

Bullying of Children and Adolescents: Current issues & Community Accountability

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The Partnership for Safe Families & Communities of Ventura County



Coalition for Family Harmony
Building Stronger Families



Before we begin:

It is not dangerous
to confuse children
with angels.
-Magnolia (1999)



When faced with trauma...

- Everybody processes differently & in their own time
- Self-care tips:
 - Acknowledge your feelings; whatever they are
 - Eat/rest
 - Express yourself
 - Show yourself compassion
 - Get out of the house
 - Remember the things that are beautiful in your life

Reflection time-Discuss a time when you:

- Witnessed bullying
- Participated in bullying
- Intervened in bullying

What stood out about these scenarios?



What is bullying?

- Unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children:
 - High likelihood of causing physical or psychological harm/injury
 - **Involves real or perceived power imbalance**
 - Repeated, or potential to be repeated over time
- Occurs during school or afterhours
Playground, bus, traveling
to or from school,
in neighborhood, online, etc.

stopbullying.gov



Imbalance of Power & Repetition

- Youth use their power to control others
 - Physical strength, embarrassing info, popularity, Identity, etc.
- Different behaviors happen more than once, or have the potential to happen more than once, same, added rewards
- Acts include: making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose, etc.

What constitutes imbalance of power

- Physical characteristics: Age size, strength
- Popularity or association with popular peers
- Background/demographics: Who's at risk?
 - Disabilities (Learning, ADHD, ASD, health care needs, chronic, etc.)
 - Weight, height, stature, etc.
 - LGBTQ+ identity, gender non-conforming, etc.
 - Alternative home language
- Ability and skills: Academic, physical, artistic
- Access to money, resources, information
- Presence of weapons

Bully is not teasing and 3 reasons why...

Teasing involves two or more friends, who act together

- Fun to all involved
- Typically teasing is seen as equal
- NEVER involves physical or emotional abuse

Three interrelated reasons:

- Stronger need for power and (negative) control
- Satisfaction in causing injury and suffering to others
- some way rewarded for their bullying w/ material, psychological rewards

www.violencepreventionworks.org, 2016)



The A-B-Cs of bullying behavior

A = Antecedent(s)

B=Behavior(s)

Consequence(s)



Who benefits as a result of abuse?

Relationship to Teen Dating Violence

Self-reported bullying in Middle School was associated with:

- 7xs likelihood of reporting PHYSICAL TDV perpetration in H.S.
- **Early Adolescent BOYS:** Bullying AND **homophobic teasing** associated with sexual harassment in M.S.
- Adolescent psychotic symptoms associated child abuse, exposure to DV, and suspected bullying/victim.
- Frequent bullying indicator of violence at home.

(Espelage, Basile, De La Rue, & Hamburger, 2015; Espelage, & Low, n.d.; Kelleher, Harley, Lynch, Fitzpatrick, and Cannon, 2008;)

LGBTQ+ community and bullying

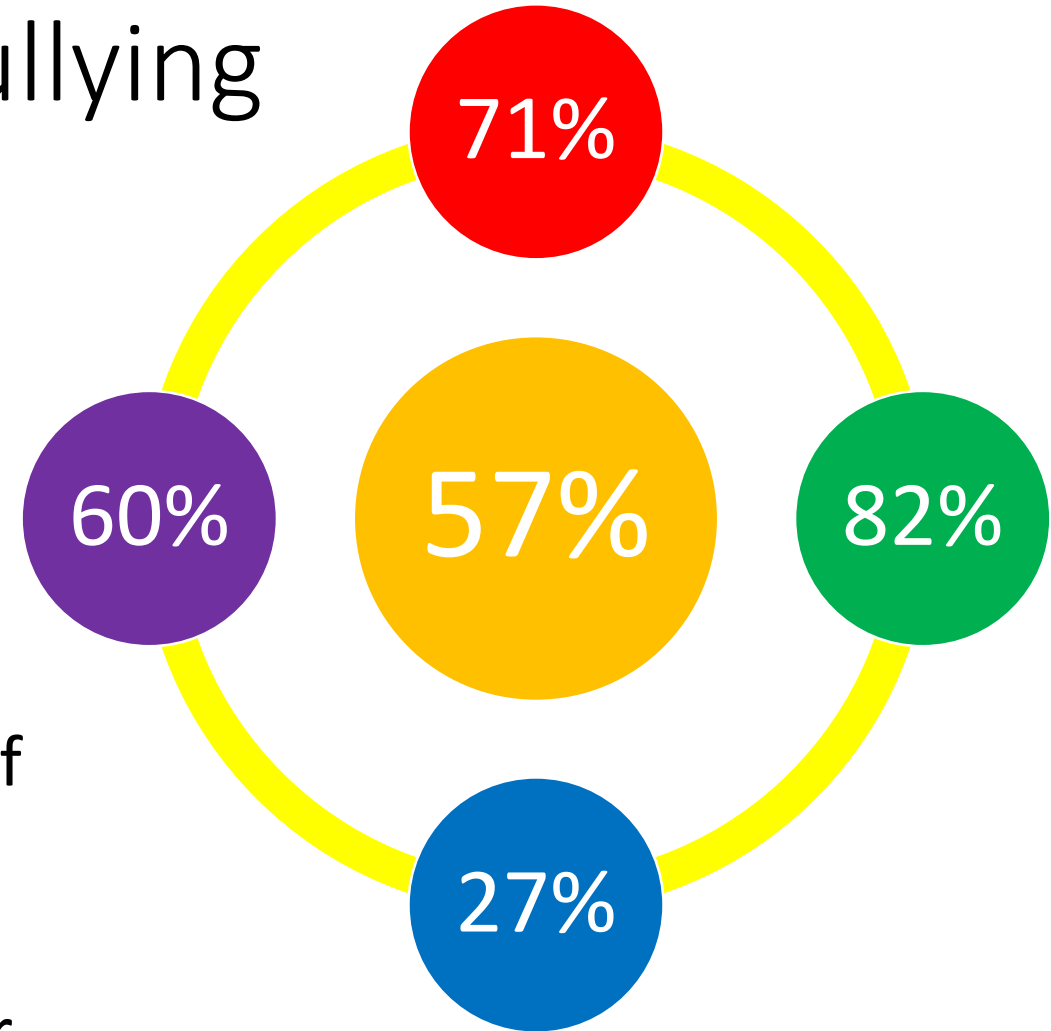
71% hear peers make negative remarks about Sexual orientation

82% Are verbally harassed because of Sexual Orientation

27% Physically harassed because of Gender Expression

60% did not report harassment because of little action, making situation worse

57% Heard teachers make negative remarks about Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity.



