

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Presented by:
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 Safe Schools for All
www.safeschoolsforall.com

What we call behavior makes a difference.

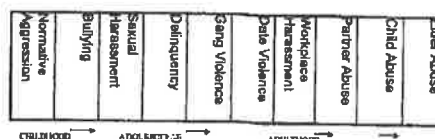
- Domestic violence
- Dating violence
- Food insecurity
- Homeless
- Bullying

What do these terms all have in common?

Bullying (peer abusive) Behavior...

- Is learned behavior.
- **is not** pre-wired, harmless, inevitable.
- Will spread if ignored, supported, or promoted.
- Involves everyone in the system.
- Can be controlled or prevented.

Peer abuse (bullying) is a public health issue.



Peppler D and Craig W. (April 2000). *Making a Difference in Bullying*. Report #60. ISSN 084-9749.

Slide by Stan Davis: www.stopbullyingnow.com

Abusive Aggression is learned from models.

Who are the models?

- Family - Parents, siblings and other adult care givers
- School - Teachers, Principals, Peers
- Community - adults at church, scouts, coaches, police officers etc.
- Media models including: sports figures, "news", Politics, relational models on TV, in magazines, movies, music, toys, video game etc.

What do children learn from models?

- **Cognitive scripts** - rehearsed and reinforced or modified by the feedback results
- **Successful scripts are stored in memory as guides for behavior and social problem solving.**
- Children not only adopt specific behaviors but also tend to adopt **evaluative standards and attitudes** (aka. BIAS) employed by the models in their life.
- **The child will pattern their thoughts, feelings and actions after a model.**



Still Faced Study

	Attuned Reciprocal	Still Faced
Attention System	focused	distracted
Self-Regulatory System	calm	distressed
Affect System	bright	dystonic
Social System	open	closed

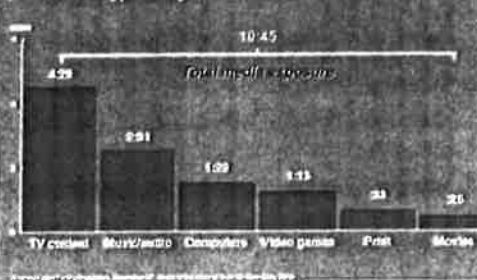
Chaotic, emotionally cold, "still faced" homes produce children...

- Who are not neurologically attuned.
- Who don't respond to verbal or physical consequences.
- Who demonstrate impulsiveness.
- Who keep emotional distance from authority figures.
- Who don't show signs of guilt or remorse for unacceptable behaviors.
- With poor social and planning skills.

These children are often hyper-vigilant for adult hostility.

Media Use, By Platform

Among all 8- to 18-year-olds, amount of time spent with each medium in a typical day:



Mainstream Media cognitive models:

- "Us and them thinking" - demonizing the "other" side - talk radio, news programs
- Revenge as legitimatizing violence - "If you are my enemy I can annihilate you".
- Reinforcing stereotypes and bias - "bad guys" as people of color, gay bashing as humor
- Spirituality and faith communities as "lunatic fringe" or dangerous ideologues.

Mainstream Media cognitive models:

- Sarcasm and abusive language models
 - Meanness as humor, biased language with a laugh track under it.
 - Children using sarcastic put downs at or about their parents portrayed as humorous.
- Inappropriate relational models
 - Children disrespecting adults
 - Sex as a "commodity" in relationships
- Moderation as weakness, compromise as being "soft".
- The idea that abusing people leads to success, material wealth, and power.
- Assigning blame to someone else.

Video Game Aggression

First person practice of aggressive attitudes and actions, repeated and rewarded thousands of times in a very arousing and engaging format.

What effect do you think that has on a child's brain and behavior?

Who gets targeted in bullying?

Disenfranchised groups as well as students who are socially excluded, disabled, "different" in any way, or who are **not valued by peers or adults** are more likely to be targeted for aggression.

Why stop peer aggression?

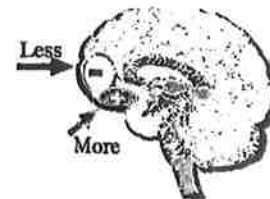
- Students who don't feel safe can't learn.
- Targets of peer aggression are more likely to become depressed and or develop suicidal ideation.
- Aggressive youth are more likely to grow into adult criminals.
- The stress of managing challenging behaviors in your school affects your health.

Excess stress and threat in the school environment may be the single greatest contributor to impaired academic learning.

