

The Dignity for All Students Act Roundtable Discussion

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PRIVATE PRACTICE**

We Build Partnerships With Our PDS Schools

- 1.) SUNY Buffalo State offers training sessions to supplement in-service training for our K-12 partner schools. We focus on best evidence-based practices and explore current cases/trends nationally.
- 2.) K-12 partners ask for help on specific cases or with disturbing trends occurring in specific schools.
- 3.) K-12 partners ask for assistance in developing age-appropriate curriculum materials or in evaluating commercial products.

4.) Our college does not operate in a vacuum "of sterile research" without knowing what practices work for which audiences (practical and applied component).

5.) K-12 partners often request assistance with components for parents or staff training for bus monitors, cafeteria workers, etc.

Like many states, tougher anti-bullying legislation is being implemented:

On July 1, 2012, New York State implemented DASA-The Dignity for All Students Act to afford all students in public schools an environment free of discrimination/harassment with respect to:

- Race
- Color
- National origin

ethnic group

religion/religious practices

disability

sexual orientation, (not federally recognized)

gender or sex

Provisions:

Whistleblower protection to "good-faith reporters"

Special protections for students with an IEP, Section 504 Accommodation Plan (i.e. orthopaedic disability or vision impairment, etc.), students in the referral process, and those that should have been referred (Child Find)

Schools must stop, not just investigate, bullying - can be liable.

Do not have to show harm, just "hostile environment"

DASA Amendment, 7/2013

- must have a trained, designated staff member dedicated to DASA
- training for teacher candidates, all applying for certification
- cyber bullying now included
- mandated reporting provision for teachers, staff, administrators
- less emphasis on where bullying occurred and more on the impact on schooling

Bullying (Olweus, 1978)

Intentional, usually repeated acts of verbal, physical, or written aggression by a peer (or group of peers) operating from a position of strength or power, with the goal of hurting the victim physically or damaging status and/or social reputation

Prevalence (likely a low estimate due to "social desirability" factors)

Via self-report:

25% of students have bullied others at least once

5-20% bully consistently

15-40% view self as a target of bullying

20-25% feel bullied regularly

20-25% have been cyberbullied

15% of those regularly bullied admit to missing school to avoid facing a bully

Peak for bullying-middle school-why?

Peak locations for bullying - online, school buses, playgrounds, lunchrooms, walk home/to school, hallways, back of classrooms, gym class

Bullying by Gender

Boys:

- Tend to bully both boys and girls
- Bully in more direct ways, often one on one
- Bully regarding sexual orientation, masculinity issues
- Overall, bully slightly more often than girls

Girls:

- more indirect, subtle, harder to detect
- bully often in groups, engaging in acts of exclusion
- tends to be toward girls of the same age, often related to dress or appearance
- cyberbully at a slightly higher rate than males
- recent exception: Lauren Bush, 17 and another 15-year-old girl tormented a 16-year-old autistic boy in Maryland with a knife until he fell into a frozen pond on 3/12/2014

Psychopathic bullies

- Often sadistic
- Rationalizes by, “He deserved it” or “He aggravated me”
- Lacks conscience

Bullies due to imitation /peer pressure or omission (lack of intervention)

- Often respond to R. Wiseman's techniques of bystander intervention
- Zimbardo-"The Lucifer Effect"

Cyberbullies

- Role of deindividuation
- Falsely believe records are untraceable

What Does the Research Say About...

Teaching the target to become less of a victim?

Peer mediated conflict resolution for disputes?

Character education (attempts to increase empathy)?

Discussing repercussions for bullying – legal, as well as punitive measures?

Zero-tolerance policies and the use of suspensions to address bullying?

Assemblies or one-day awareness programs?

What are some of the limitations of DASA?

How have each of the following cases influenced DASA training?



Interesting Cases with Strong Implications

1.) Karen Klein, bus monitor & 68-year-old widow, partly deaf (6/2012)- Four seventh graders bullied her on bus 784-Greece Athena Middle School, NY. 20 years a bus driver, three as a monitor. Her crying fueled their bullying. She did not press charges due to death threats against them; wanted a proper apology. \$703,833 raised by Toronto immigrant on a fund raising site. \$100,000 donated to anti-bullying foundation in Karen Klein's name
Implications of this case?





2.) Rebecca Sedwick -9/2013: 12 and 14-year-old girls bullied Rebecca, age 12. Bullies were charged with aggravated stalking; charges dropped. Polk County Florida Sheriff Grady Judd vs Jose Baez. Originally, felony charges. Electronic messages to kill herself, drink bleach and die. Jumped from abandoned tower to her death. Slit her wrists in 12/2012. 14-year-old bully-no remorse. Role of background for victim and victimizer? Implications?



3.) Phoebe Prince, age 15: Committed suicide by hanging, 1/14/2010, found by 12-year-old sister in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Born in England, moved from Ireland. Six teens (two males) charged with civil rights violations, statutory rape, harassment. Sentences were probation and community service. Aunt (once) and the mother (three times) reported the bullying to the school. Anne O'Brien, Phoebe's mother, settled with the town for \$225,000. Placed emphasis on "acts of omission" by the school. Exploration of victims as bullies themselves. Impact of this case?



4.) Tyler Clementi (2010): 18-year-old freshman at Rutgers, jumped to his death from the George Washington Bridge on 9/22/2010. His roommate recorded his homosexual encounters without his knowledge using a WebCam in their dorm room. The day before Tyler's suicide, the roommate's Twitter followers were encouraged to watch a second encounter between Tyler and the other male. The roommate and another individual were indicted for making the WebCam recordings, but not the suicide itself.

Outcome: housing policy changes, invasion of privacy charges.

Legal disposition: The bullies were charged with invasion of privacy, bias intimidation, tampering with evidence, witness tampering, etc. Roommate received 30 days in jail and was actually incarcerated for 20 days. They were placed on three years probation and mandated to attend counseling. A \$10,000 fine was imposed. An appeal is pending

Issues: “his guest did not commit suicide...”,
“Last straw argument”..



6.) Jamey Rodemeyer (9/18/2011): Heim Middle School, Williamsville North H.S., New York.

Openly bisexual victim of bullying. Other individuals post online comments such as, "I would not care if you died.

No one would. So just do it."

Jamey made "It Gets Better" videos. Sent a goodbye tweet to Lady Gaga.

Outcome: Nine-week investigation of his computer documented many incidents of harassment. No charges filed due to statute of limitations. The victim's sister was bullied at a dance after her brother's death by the same group. This resulted in stronger New York State cyberbullying laws.

Implications?



Valentine Road is used to discuss how to create a classroom climate of respect, LGBTQ bullying, etc.



Mikey Gonzalez' case from Dunkirk, NY is used to explore targeting developmentally disabled individuals for bullying and the effectiveness of community responses.

Trends:

1. Rarely criminal charges for bullying, despite pressure on schools
2. Charges surrounding the suicides have increased, but few harsh punishments have been enacted.
3. Victimizers creating the best evidence used against them/videos
4. Revenge porn/breakup bullying and sexting related bullying on the rise

5. Young girls given alcohol, date rape drugs, etc.
Molested, tapes distributed

6. Parents taking matters into their own hands

7. "Parental responsibility legislation" being explored
in many states



Conclusions

Bullies are a diverse group. No one anti-bullying program will target all types.

Creating a "classroom of respect" requires a multi-tiered approach.

Increase anonymous reporting avenues.

Increase adult presence in high probability for bullying places.

Create a parental component to accompany efforts directed at students.