(Kosciw, Greytak, Bartkiewicz, Boesen, & Palmer, 2012)

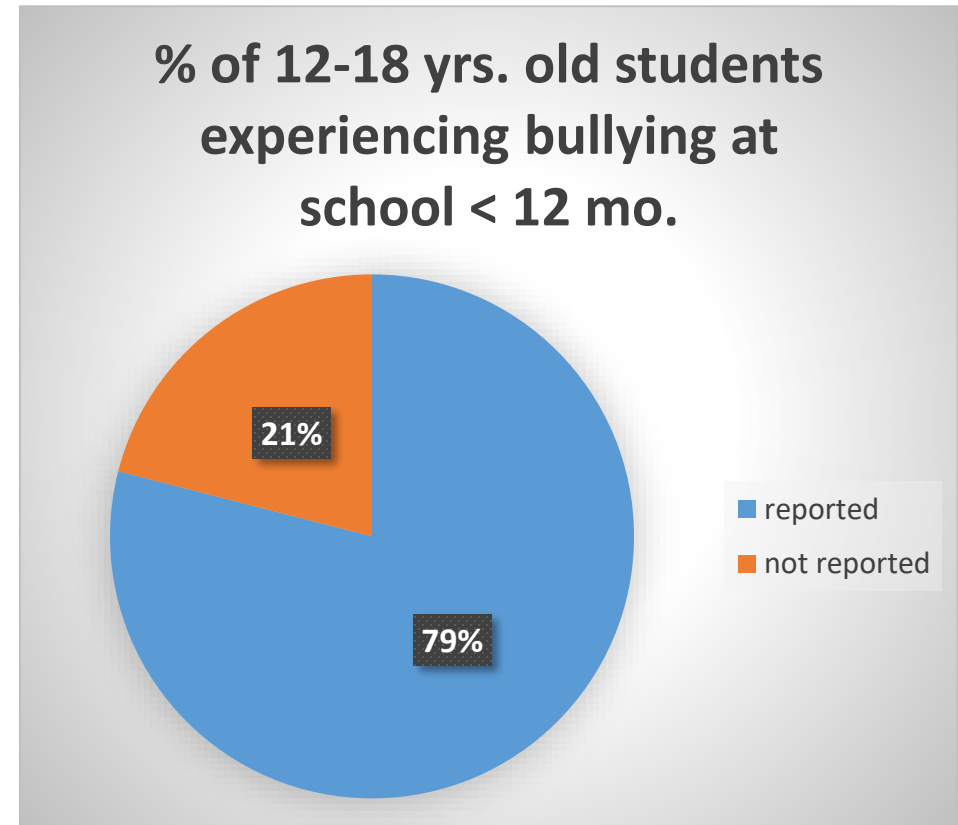
How are children and youth bullied?

- Forms of bullying at school
 - 14% made fun of, called names, or insulted
 - 13% subject of rumors
 - 6% pushed, shoved, tripped, spit on
 - 5% excluded from activities on purpose
 - 4% threatened with harm
 - 2% forced to do things they didn't want to do
 - 2% had property destroyed
- 7% had been cyberbullied anywhere

Source: U.S. Department of Education (2015)

Types of Bullying

- **VERBAL BULLYING:** Saying or writing mean things. Includes:
 - Teasing
 - Name calling
 - Inappropriate sexual comments
 - Taunting
 - Threatening to cause harm
- Social Bullying
- Physical Bullying



Types of Bullying

- **SOCIAL BULLYING:** Sometimes referred to as *relational bullying*, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Includes:
 - Excluding someone from a group on purpose
 - Telling other children not to be friends with someone
 - Spreading rumors about someone
 - Embarrassing someone in public
- Physical Bullying
- Verbal Bullying



Types of Bullying

PHYSICAL BULLYING: involves hurting someone or possessions. Includes:

- Hitting, kicking, pinching
 - Spitting
 - Tripping, Pushing
 - Taking or breaking someone's things
 - Making mean or rude hand gestures
-
- Verbal Bullying
 - Social Bullying



Myths about bullying that harm

1. You'll know when a youth is being bullied
2. Bullying always includes physical aggression
3. The bullying is always bigger
4. There's one clear way to solve the problem
5. Bullies comes from the top of the social pecking order
6. Parental attitudes have no effect on bullying

Myths about bullying that harm

- 7. If your youth is a victim, call the bully's parents
- 8. Boys are more likely to be bullied
- 9. Parents are always their kids best defender
- 10. When bullies use homophobic taunts, they're always referring to the victim's sexual orientation
- 11. Schools bear no clear responsibility for bullying
- 12. Cyberbullying is the gateway to other bullying

Fight, Flight, Freeze responses to stress

Responses based on **perceived intensity** of the threat and the ability to overcome it.

Acknowledge our shared experiences.



What is Cyberbullying?

- Takes place over digital devices (e.g., cell phones, computer, tablets)
- Through text, SMS, and apps via instant messaging
- Online in social media, forums, gaming (virtual spaces)
- Can be viewed, joined, shared
- Includes sharing personal, private information about someone else that causes embarrassment or humiliation
- Can be unlawful or otherwise criminal
- Most common sources include Social media, SMS/texts, Instant Messaging (apps, social media, email provider services, etc.), email

Special Concerns for Cyberbullying

Curated content creates a kind of **permanent** record of views, activities, behavior = online reputation.

Unique concerns over real-time bullying:

1. **Persistent:** immediate & continuous (24/7), difficult to escape
2. **Permanent:** most info is shared permanently and public, if not reported and removed; negative reputation impacts other areas of life
3. **Hard to Notice:** adults may not see/hear it, so it is harder to recognize
4. **Anonymity:** victim left wondering “who”, causing distress
5. **Disinhibition:** anonymity leads to abuse not enabled face to face
6. **Punitive:** retribution of bully; fear of lost technology privileges

Cyberbullying tactics

- Repeatedly sending offensive, mean, insulting messages
- Distributing info that is embarrassing, derogatory or untrue, posted on webpage, sent via email, text, or instant messaging
- Outing by sharing secret information or tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information to be shared
- Threatening to hurt another, or telling them to kill themselves



Cyberbullying tactics

- Posting a mean or hurtful picture or video
- digitally altered image of another
- hacking into social media, other accounts

Creating a mean or hurtful webpage about someone

- Pretending to be someone else online **IN ORDER TO** solicit/post personal (or false information) about someone else
- Posting mean or hateful names, comments, content about any race, religion, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics online



