Bullying and Schools: An Overview of the Problem

- Definitions and types
- Characteristics
- Challenges for educators
- Prevalence in schools: Recent survey data
- Interventions and supports
Agree or Disagree?

- Teasing is bullying
- Some people deserve to be bullied
- It is mostly boys who are bullies
- People who complain about bullies are whiners (they should stand up for themselves)
- Bullying is a normal part of growing up
Agree or Disagree?

- Bullies will go away if you ignore them
- All bullies have low self-esteem
- It’s tattling to tell an adult when you are being bullied
- The best way to deal with a bully is fighting or trying to get even
- People who are bullied might hurt for awhile, but they’ll get over it
Oregon House Bill 3403 (May 14, 2001)

“As used in sections 1 to 7 of this 2001 Act, “harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any written, verbal or physical act taking place … at any school-sponsored activity [or environment].. that a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:

(1) Physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property,
(2) Placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm or damage to the student’s property, or
(3) Insulting or demeaning any student or group of students in such a way as to disrupt or interfere with the school’s educational mission or the education of any student.”
Oregon House Bill 2599 (July 1, 2009)
Amends Oregon Law ORS 339.351 - 339.364

“Requires school districts to include specified elements in policy prohibiting harassment, intimidation or bullying and prohibiting cyberbullying. Requires school districts to provide to Department of Education data related to acts of harassment, intimidation or bullying or acts of cyberbullying.

Considers school district to be nonstandard if school district does not comply with requirements.”

Declares emergency, effective July 1, 2009.
“Cyberbullying” means the use of any electronic communication device to harass, intimidate or bully.

“Harassment, intimidation or bullying” means any act that:

(a) Substantially interferes with a student’s educational benefits, opportunities or performance;

(b) Takes place on or immediately adjacent to school grounds, at any school-sponsored activity, on school-provided transportation or at any official school bus stop.
Specifics of HB 2599:

[, and that];

- **(c)** Has the effect of:
  - **[(a)] (A)** Physically harming a student or damaging a student’s property;
  - **[(b)] (B) **Knowingly** placing a student in reasonable fear of physical harm to the student or
damage to the student’s property; or
  - **[(c)] (C)** Creating a hostile educational environment, **including** interfering with the psychological well-being of a student; and[
  - **(d)** May be based on the protected class status of a person.
Specifics of HB 2599:

(3) “Protected class” means a group of persons distinguished, or perceived to be distinguished, by:

1. race,
2. color,
3. religion,
4. sex,
5. sexual orientation,
6. national origin,
7. marital status,
8. familial status,
9. source of income or
10. disability.
Definitions

- “The recurring exposure, over time, to negative actions by one or more others.” (Olweus, 1994)

- “A form of aggressive behavior that involves coercion, intimidation, and threats to one's safety or well-being.” (Walker, Colvin, Ramsey; 1995)
Definitions

“Bullying and harassment are hot-button terms that have both social and legal implications, but to be clear, these behaviors comprise a subset of that litany of problem behaviors known as anti-social behavior.”
Characteristics of Bullying

Direct Bullying (Overt Behaviors)

**Physical**

- Assault with hands, feet, or object
- Violent or unwanted physical contact
- Destruction or theft of property
- Threatening or menacing actions or postures
- Offensive gestures, faces, postures
Characteristics of Bullying

Direct Bullying (Overt Behaviors)

Verbal

- Verbal threats of physical harm
- Verbal assaults likely to cause mental or emotional distress
- Teasing
Indirect Bullying (Covert Behaviors):

**Physical:** Can include the anonymous theft or destruction of another's property

**Verbal:** Includes rumors, lying, and gossip. Often consists of subtle and concealed actions intended to socially isolate or exclude the victim from groups and friends. These behaviors are sometimes referred to as Social Bullying...
Cast of Characters

- **Perpetrators**
  1. Bully/Victim
  2. Alpha-Wolf

- **Victims**
  1. Victm/Bully
  2. Provocative Victim
  3. Chronic Victim
  4. Collateral Victim

- **Bystanders**
  1. Everybody
Challenges Facing Educators

Although common and frequent, most bullying and harassment behaviors are exhibited outside of adult supervision.
Challenges Facing Educators

Bullying and harassment behaviors and interactions are often made to look social in nature
Challenges Facing Educators

Many bullying and harassment behaviors have traditionally been passed off as "boys will be boys" and "girls will be girls" or "it's just natural."
Prevalence

7% to 9% of children surveyed in grades one through nine had bullied other students with regularity and around 5% of the students surveyed were involved in serious bullying problems occurring once a week or more frequently (Olweus, 1996)
Prevalence

Up to 96% of local elementary school students surveyed report witnessing multiple instances of harassment and bullying at school each year (Smith & Sprague, 2000)

Up to 86 % of local elementary school students surveyed report being harassed and bullied at school each year (Smith & Sprague, 2000)
Outcomes

Of boys considered to have serious bullying problems between 6th and 9th grades...

- 60% had at least one criminal conviction, and
- 40% had three or more arrests - by age 24.

(Olweus, 1991; Committee for Children, 2001)
Transforming the destructive peer culture is perhaps our most formidable task in the area of school safety. This culture is not of the schools making but schools are perhaps the only social institution, excluding the family, capable of addressing it effectively.
What do we teach kids to do at school?

1. Ignore the bully
2. Use your words
3. Leave the area
4. Tell an adult
5. Act calm and unafraid
6. Try to problem solve or “get along”
What do parents often teach their kids to do?

