

Bullying  
is  
*Child Abuse*  
by *Children*

# 4 POINTS

1. Bullying **affects MILLIONS** of children annually
2. Current practices **TEACH** children that bullying is **OK**
3. To change this we must **CHANGE OUR THINKING**
4. Bullying is **CHILD ABUSE** by **CHILDREN**

# 1. Affects **MILLIONS** of children

- **Starts in PRE-SCHOOL**
  - singled out as “different”
  - not being “chosen”
- **1 of 3 children surveyed** reported being bullied in the previous year
- **NEA study:**
  - **>160,000 stay home** from school out of fear
  - those who go to school: **minds are pre-occupied**
    - fearful of halls, cafeterias, restrooms, buses

**Does this help explain achievement deficits???**

# Lifelong Consequences

of being Bullied → DEPRESSION

## Depression FACTS

1. Is **NOT** “sadness”
2. The “**stress**” response [fight or flight] is **STUCK** in the “**ON**” position but the person can neither “fight” nor “flee”
3. Stems from feelings of **HOPELESSNESS** and **HELPLESSNESS**
4. Leaves sufferer with **crippling sense of POWERLESSNESS**
5. **Permanently damages brain nerve cells**, making managing mood difficult
6. Is leading cause of disability in the **WORLD** [W.H.O.]
7. Is as serious an illness as any physical illness
8. Is “**contagious**” – affecting all those close to sufferer

# Depression Consequences

- **As Children**

- Avoidance of school and/or Poor performance
- **Rage → Violence = Suicide or  
Homicide = School Shootings**

- **As Adults**

- **Road Rage → Violence**
- **Homicide = School or Workplace Shootings**
- **Lower earnings**

	<u>Healthy</u>	<u>Depressed</u>	<u>Difference</u>
<b>Men</b>	<b>\$55,000</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>- 49%</b>
<b>Women</b>	<b>\$28,000</b>	<b>\$17,000</b>	<b>- 39%</b>

In a 2003 study, mentally ill [e.g., depressed] earned  
**\$193 BILLION LESS** than healthy individuals

2. Current practices  
**TEACH** children  
that bullying is **OK**

We **LEARN** from the **OUTCOMES** of behavior

<u>OUTCOME</u>	<u>BEHAVIOR</u>
<b>+</b> <b>REWARD</b>	<b>→</b> <b>← REPEAT</b>
<b>-</b> <b>PUNISHMENT</b>	<b>→</b> <b>← REPRESS</b>