Viral Tactics: examples

- Nude photo sharing
- Lies and false accusations
- False identity profile
- Bullied for being LGBTQ+
- Jealousy/relationship bullying
- Bullied for being economically disadvantaged
- Encouraging self-harm or suicide

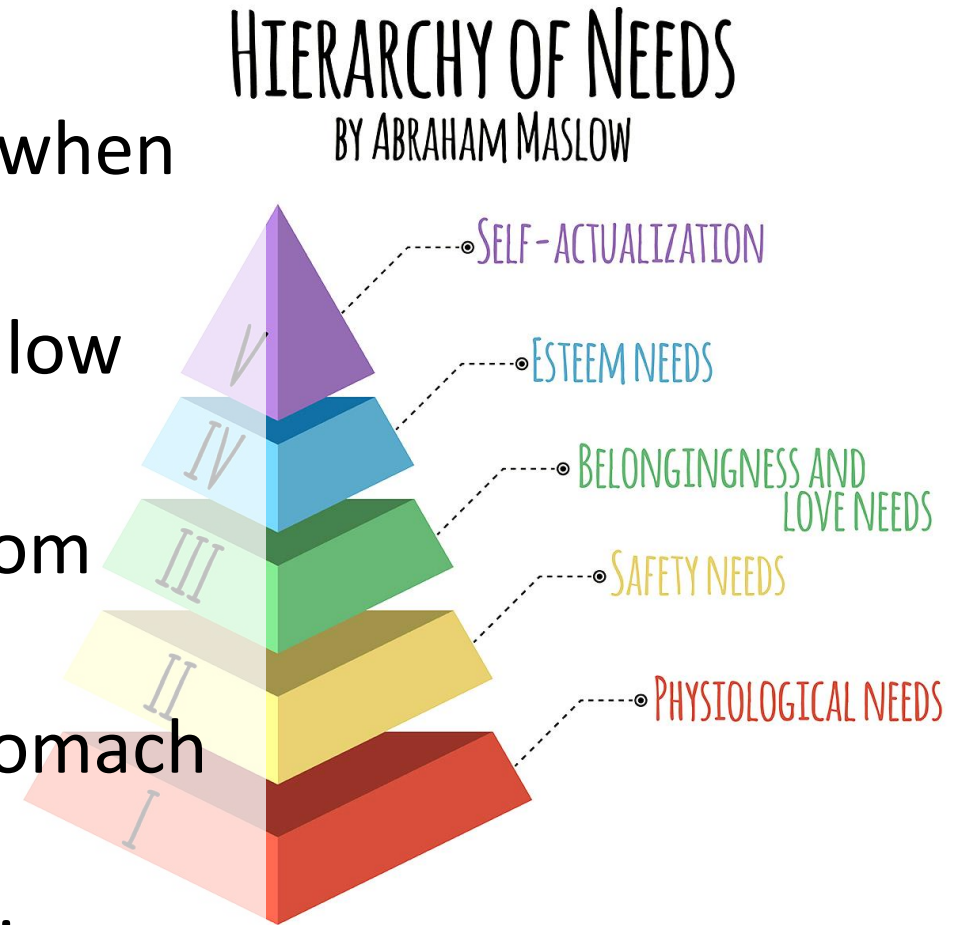


Warning signs of bullying

- Torn, damaged, missing pieces of clothing, books, belongings
- Afraid to go to school, walking to/from school, riding school bus
- Takes illogical route when walking to or from school
- Avoids taking part in organized activities (such as clubs, sports) with peers
- Few, if any, friends with whom the youth spends time
- Lost interest in school work, or student suddenly begins to do poorly in school

Warning signs of bullying

- Appears sad, moody, teary, depressed when they come home
- Appears to be anxious and suffer from low self-esteem
- Unexplained cuts, bruises, scratches from fighting
- Complains frequently of headaches, stomach aches, other symptoms without cause
- Frequent bad dreams, or trouble sleeping
- Loss of appetite



(www.violencepreventionworks.org, 2016)

Warning signs of a youth who bullies

- Have a positive attitude toward violence, the use of violent means
- Strong need to dominate, subdue others, and get their way
- Be impulsive, aggressive, or easily angered
- Lack empathy toward students who are bullied
- Have defiance, aggression toward adults including teachers, parents
- Involved in anti-social or rule breaking behaviors
- Greater physical strength than that of others, in general, and the students they bully (esp. true for boys)
- More likely to report owning a gun for risky reasons, such as to gain respect or to frighten others

www.violencepreventionworks.org, 2016)

Likelihood of Reporting

Why are children and youth reluctant to report being bullied?

- Negative messages about “tattling” and “snitching”
- Concern about retaliation
- Gender stereotypes
- Lack of confidence in adults’ actions

What to do if you're being bullied

Look directly, tell them to STOP in a calm clear voice

Try to laugh it off, if joking comes easy

If speaking up is too hard or unsafe walk away & stay away

Find an adult to stop the bullying on the spot

Stay safe in the future:

- Talk to an adult you trust; don't keep your feelings inside; telling can help you feel less alone
- They can help plan to stop the bullying, and deal with the impact with **trauma-informed** care
- Stay away from places **WHERE** bullying happens during times **WHEN** it happens
- Stay near adults and other kids; most bullying happens when adults aren't around

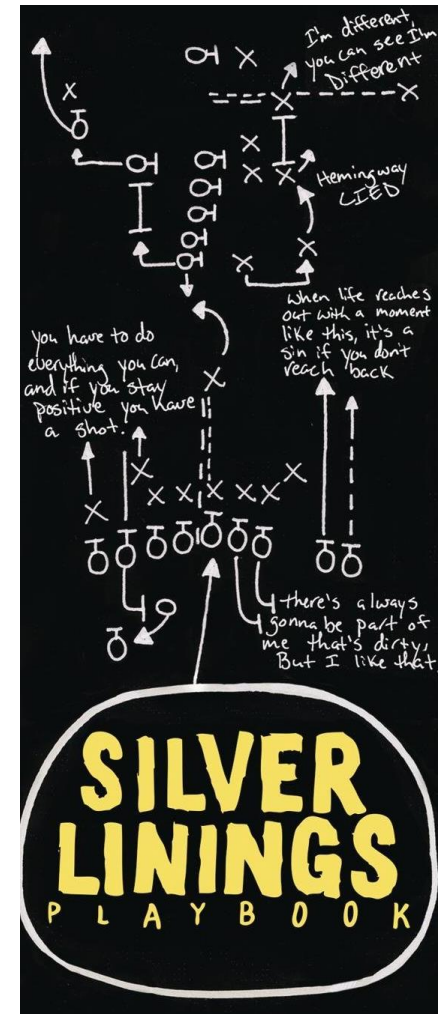
Allowing bullying to continue:

- Permeates schools as in families-by being overlooked.
- Adults may believe they are motivating or disciplining youth by ostracizing or humiliating a them in front of others.
- Adults overlook bullying when they:
 - Condone the mistreatment of younger students, relatives, friends
 - Allow derogatory names or labels for groups of students
 - Overlook casual cruelty, sexual harassment, hate or biased behavior
 - Allow hazing activities in student clubs or sports programs
 - Endorse street rules: “snitches get stitches”

(CA Dept. of Education, 2017)

Adults: Stopping bullying on the spot

- Intervene immediately.
- Its ok to get another adult for help. Plan together.
- Separate the kids involved.
- Make sure everyone is safe.
- Meet immediate medical, mental health needs.
- Stay calm, reassure the kids involved, incl. bystanders.
- Model respectful behavior during intervention.