Eric Jensen, Teaching with the Brain in Mind pg. 52

Distress/Threat Changes Blood Flow in the Brain

Less blood flow to places in the brain (dorsal area of frontal lobes) that do future planning... and more blood flow to areas that process emotions, leaving fewer options for more thoughtful decision-making.



Distress: state or trait?

Neurotransmitters that influence emotions and behavior:

- Epinephrine and Norepinephrine (Adrenaline) - triggers the alert system, too much causes anxiety, aggression/mania
- Dopamine - attention, cognition, motivation and pleasure (dopamine travels with endorphins)- responsible for linking events and actions to outcomes (reward / motivation system)
- Serotonin - helps regulate mood, creates restful alertness, keeps us from being overwhelmed with too much incoming stimuli
- Cortisol - cues attention and memory, primary long acting stress hormone, at high or unrelenting levels damages structures in the brain by eroding connectivity, affects learning and memory
- Oxytocin - encourages "tend and befriend" behavior as opposed to "fight or flight", behavior, in response to stress.

Excess Cortisol Damages the Brain

- Causes shrinkage of the frontal lobes and hippocampi
 - Existing cells shrink (dendritic erosion)
 - Total number of cells decreases
 - Erodes connectivity of neurons
 - Prevents neurogenesis (new cell production)

Prefrontal Cortex Functions

Planning
Organization
Initiate or delay response
Consequence evaluation
Learning from mistakes
Focus
Working Memory
Modulating Mood



Dysfunction in this area leads to disruption in the organization and control of behavior.

3 critical periods of rapid brain development

- Conception to birth
- Birth to age 6 - peak period age 2-3yrs
- Ages 12-18 - peak period is age 13-15

The busier the brain the higher the risk.

Development does not just happen - missed opportunities make things harder later on.

The greater/longer the stress, the longer the recovery.

The brain develops back to front.

The PFC is supposed to undergo massive new development and reorganization during adolescence.

When exposed to chronic distress, deprivation or trauma it is **negatively affected front to back**. The greater the distress - the greater the impact on development.

A healthy PFC enables a person to:

- regulate the body
- do attuned reciprocal relationships
- maintain emotional balance
- demonstrate response flexibility (think before acting)
- develop insight (mental time travel)
- show empathy for others
- modulate fear

Reducing Levels of Peer Aggression

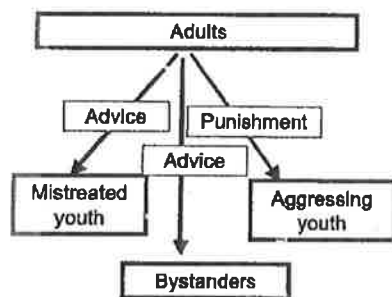
What doesn't work?

The history of bullying prevention

Version 1: brief interventions by adults aimed at changing the behavior of individuals. Assumption: adults know which youth actions will stop bullying

- V 1.1 "Stop tattling." "Only tell me if there's blood."
- V 1.2 "If you have high self esteem, no one will mistreat you, and you won't mistreat others."
- V 1.3 "Don't act like a victim." "Stand tall and make eye contact." "Pretend it doesn't bother you." "Tell them to stop." "Just walk away."
- V 1.4 "Bullying is mean!" No-bully zone.
- V 1.5 "You're suspended!" Zero tolerance methods
- V. 1.6 "Say you're sorry." "Now say it's OK."
- V. 1.7 (to bystanders) "Confront bullying behavior."

Bullying prevention V 1.1- 1.7



Interventions that alone do not work as prevention of peer aggression.

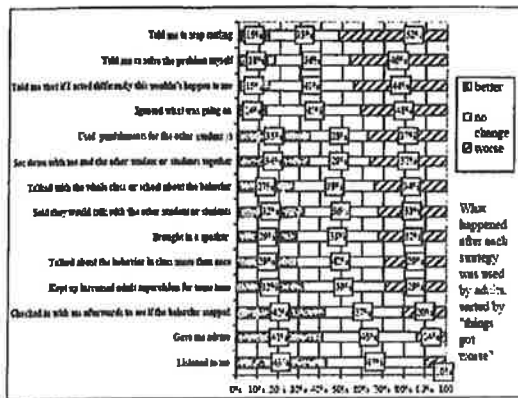
- Peer Mediation
- Short term one shot solutions.
- Anti-bullying Curriculum
- Self-esteem work for bullies.
- Assertiveness training for targets.
- More punitive discipline.
- Zero Tolerance Policies

What else doesn't work?

- Expecting young people to solve all their own problems related to peer mistreatment
- Telling them not to ask adults for help - "You're tattling!"
- The adult community remaining silent about negative behaviors.
- Telling students "pretend it doesn't bother you", "just walk away", "tell them how you feel", or "ask them to stop".

