BULLYING/PEER AGGRESSION
What we will cover today

1. Some basic facts about bullying

2. How to respond when you see, or think you see, an incident

3. How our beliefs about bullying control our ability to help victims, aggressors, and bystanders
Definition of Bullying

Bullying is **unfair** and **one-sided**.

It happens when someone **keeps** hurting, frightening, threatening, or leaving someone out **on purpose**.
Bullying can include...

• **Physical**
  – hitting, shoving, pushing, and destroying property

• **Verbal**
  – teasing, name calling, threats, starting rumors

• **Written**
  – note, written threats, graffiti, cyberbullying
Fact #1

Most bullying is spoken or written, not physical ..........

WHY?
Bullying: How serious is the problem?

• Today there are **56 million** students in the US (grades K-12) \[\text{Source: Upcoming Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2010}\]

• 10-20% or **5.6 million** school children are the targets of chronic bullying
National Education Association

- 90% of students felt bullying caused social, emotional or academic problems for those bullied
- In 67% of the 37 cases of school shootings, a U.S. Secret Service study showed the attacker felt bullied or threatened by others
Harmful and Long-lasting Effects

• 60% of boys who bullied between sixth and ninth grade had at least one criminal conviction by age 24.
• 40% of them had 3 or more arrests
What does bullying look like?

• Intent to harm
• Imbalance of power
• singles out a target
• Includes:
  – physical aggression
  – verbal aggression
  – malicious rumors or gossip
  – social exclusion
  – threats of harm or exclusion
Cyber Bullying & Texting

Anonymity can be a critical factor; it’s much easier for those who cyber bully to harass when they are able to hide their identities with false screen names or temporary email addresses.
Relational Aggression

- Rumors
- Intimidation
- Humiliation
- Exclusion
- Teasing
- Cyber bullying
- Manipulation
Fact #2
Bullying is different from a conflict or a quarrel

• When kids quarrel, they usually blame each other
• Kids who are victims are AFRAID of bullies
Bullying vs. Normal Peer Conflict

- Peer conflict involves a balance of power: children are of equal size, age, or status.
- All involved in the peer conflict have an equal interest or stake in the outcome.
Fact # 3
Kids who are bullied:

• don’t fight back

• are afraid to blame the bully
In “rough and tumble” play...

- Children are **free to participate**.
- Children are likely to **alternate roles**.
- Children tend to **stay together after play**.
Today, bullies are often POPULAR kids
Harmful Consequences: Targets of Bullying

- Emotional and academic difficulties.
- Lower self-esteem, depression, loneliness, anxiety, and insecurity.
- Negative attitude toward school.
- Negative judgment by peers.
- Development of a painful cycle in which the child who is most in need of peer support is the least likely to receive it.
- Suicidal thoughts.
Harmful Consequences of Bullying

On *children who bully*:

- Aggressive behavior may extend into adulthood.
- Association with other children who have aggressive behavior problems.
- Increased likelihood of incarceration.
Harmful Consequences of Bullying

For *bystanders of bullying*:

- Conflicting feelings: confusion, lack of knowledge of what to do, fear of becoming the next target.
- Conflicting feelings reduce the bystanders’ ability to intervene because they become too focused on their own distress.
What the new law requires

• **Train staff**
  – Train all adults to respond to reports of bullying
  – Train teachers who will teach lessons
  – Train staff who will coach students

• **Improve school safety**
  – Remove visual obstructions and secure unsupervised areas
  – Reward safe, friendly playground behavior
  – Provide adequate, trained adult supervision
  – Arrange for supervision before/after school
# Bullying Prevention Advisory Committee

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role/Position</th>
<th>School/Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natalie Mooney</td>
<td>Adjustment Counselor</td>
<td>Pierce</td>
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<td>Brian Powers</td>
<td>Adjustment Counselor</td>
<td>Tucker/Glover</td>
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<td>Rich Guarino</td>
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<td>Kathy Sullivan</td>
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<td>Steve Traister</td>
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<td>Lisa Veldran</td>
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<td>Mary Downey-Tipping</td>
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<td>Amanda Brink</td>
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<td>Mary Rooney</td>
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<td>Kerry O’Leary</td>
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<td>Karen Spaulding</td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>Cunningham</td>
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<td>Alan Cron</td>
<td>Vice Principal / BPAC Chair</td>
<td>MHS</td>
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What is YOUR role?

• How you react to a bullying situation is KEY

1. Our goal is to support the victim. Don’t expect them to just help themselves.

2. **How?**, dismiss the victim, deal with the bully

   - consider this example...
**Situation #1: Victim won’t talk**

- You may or may not actually see the incident, BUT.....

- *Victim won’t talk (why not?)*
Situation #2:
Victims supports the “bully”

• You may even witness it
• “Gee, we were just goofing around.”
Remember, the victim is AFRAID of the bully

• Trust what you think you see, more than what you hear

• Never mind if the victim doesn’t talk or supports the bully

• If it looks wrong to you, you should respond
Do react, Don’t worry if it cannot be formal discipline

• React even if you only suspect bullying happened, but don’t go to discipline if you only suspect

• There are many reactions before discipline.
Do’s and Don’ts

• DON’T try to sit the two kids down together to “work it out.”

The victim will know that the bully will just get even later.
The General Idea

PRINCIPLE:

“Separate, don’t Mediate”

• Your reaction:
  – Dismiss victim, talk to the bully alone
    • IF you don’t react, kids will assume that this is NOT important. No child will react if the adults don’t
    • It’s NOT just up to the kids
What about negotiation skills? Don’t kids need to learn about working things out?

• Remember, trying to help the kids “work it out” or “talk it out” won’t help in a bullying situation
What to say to the suspected bully:

- “I don’t like what I saw you do.”
- “I don’t care if Ryan likes it. I don’t like it and I don’t want to see it again.”
- Expect confusion – bullies are experts at confusing adults, if you engage in a debate with the bully about what you did or didn’t see, in no time you will be confused.
Getting past the “Snitching” rule

• There is strong social pressure NOT to talk to adults
• Utilize Abstract, “no name’ reporting
• Strive for a climate where kids talk to adults. Talking about good things early and often makes talking about difficult things easier should the need arise.
Scenario one......

The case of the happy headlock

.......“we were only just playing”.
Practice cont’

The case of the group *PSssssssstttttttt.....*

You overhear one student telling a group of friends who are all laughing about a bullying scene they witnessed on the playground.

What do you do?
Thank you!