Get Police and/or medical attention immediately if:

- There is sexual abuse.
- A weapon is involved.
- There is serious bodily harm.
- There are threats of serious physical injury.
- Anyone is accused of an illegal act, such as robbery or extortion (using force to get money, property, or services).
- There are threats of hate-motivated violence, such as racism or homophobia.



Explain to the child who was bullied that:

- they are not at fault. The behavior can be owned by the bully, alone.
- everyone is entitled to respect, and no one deserves to be bullied.
- they can be assertive without striking out, which may reduce chances the bully will continue to receive desired impact of bullying.

Work with school staff to support the victim, when appropriate.

- Keep accurate records of incidents, and be specific about the child's experience when discussing the resolution of the problem.
- School meetings may lead to practical advice that assists all parties.

(California Department of Education, 2003)

Avoid the common mistakes:

- Don't ignore it.
- Don't immediately try to sort out the facts.
- Don't think youth can “work it out” without alone.
- Don't force other youth to say publicly what they saw.
- Don't question the youth involved in front of others.
- Don't talk to the youth involved together, only separately.
- Don't make youth apologize or mend relations on the spot.

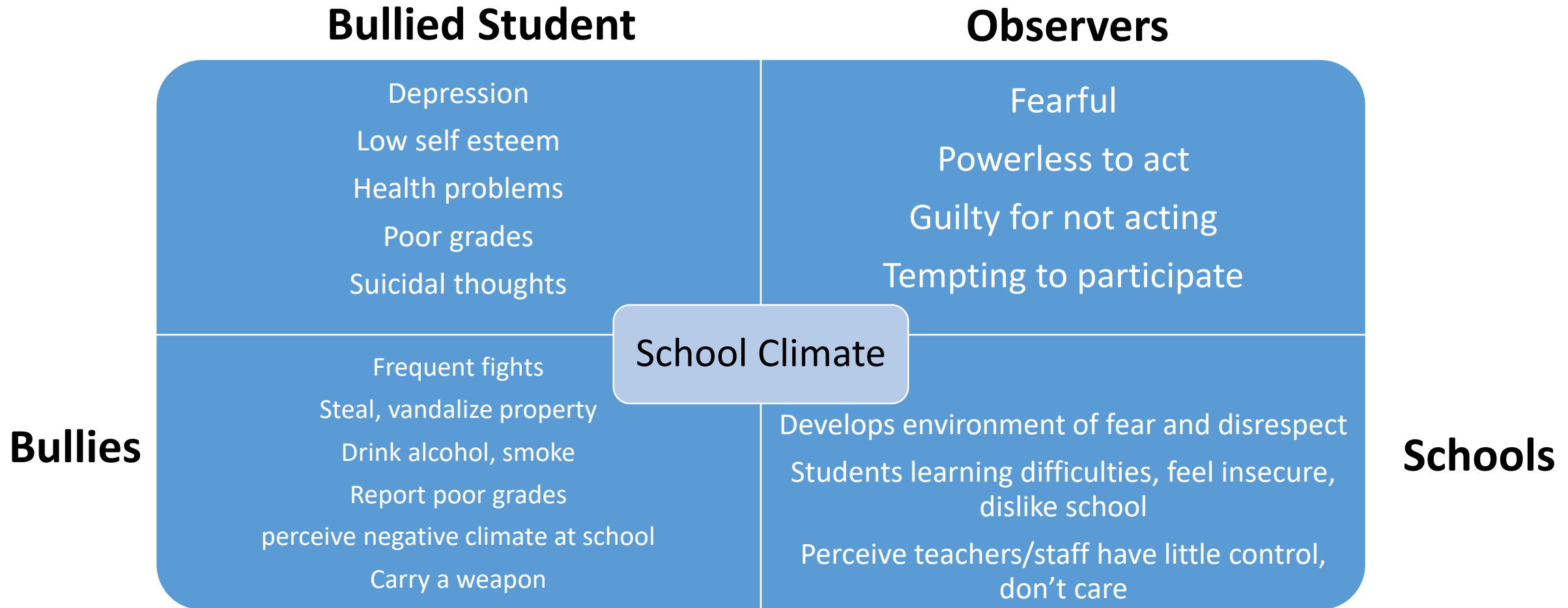


The bigger picture:



What are functions of bullying behavior?
A - B - Consequence(s)???

Impacts of bullying on school community climate



Avoid creating an anti-social environment:

- A Punitive environment
- A lack of positive consequences and reinforcement
- Inconsistencies in the rules and the consequences for breaking them
- A lack of awareness of (or responsiveness to) individual differences, including those related to race/ethnicity, and a failure to recognize a youth's effort or accomplishments
- Adult personality, demeanor, conduct may project a negative tone

Focus on school climate

How campus community experiences the school, including:

- interpersonal relationships, teacher/staff practices, organizational arrangements
- factors that create learning conditions, support physical/ emotional safety, connections, support, and engagement

Visualize what it looks like for schools to be trauma informed.

Focus on school climate

Reflects administrative attention to:

- Fostering social and physical safety
- Providing support enabling students and staff to realize high behavioral and academic standards
- Encouraging development of respectful, trusting, caring relationships throughout the school community

(U.S. D.O.E. Office of Safe & Healthy Schools, 2016).

