and aggression in our schools lead to impaired readiness for learning and academic achievement, increased absenteeism, and higher dropout and failure rates. As evidenced in our country and around the world, bullying and harassment can also lead to devastating incidents of suicide and extreme violence.

For years, schools who have implemented the Bully-Proofing Your Schools series in elementary and middle schools have reported decreased bullying behaviors, reductions in suspensions and referrals, and lowered rates of absenteeism. Students have also reported that they are better equipped to handle bullying situations and that they feel an increased sense of safety and support. Creating schools with climates that are psychologically safe and free of harassment is important for every level of education, but it can be an especially challenging task for high schools. The Bully-Proofing for High Schools program is written specifically for educators and addresses issues that are unique to the high school level. This just released set includes specific approaches that teach staff how to decrease the likelihood of violence, empower students, and create a safe, respectful environment where teachers can teach and students can learn.

The BPHS program includes:

- Comprehensive plan for empowering high school students and staff to take a stand against negative behaviors
- Power Point for staff training
- Guide for writing anti-bullying/harassment and discipline policies, including ready-to-use policy
- Complete 9th-12th grade student curriculum, including lesson plans for each grade level and student strategies to use in bullying situations
- Interventions for support or other staff to use with bullies, victims and bystanders
- CD-ROM with a School Climate survey (to use as pre- and post- test), letters, forms, and ready-to-use worksheets
- Resource guide with suggested supporting materials, such as book titles, videos, and Web sites on topics

The Bully-Proofing for High Schools program is a comprehensive, research-based program that focuses on creating a climate where students feel safe and respected. The program provides a step-by-step approach that can be adapted and interface with any high school’s goals and school improvement plan. More information is available at www.bullyproofing.org and is available through Sopris West Educational Services at http://store.cambiumlearning.com