1. Ignore the bully
2. Stand up for yourself
3. Reply in kind
4. Tell an adult
Effective Interventions

Effective interventions consist of two research based or research validated components:

1. Curricular or instructional programs centered around social skills training
2. Positive behavior support programs designed to teach and reinforce positive behavior for the majority of the students and the school community
Essential School-based Systems

- Directly teach the students: how not to be a victim, what to do, what BHI is, etc.
  - Important to teach enough for fluency, 30-50 times a year?

- School-based mentoring for victims, aggressors, at-risk bystanders

- Take it seriously (can be time consuming and tedious, but absolutely necessary)
Effective Curricular Interventions

Provide for the consistent and comprehensive teaching, practice, and re-teaching of social skills such as:

1. Empathy
2. Friendship building and maintenance
3. How to recognize and effectively respond to bullying and harassment
4. How to report bullying and harassment to adults
Effective Behavioral Interventions

Provide for the consistent and comprehensive teaching, practice, and re-teaching of what to do if bullied or harassed

1. How not to be a victim
   Respond respectfully, defuse, and disengage
   What not to do: cry run, fight, etc.

2. How to report the incident to an adult

3. What to do if you are a bystander
   Respectfully stand up for the victim as a friend, defuse, disengage, and report
Whole School Interventions

1. Active supervision training and implementation

2. School-wide positive behavior supports and research-based interventions

3. Staff trained to recognize and effectively respond to observed or reported incidences

4. Staff training to effectively and safely intervene with, and support, both bullies and victims
Assume a Friendly and Supportive Role

Tone of Voice

- Eye Contact
- Smile, Show Interest
- Pay Attention to the Student
- Tell he or she that they did the right thing and why (safe, responsible, respectful, etc.)
The Four-A Response Process
(from Steps to Respect: Committee for Children)

- Affirm
- Ask
- Assess
- Act
Affirm the Child’s Actions

- Students who take responsibility for school or peer safety should be, and need to be recognized
- Acknowledge their feelings
Ask Questions

- Who is involved?
- What happened?
- When it happened?
- Where it happened?

Use active listening skills….
Assess the Student’s Safety

- Is the bullying still happening?
- Is the reporting student at risk?
- Fear of revenge?
- What does the student need to feel safe?
- What is the severity of the situation
Act

- Reporting the incident to other staff
- Teachers coach both the Student who bullied and the Student who was bullied.
- Develop and implement plan
Staff Reporting

Any bullying, harassment, or sexual contact/harassment should be reported to

____________________ staff name

and

____________________ other relevant.
School-level measures

- Assessment of the problem through surveys and questionnaires
- School conferences on bully/victim issues that include staff, students, and parents.
- Effective adult supervision in unstructured, high census common areas (playgrounds, cafeterias)
- Implement effective problem solving strategies with staff, students, and parents
- Establishing a site-based pro-social school improvement team dedicated to improving school culture and climate
Class-level measures

- Creation of class rules against bullying
- Establishing positive reinforcement (praise) for appropriate behavior
- Establishing clear consequences for inappropriate behavior
- Instructional activities including role playing, cooperative learning, literature, and positive class activities
- Regularly scheduled class meetings devoted to bullying
- Meetings with teacher, students, and parents
Individual measures

- Immediate and ongoing one-on-one talks (processing) of a serious nature with both bully(s) and victim(s)
- Separate ongoing serious talks (processing) with the participating students and their parents
- Joint talks between the bully and their parents and the victim and their parents (includes the school psychologist and/or counselor)
- Provision of social and behavioral support resources for parents of participants
- Discussion groups for parents of perpetrators
- Change in placement (classroom, school, etc.)
Intro to “Stop, Walk, and Talk”  
(Ross, Horner, & Stiller, 2007)

- A PBS-based strategy for bullying prevention and response.

**Critical Features:**

- Directly teach bullying prevention and response under “Be Safe, Responsible, and Respectful”
- Teach kids to use the “**Stop**” command, **Walk** away from the situation, and **Talk** to an adult.
- Based on interrupting the function of the behavior
- Teach kids when and how to use the strategy.
- Teach staff to effectively respond to reports of BHI at the initial level.
What the program entails…

- Determine a consistent school-wide hand-signal for “Stop!”
- Staff teach lessons on how BHI is not safe, responsible, or respectful.
- Staff teach lessons on how to respond using Stop, Walk, and Talk.
- Staff teach kids how to accept someone using “Stop!” with them
- Staff set up systems within the school for taking and responding to reports and reinforcing students using the strategy as well as supporting perpetrators and victims of BHI.
Hand signal used with verbal command: “”
“stop” “enough” “time-out” “quit-it”
“overboard” “too far” “un-cool” .... Etc......
Next Steps....

- Determine your school’s “Stop!” hand signal.
- Set up training for staff in using Stop, Walk, and Talk.
- Begin implementation process
  - Develop lesson plans, schedule for teaching across the year, reporting protocols, reinforcement systems, and building level support processes.
Discussion, Questions, Comments
Well, OK then….. Thanks

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THIS CONCLUDES MY PRESENTATION. ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?

HOW DO I GET THE BOREDOM OUT OF MY HEAD!!

THE FUNNY THING IS THAT I’LL LIST THIS ON MY ANNUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

AIR! I NEED AIR!!
Recommended Programs and Curricula

- **Second Step Violence Prevention Program** (available from the Committee for Children, Seattle, WA, 1-800-634-4449, [http://www.cfchildren.org](http://www.cfchildren.org)).

- **Steps to Respect** (anti-bullying program--available from the Committee for Children, Seattle, WA, 1-800-634-4449, [http://www.cfchildren.org](http://www.cfchildren.org)).

- **Bully Proofing Your School** (available from Sopris West Inc., P.O. Box 1890, Longmont, CO 80502-1809; 1-800-547-6747).


- **Building Effective Schools Together** (BEST). Contact Stephen Smith or Jeffrey Sprague at (541) 346-3592.