Focus on school climate

Students in positive learning environments that are safe, supportive, and engaging are:

- more likely to improve academically
- participate more in class
- develop skills to help them in school and life
- *Less likely to behave disruptively*

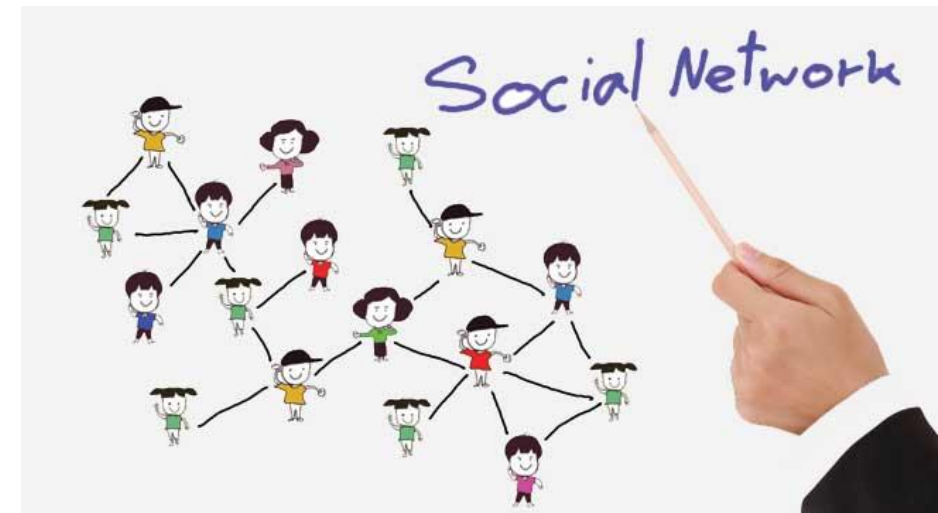
Teachers are impacted in stress and burnout.

School climate social disparities

- African American Students 3xs more likely than white peers to be expelled or suspended
- African American and Latino students make up 40% of students, but 50% of students referred to Law Enforcement or school-related arrests
- IDEA students represent 12% of students, yet 25% of students referred to law enforcement or subject of school related arrests
- Racial disparities start early: Representing 18% of preschool enrollment, 48% of black preschoolers suspended twice or more

School considerations

- Assess bullying at the school, including “hotspots”
- Garner staff and parent collaboration for bullying prevention
- Form a group(s) to coordinate anti-bullying/prevention activities
- **Advocate for staff training**
- Establish and enforce school rules and policies
- Increase adult supervision in “hotspots”
- Intervene consistently and appropriately
- Focus some class time on bullying interventions



School-based policies that decrease bullying

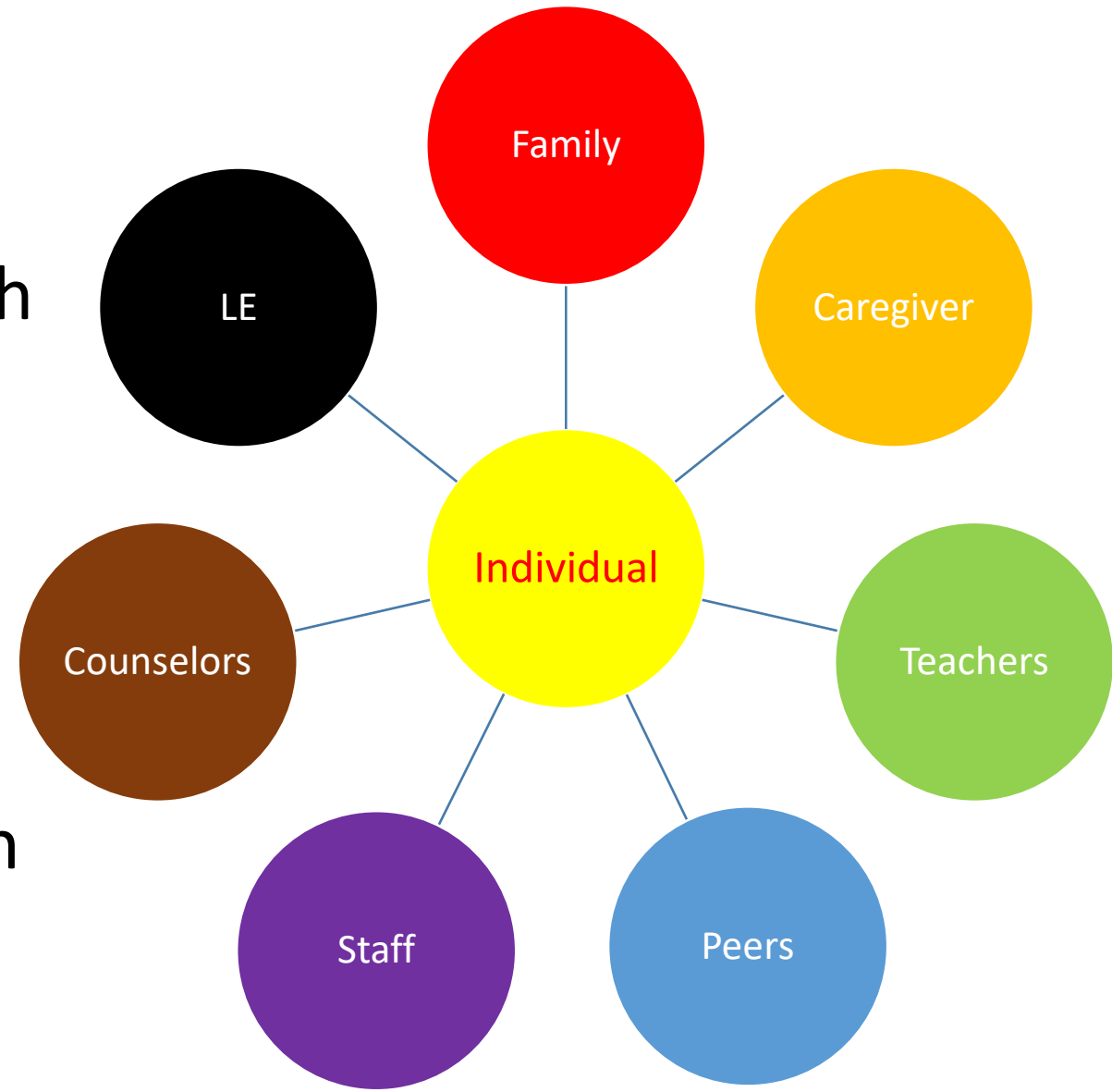
- Disciplinary methods (**age group effects**)
- The duration (days) of the program for children and teachers
- Intensity (hours) of the program for children and teachers
- Parent trainings & meetings
- Playground supervision

Peer engagement can increase victimization.

Studies indicate bullied children often don't communicate their problems to anyone, and parents and teachers don't talk to bullies about their conduct.