What else doesn't work?

- Telling youth that if they had acted differently they wouldn't have been mistreated
- Whole school assembly to tell all students that bullying is wrong or that it hurts.
- See <http://www.youthvoiceproject.com> for more on safe actions students can take.



- ### Conditions favorable for peer aggression to continue :
- Lack of, or low quality supervision.
 - **Inconsistent staff response to aggressive situations.**
 - Students with indifferent or accepting attitudes about aggression.
 - Presence of aggressive individuals of same age or older.
 - Blind spots.

What does work with today's students in preventing and responding to peer aggression?

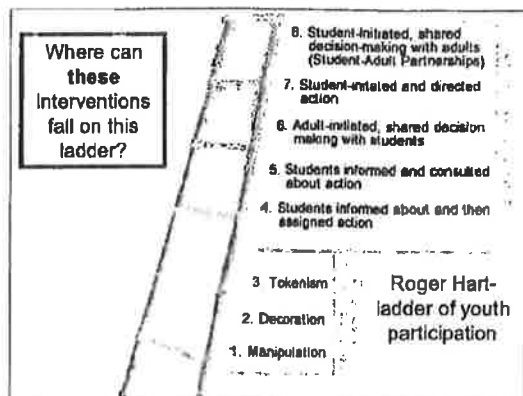
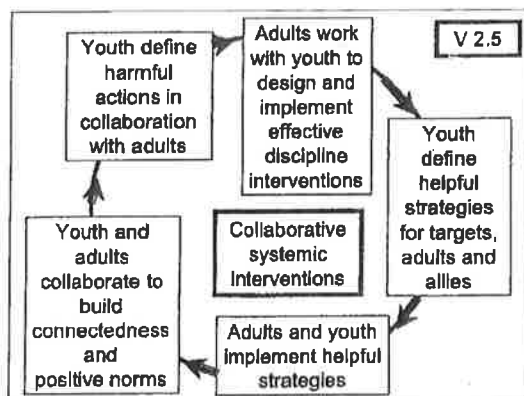
The history of bullying prevention

Version 2: Long term data-driven systemic interventions which work to change school climate and peer norms. Assumptions: What people in a school do influences outcomes.

- V 2.1 Adult-directed systemic interventions
- V 2.2 Integrate social justice initiatives into 2.1 (Greene)
- V 2.3 Integrate restorative practice into 2.1 (Sawyer, Riese,...)
- V 2.4 Integrate peer mentoring into 2.1 (Koebeke,...)

V 2.5 Collaborative **Inquiry-based** data-driven systemic interventions in which **youth define** peer behaviors of concern, helpful interventions by targets, adults, and peer allies, and obstacles to success.

Adult roles are ongoing: ask good questions, contribute knowledge of prevention science, follow through on disciplinary approaches using youth input, build connections with all, work with young people to create positive climate and peer norms schoolwide.



School Climate = The Affective Resonance of a School

School Culture evolves in the context of the climate of a school.

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Wingspread Declaration on School Connections

The most effective strategies for increasing the likelihood that students will be connected to school include:

- Implementing high standards and expectations and providing academic support to all students.
- Applying fair and consistent disciplinary policies that are collectively agreed upon and fairly enforced.
- Creating trusting relationships among students, teachers, staff, administrators, and families.
- Insuring that every student feels close to at least one supportive adult at school.

<http://www.jhsph.edu/wingspread/Septemberissue.pdf>

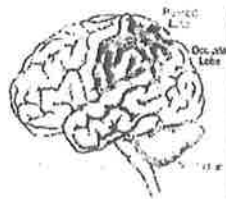
Increased connection to school promotes:

- Educational motivation
- Classroom engagement
- Improved school attendance

The combination of improved motivation, engagement and attendance increases what?

3 Key Functions of the brain.

- Survival - scanning for threat
- Learning from experience
- Anticipating/Predicting

