

Community Presentation

AAUW Napa County/Task Force Presentation Bullying in Schools—A Community Concern

Mission:

"Making a Difference"

By: partnering with colleagues in our community to promote awareness and education about bullying through:

- **Collaboration**
- **Respect**
- **Research**
- **Community action**
- **Workshops/Forums**

Introduction:

Many youth in the United States have been victimized by bullies. There is evidence both nationally and internationally of the tragic results of bullying in the school setting. The Board of AAUW Napa identified this as a concern, and in January 2008 a Task Force (Bullying in Schools/ A Community Concern) was formed.

The Task Force set as its goal the prevention and intervention to acts of violence due to bullying.

On June 18, 2008, the Task Force met with Dr. John Glaser, Superintendent of Schools of the Napa Valley Unified School District and Lynn Carlisle, Director of Secondary Education, who both recognized the value to the District to partner with AAUW in this endeavor. Dr. Glaser suggested that members of AAUW Napa be involved as mentors for the high school Senior Projects and pointed out that a concentration on cyberbullying would be beneficial for the school district.

The primary goals of this Task Force are to:

1. Provide information, training, and resources related to bullying and cyberbullying to the community including parents, teachers, and students
2. Promote awareness regarding bullying issues with emphasis on cyberbullying
3. Address attitudes and actions to decrease the occurrence and impact of cyberbullying.

Purpose

The purpose of this taskforce is to provide information and resources regarding bullying and cyberbullying to parents and the community in Napa County.

Definitions

Bullying is a campaign of intimidations and/or insults about an individual by a group of people or an individual in order to achieve a sense of power over others.

Bullying has long been associated with childhood and adolescent experiences whether within the schools or society in general. The individual who is bullied (the target) is the one most adversely affected. Also affected are the perpetrator(s) and bystanders. Bullying can take many forms. One of the most recent avenues for bullying is in the form of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is a way of bullying using cell phones, email, texting, internet sites and/or other electronic devices, generally making it anonymous. It is used to embarrass, harass, smear, taunt, threaten, manipulate or create a hate environment focused on a particular person.

Bullying trauma affects the bullied student's ability to make friends, belong to groups, function and participate in the process of childhood maturation. It is a mental health issue that inter-relates with physical, social, emotional, psychological and environmental factors. This plays a fundamental role in a student's everyday health and feelings of well being and therefore can adversely affect successful learning.

Cyberbullying Warning Signs

A child may be a victim of cyberbullying if he/she:

- Unexpectedly stops using the computer
- Appears nervous or jumpy when an Instant Message appears
- Avoids discussions about what they are doing on the computer
- Becomes abnormally withdrawn from usual friends and email contacts
- Appears sad, withdrawn or depressed
- Is frequently absent from school
- Demonstrates a decrease in academic performance
- Goes to the nurse's office frequently with various complaints in order to avoid class

A child may be cyberbullying others if he/she:

- Quickly switches screens or closes programs when you walk by
- Uses the computer at all hours of the night
- Gets unusually upset if he/she cannot use the computer
- Laughs excessively while using the computer
- Avoids discussions about what they are doing on the computer
- Uses multiple online accounts, or an account that is not his/her own
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Statistics and Research

The National Education Association (NEA) in 1995 estimated 160,000 students daily refuse to go to school in fear of being bullied. Students may complain of having a headache, stomachache or display symptoms of stress and/or anxiety.

According to the Pew Research Center (Pew Internet and Life Project, June 27, 2007,) "Roughly a third of teens who use the Internet said they'd received threatening messages, had email or text messages forwarded without consent, had an embarrassing picture posted without consent, had rumors about them spread online, or experienced some other kind of online harassment."

A 2002 report by the U.S. Secret Service reported that 75% of students who were involved in school shootings had been bullied. In 1999 a Swedish study looked at the relationship of bullying to future criminal behavior. It indicated that 60% of males classified as bullies at 6th through 9th grade had been convicted of at least one crime by age 24. This compared to only 23% of males classified as non bullies or victims.