6 types of interventions

- Disciplinary (punitive) approach
- **Strengthening the victim**
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Support Group Method
- The Method of Shared Concern



Missteps for school interventions

1. Zero tolerance policies – 1 in 5 students admitted to bullying
2. Conflict Resolution & Peer Mediation
 - Bullying is not a conflict
 - it is victimization much like DV and Child Abuse
 - Sends wrong message that both parties are “partly” to blame
3. Group treatment for children who bully
 - Reinforces aggressive, antisocial behaviors via role modeling

The Victim is NEVER to blame.

stopbullying.gov

Reporting Cyberbullying

Steps to take immediately:

- Don't respond to and don't forward cyberbullying messages
- Keep evidence. Save/print screenshots, emails, texts.
- Record dates, times, descriptions of instances when cyberbullying has occurred.
- Use this evidence to report to internet/cell phone service providers, or law enforcement when appropriate.
- Block the person who is cyberbullying, if safe.

Reporting Cyberbullying

- Often bullying violates terms of services established by social media sites and Internet service providers.
- Review terms/conditions or rights & responsibilities sections.
- Visit social media safety centers to learn how to block users and change settings to control who can contact you.
- Report cyberbullying to the social media site so they can take action.
- Schools may require to address cyberbullying in their anti-bullying policy, covering off-campus behavior that creates hostile school climates.

Reporting Cyberbullying

When cyberbullying involves certain activities, it is considered a crime.

Report to law enforcement:

- Threats of violence
- Child pornography or sending sexually explicit messages/photos
 - Youth can be both victims and perpetrators of sexting violations
 - Be forthright about behavior between youth (under 18).
- Taking a photo/video of someone when they would expect privacy
- Stalking or hate crimes

Law Enforcement will:

- Meet you where you are at
- Take the personal information from the survivor
- Take the information about what took place
- Take any evidence the survivor has to help illustrate to the officer and later, the District Attorney, what took place



Legal Considerations: Arrest vs Prosecution

Arrest:

- **Probable cause:** Probable cause for arrest exists when facts and circumstances within the police officer's knowledge would lead a reasonable person to believe that the suspect has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a crime.

Prosecution:

- **Proof beyond a reasonable doubt:** the facts presented by the prosecution must be proven to the jury to the extent that there could be no “reasonable doubt” in the mind of a “reasonable person” that the defendant is guilty.

Sexting

- If the suspect is over 18 – This is a crime of sending harmful material to a minor.
- A person who possesses or otherwise controls material that depicts a person under 18 years of age engaging in or simulating sexual conduct has committed a felony.
- California also makes it a crime for a person to send, distribute, exhibit or offer to send, distribute, or exhibit any harmful matter to a minor with the intent to both sexually gratify or appeal to the person or minor *and* seduce or arouse the minor.
- will investigate the allegations to the fullest.

If the survivor is under 18, the law is a little convoluted.

- The survivor can be both a victim and a suspect if the survivor is taking the pictures.
- It is a crime to knowingly send or bring into the state (or cause to be sent or brought into the state) material showing a minor engaged in or simulating sexual conduct, when the intent is to distribute, exhibit, or exchange the material.
- The same statute also prohibits a person from possessing, preparing, publishing, producing, developing, duplicating, or printing any obscene matter showing a person under 18 engaging in sexual conduct.
- If the suspect is over 18, we will investigate the allegations to the fullest.
- If the survivor and the suspect are under the age of 18, the case will be investigated to the fullest and likely both parties will be told to stop and the dangers will be explained to them.

Precautions for internet & social media

- Be very careful about who you give any information about yourself. The person on the other end of the computer may not be who you think they are.
- Be very careful about who you meet in the real world after meeting them online. The person you are meeting may not be who you think they are.

THE SURVIVOR IS NEVER TO BLAME

Prevention from Cyberbullying (see handout)

- Think before your post. Someone may forward it. Be kind, in return. Don't share anything that could hurt or embarrass others.
- Keep your password a secret from other kids; even kids that seem like friends could give it away or use it in ways you don't want.
- Think about who sees your posts. Privacy settings give you control.
- Keep parents in the loop. Tell them what you're doing online and who you're doing it with. Let them friend or follow you.
- Talk to an adult you trust about any messages you get or things you see online that make you scared or sad. If it's cyberbullying, report it.
- Listen to what they say is ok, and what is not ok to do. They care about you and want you to be safe.

Prevention from Cyberbullying (cont.)

- Install antivirus software, keep it updated. Use your firewall.
- Take advantage of free parental controls, spam blockers.
- (Elementary age) bookmark appropriate sites for your child to visit, reach an agreement these are the only sites they can visit.
- Check in about “new sites” or use a kid friendly search engine.
- Review browser history, chat sessions, comments posted on SNS.
- Add Monitoring software pre-teen and teens.
- Respect age restrictions of Social media, to establish boundaries.
- Google your youth’s name, screen name, phone number, address regularly. Teach about online reputation/footprint for the future.

www.violencepreventionworks.org, 2016)

General Youth Safety Strategies (cont.)

- Discuss **the Golden Rule** as it applies to cyberspace, how rumors are easily started and gossip is spread virtually.
- Teach youth to be a rumor blocker, not rumor starter.
- Discuss what info should be shared, and what is “private.”
- Online friends should be “real world” friends.
- Limit your child’s time to one hour or less a day online.
- Teach youth how to appropriately communicate online.
- Teach youth not to react immediately to what they see online.

Resources & Recovery from bullying

- Interpersonal strategies
- Toward transformative justice
- Self care for you, self care for youth
- Family Advocacy & Youth Engagement
- Coalition for Family Harmony's Crisis intervention & services
 - SART Program for sexual assault and cybercrimes