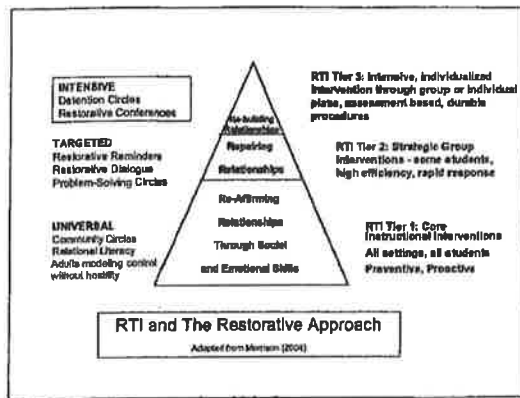


Impact of School Climate on the Brain	
High Boundaries/Limits	<p>Doing To Authoritarian Punitive Stigmatizing Hyper-vigilance for threat Memory and executive functions hampered BRAIN: Reactive Defensive</p>
	<p>Doing With Authoritative Connected Trusting Relaxed attention Attunement, connections, accountability, cause and effect thinking BRAIN: Reflective/Pro-social</p>
Low	<p>Doing Nothing Uninvolved Ignoring Unresponsive Distress Negative impact on attention, memory, emotions and behavior BRAIN: Reactive Defensive</p>
	<p>Doing For Permissive Excusing Reasoning Connects negative behaviors with positive feelings Reinforcing negative behaviors Brain: Passive Enabled</p>
Low Nurture/Support High	

Chart is modified from Diana Baumrind's parenting research

A Restorative Approach

Is a philosophy or guiding principle (not a program or specific activity) that sees **relationships as central to learning, growth and a healthy school climate for students and adults.**



RTI Tier 1 Interventions:

Adults protecting students and consistently responding to aggression - modeling control without hostility.

Adults building relationships and modeling pro-social relational behaviors and skills.

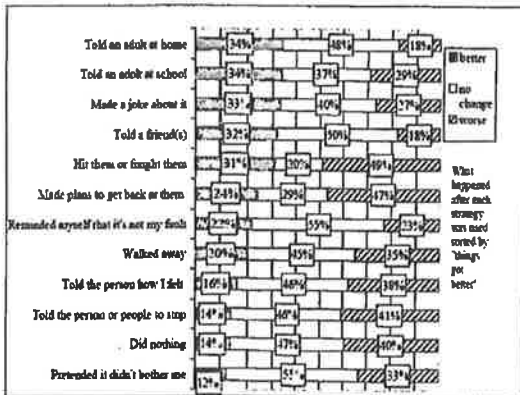
These are the Foundation Principles for Maintaining a Safe School Climate and Culture

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RTI Tier 1 Universal Interventions: Building Cognitive Structures that Contribute to Improved Academic and Behavioral Outcomes

- Procedural Learning and Routines
- Teach Emotional Vocabulary
- Practice Complete Redirections with students
- Teach A Problem Solving Method (Template)
- Teach Reflective Thought Processes
 - What did you do?
 - Who did it affect?
 - How did it affect them?
 - What should you do now?

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Student supervision should be...

- Purposeful
- Alert
- Proactive and respectful
- Mobile and Interactive - brief positive contacts
- Done from the perimeter
- Communicated to other supervising adults

What kind of intervention works?

- Timely
- Consistent
- Firm
- Respectful
- Brief

Precursors to Bystander Action

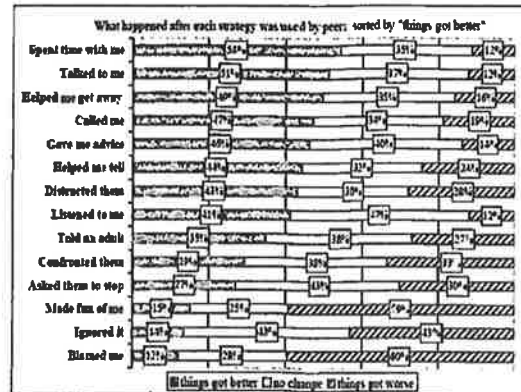
These tests must be applied in order one at a time:
The bystander must...

1. Perceive that the person needs help
2. Believe the person does not deserve what is being done to him or her and deserves help
3. See it as THEIR job to help
4. Possess the skills and resources to help efficiently and safely
5. Consider the benefits and risks of helping

Then

If benefits outweigh the risks, there is bystander action.

Darley, J. M., & Latané, B. (1968). Bystander intervention in emergencies: Diffusion of Responsibility. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 8, 377-383.
Latané, B., & Darley, J. Bystander "Apathy", *American Scientist*, 1968, 57, 244-258.



Remember

School is **NOT** a safe
neutral place for all

SEXUAL
ORIENTATION
CLASS



A motto for our work, proposed by
a high school assistant principal

"Discover and repeat success."



-Howard Palmer,
Denton, Texas
November, 2010

Resources

Safe Schools for All

www.safeschoolsforall.com

The International Bullying Prevention Association

www.stopbullyingworld.com

Maine's Best Practices in Bullying and
Harassment Prevention

<http://www.maine.gov/education/bullyingprevention/>

International Institute of Restorative Processes

www.iirp.org