The Parent, Educator and Community Action Guide (Napa County, California) 2007 states the following regarding teen internet use:

- 87% of teens age 12-17 use the internet
- 47% of children have received emails with links to pornographic websites
- 95% of parents can not identify common chat room lingo
- 1 in 4 sixth grade students have become friends with a stranger online and 1 in 10 have attempted to meet an online friend face to face
- 86% of girls say they can chat online without their parents permission
- 28% of teens say they use code words on a daily basis to hide their online conversations from their parents

In a report of the Internet Safety Technical Task Force (Dec. 30, 2008) from the Berkman Center for Internet and Society (Harvard Law School) titled Online Threats to Youth: Solicitation, Harassment, and Problematic Content, it cites that the majority of cases of sexual solicitation involved adolescents, and instances of prepubescent sex being solicited online are nearly nonexistent

Many of the threats that youth experience online are perpetrated by their peers, including sexual solicitation (Wolak et al 2006). Also, youth identify most sexual solicitors as being other adolescents or young adults between the ages of 18 and 21. Studies have found that most victims of meetings between minors and adults that involve sex, the victims are underage adolescents who knew that they were going to meet an adult for a sexual encounter. (<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/pubrelease/isttf>)

Greenfield states that "a warm and communicative parent-child relationship is the most important non-technical means that parents can use to deal with the challenges of the sexualized media environment". (Greenfield 2004:741)

Current State and Federal Laws

Federal Law 5 U.S.C. 552a (2000) based on the 1974 “Privacy Act” of President Ford states that if information is collected about a person by a federal agency, it must be complete, accurate, and relevant to what he/she is doing and be up to date. It has been characterized as a “code of fair information practices” that attempts to regulate the collection, maintenance, use, and dissemination of personal information by federal executive branch agencies.

Since 2001 25 states have passed laws to deter bullying in public schools. Currently 15 states have legislation that includes consideration of cyberbullying. (www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov).

Current state laws on bullying:

State	Citation
California	Cal. Ed Code § 35294.2 (2001), 32261, 32262, 32265, 32270, and 3529.2G
Colorado	Colo. Public Act No. 02-119 (2002)
Connecticut	Ct. Public Act No. 02-119 (2002)
Georgia	Ga. Code Ann. § 20-2-751.4 (2001)
Illinois	ILCS § 105 5/10-20.14
Louisiana	La. R.S. 17 § 416.13 (2001)
New Hampshire	N.H. RSA 193-F (2000)
New Jersey	N.J.S.A. 18A:37-13-18 (2002)
New York	NY CLS Educ § 2801-a (2002)
Oklahoma	Ok Stat. 70 § 24-100.2 (2002)
Oregon	Ore. Laws 617 (2001)
Rhode Island	R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-21-24 (2001)
Vermont	V.S.A. 16 § 565 (2001)
Washington	RCW 28A.300.285 (2002)
West Virginia	W.Va Code Ann. § 18-2C-1 (2001)

California Education Code mandates student protection from harassment while at school and on the way to and from school. Schools are vulnerable to lawsuits for failing to provide a safe environment.

CA AB 86 bill adds harassment by “an electronic act” to the list of suspensions or expulsions in the California Education Code. This bill was approved by the Governor, and filed by the Secretary of State to become law on September 30, 2008.

The California Education Code, Section 35294.2 (g), states that “The California State Department of Education shall develop model policies on the prevention of bullying and on conflict resolution and make the model policies available to school districts. A school district may adopt one or both of these policies for incorporation into its school safety plan.”

Student Guidelines (bookmark)

1. Write about other people online only what you would say to them face to face.
2. Remember “MySpace” and “FaceBook” are open to the public, even to your grandmother.
3. Think B4UClick. What’s on the Internet stays on the Internet.
4. Keep personal information private. (The more information someone has about you, the more easily they can bully you.)
5. Don’t join in with someone who is bullying someone else.
6. Never ignore a mean or threatening message. Save the message and show it to an adult.

Parental Guidelines (bookmark)

1. Protect your child. Don't stop talking. Emphasize that you won't blame them or take away computer or cell phone privileges if they have been bullied.

2. Keep computer in busy area of your home, i.e. kitchen or Family room.
3. Ensure that screen names and profiles do not reveal personal information.
4. Set the rules regarding permissible and forbidden websites.
5. Learn about or meet your child's online friends.
6. Have access to your child's accounts and passwords.

7. Install software to limit access to undesirable websites.
8. Provide a parental controlled location to deposit cell Phones at bedtime.
9. Watch out for signs that your child is being bullied online. If they are, then listen respectfully to you child and make A plan to keep them safe. Contact your child's school Local police or your Internet Service Provider if there is Bullying.

Presentation Outcomes

At the end of the presentation, the participant will be able to:

1. Define bullying and cyberbullying.
2. Recognize behaviors that correspond to bullying/cyberbullying.
3. Select resource materials for further explanations of this subject.
4. State methods of combating cyberbullying.

Resources/References

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