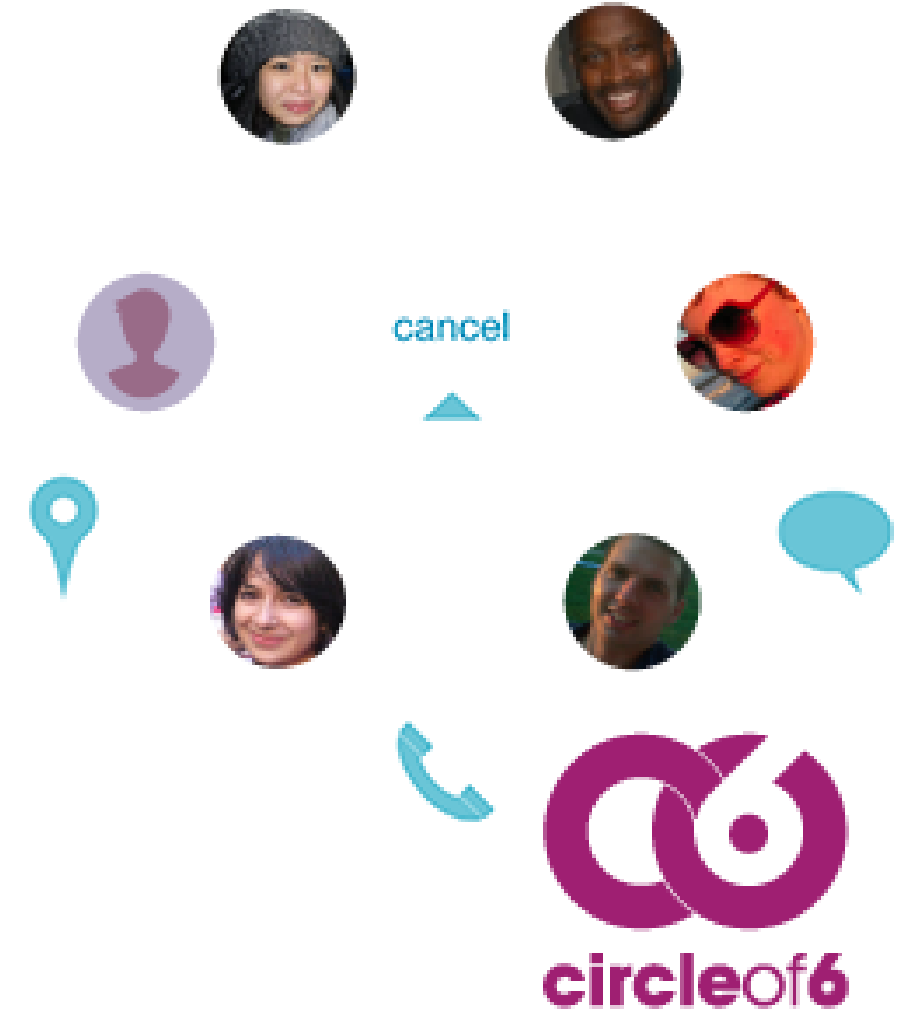
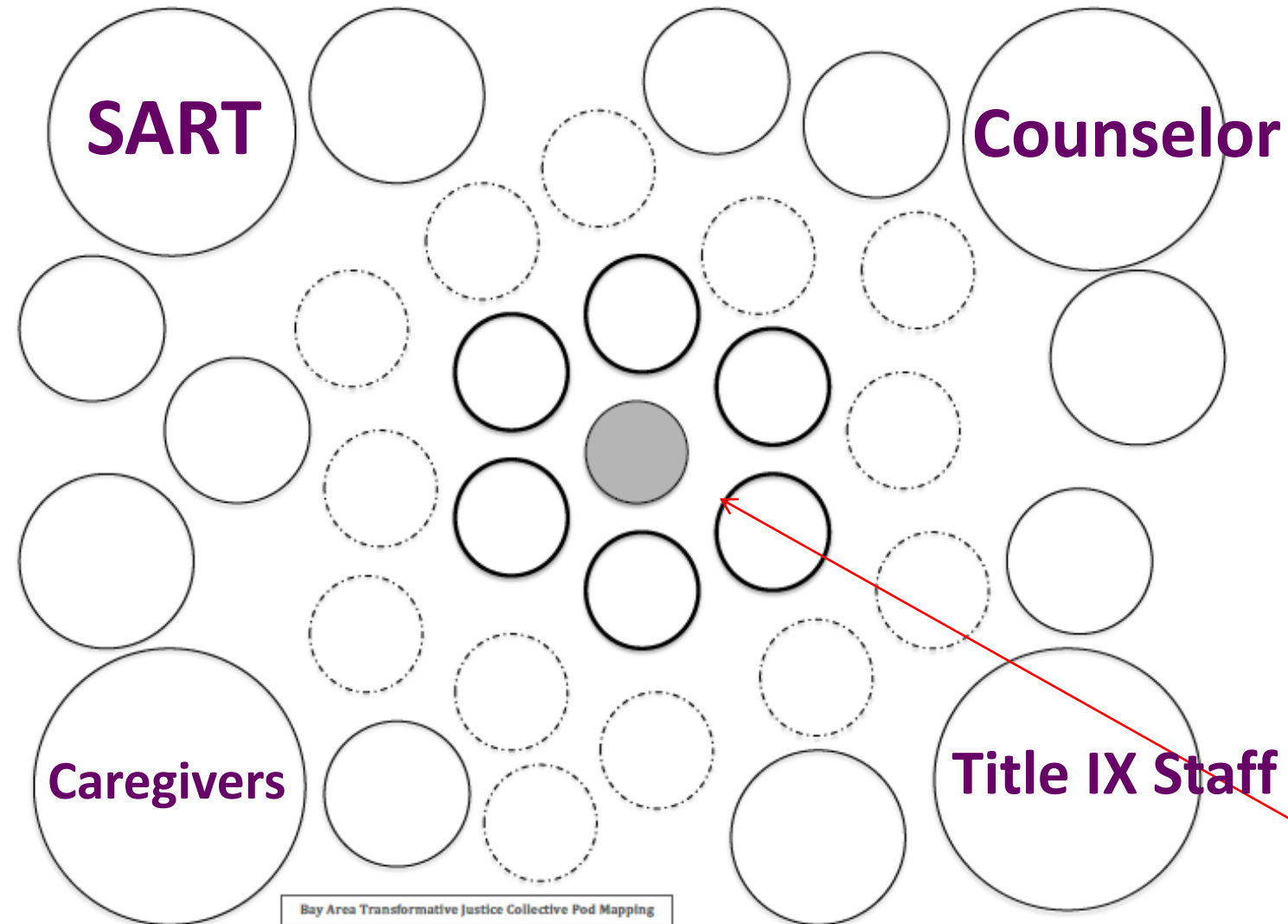
Interpersonal strategies:

- acknowledge and establish trust
- validate experiences-START BY BELIEVING
- Self-determination:

Survivors are the experts of their own lives

- Recognize negative experiences in systems
- Be understanding if young person encounters bias
- Respect choices if they opt out of services due to perceived bias... explore options
- Facilitate social connections... **any teens?**

social (network) support:



Survivor

Toward Transformative Justice Communities

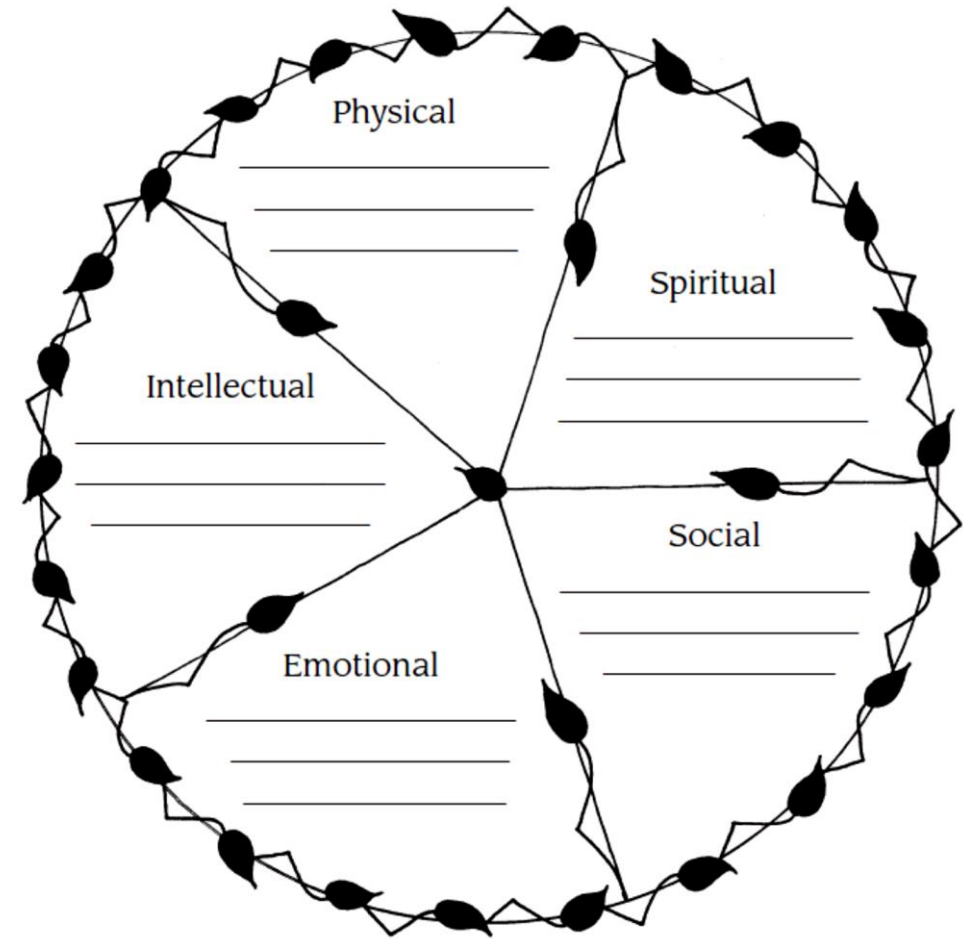
“Pods” – a type of relationship within transformative justice

- people who turn out for each other in support around violent, harmful, and abusive experiences
 - **Survivors**
 - **Bystanders** (witnessing harm)
 - **People who have harmed** (taking accountability)
- Support with on-going safety, accountability, transformation of behavior(s), individual and/or collective healing and resilience

Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective

Self Care for teens:

- Educate teens about the importance of self care in each of the domains.
- In each domain, help list the self care activities in which youth engage
- Activities cover multiple domains
- Role model self-care activities, try new activities to overcome apprehension, add to self-care repertoire



Teach youth to self-assess self-care

Reframe negative attitudes toward self care activities

Allow for flexibility with time, initiations, replacement behaviors

Behaviors that help (Ryan, 2009)

- Talk with your child, foster youth about LGBTQ+ identity
- Express affection when youth tells you, or when you learn identity
- Support your child's LGBTQ+ identity even though you feel discomfort
- Advocate for youth when they are mistreated due to identity
- Require that other family members respect LGBTQ+ youth
- Bring youth to LGBTQ+ organizations, events
- Talk with clergy, and help faith community support LGBTQ+ people
- Connect your child w/ role models to show them options for future
- Welcome your child's LGBTQ+ friends, partners to your home
- Support their gender expression
- Believe your child can have a happy future as an LGBTQ+ adult

Youth Believe They Can Be A Happy LGBT Adult

Level of Family Acceptance

EXTREMELY accepting



92%

VERY accepting



77%

A LITTLE accepting



59%

NOT AT ALL accepting



35%

Risk for HIV Infection



LOW rejection

MODERATE rejection

HIGH rejection

Level of Family Rejection

Ryan, Family Acceptance Project, 2009

Youth Want to Become a Parent

Level of Family Acceptance

EXTREMELY accepting



69%

VERY accepting



50%

A LITTLE accepting



35%

NOT AT ALL accepting



10%

Ryan, Family Acceptance Project, 2009

How parents & caregivers can lead advocacy:

*The Designated Child Abuse Prevention Council
Family Violence Prevention Task Force
General Meetings, Monthly 1st Wednesday
10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.
at Ventura County Community Foundation Bldg.
4001 Mission Oaks Blvd
Camarillo, CA 93012



partnership *for Safe Families & Communities of Ventura County*

Youth engagement & Development taskforce



#StaySafe: A youth panel discussion
Thursday, May 25th, 2017
4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
217 N. 10th street
Santa Paula, CA 93060



Coalition for Family Harmony

Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault programs for over 40 years

- Mental health services to family, partner, or sexual violence survivors
- Free counseling to LGBTQ+ individuals, supportive caregivers
- Domestic violence emergency shelter/transitional housing programs
- Teen dating violence workshops & Teen Anger Management Program
- Support groups incl. LGBTQ+ youth and transgender adults/families
- DV Legal services, Safe at Home program
- Rape Crisis Program Advocacy
- Probation Services, incl. youth probation

Walk in crisis counseling: M-F, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
24/7 bilingual crisis hotline (800) 300-2181



Coalition for Family Harmony
Building Stronger Families

Sexual Assault Response Team Program

- The Coalition has the only Rape Crisis Center in Ventura County.
 - East and West County
 - On-call 24/7
- We work with victims of Sexual Assault to provide crisis counseling, accompaniments and advocacy when needed
- Part of SART
- We are one of the only CRI programs in the state that uses MFT Interns as Advocates for continuity of care
- Assist Romance scam & Cyber scam victims

Walk-in crisis counseling: M-F, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
24/7 bilingual crisis hotline (800) 300-2181



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Resources and Research

- www.stopbullying.gov
- <https://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/twelve-bullying-myths/>
- <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/Quick-Guide>
- <https://ocrdata.ed.gov/>
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4699677/>
- <http://www.violencepreventionworks.org>
- <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/bullyfaq.asp>
 - California Department of Education (2003). Bullying at School.
- <https://www.glsen.org/press/2011-national-school-climate-survey>