No **NEGATIVE** outcome

= **POSITIVE** experience

= **REWARD**

= **REPETITION** of behavior



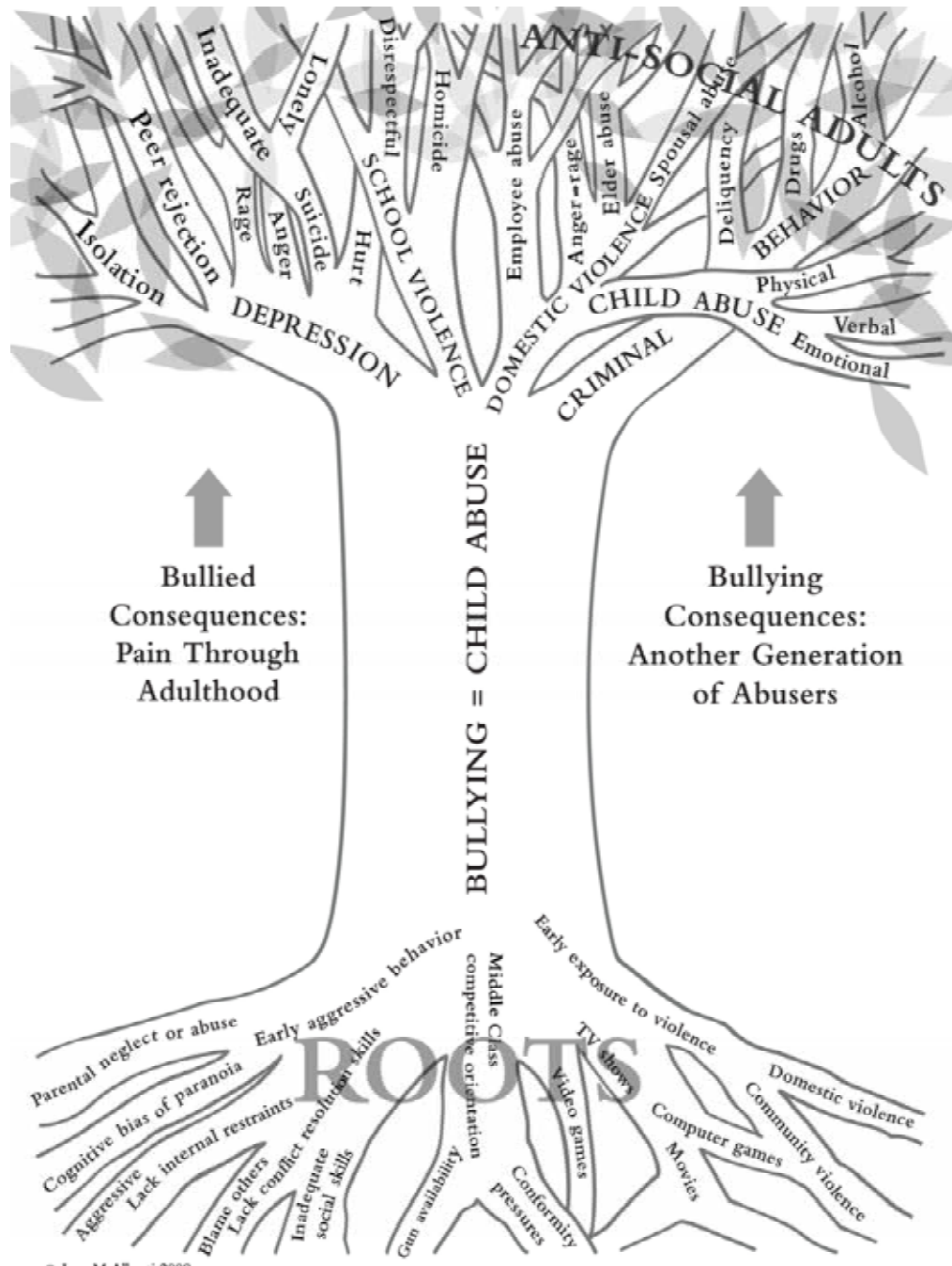
Children  
*LEARN*

what they

*LIVE*

Then they *LIVE* what they

*LEARNED*



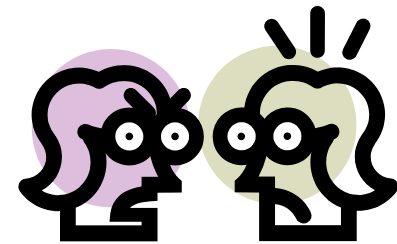
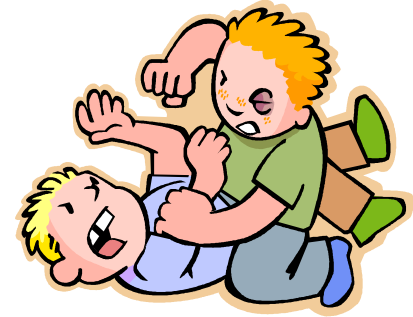
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3. To change this we must  
**CHANGE OUR**  
***THINKING***

# Current Thinking about Bullying

“They are ONLY children”

- “Boys will be boys.”
- “It’s ‘natural’ for boys to be aggressive.”
- “It’s a passing phase.”
- “It’s a ‘given’ of childhood.”
- “Girls are verbally aggressive”
- “It’s just girls being ‘mean’.”



“As long as there have been schools [or societies], there have been bullies.”

# Current Thinking about the Solution

“They have to be able to

- Defend themselves”
- Stand up for themselves”
- Fight back”
- Not be pushed around by anyone”

“If they can't, they deserve what they get.”

# Things have **CHANGED**

It **used** to be, primarily,

- 1-to-1
- boys – “alpha male” seeking dominance
- physical

It is **NOW**

- **girls** as well as boys – **alpha female**
- **emotional** [cyber-bullying] as well as physical
- **2- or 3- or more-to-1** [a child can't handle alone]
- **increasing**

# **MENTAL ILLNESS**

**is doing the  
*SAME THING*  
over and over  
but  
*EXPECTING the OUTCOME*  
to be  
*DIFFERENT***

# MENTAL HEALTH

- Define the OUTCOME you want
- Generate different "INPUTS" that you think might produce that outcome
- Select ONE new INPUT to experiment with
- Design the EXPERIMENT
- Implement the EXPERIMENT
- Evaluate the EXPERIMENT



# SUGGESTED EXPERIMENT #1

**CHANGE** the **LANGUAGE**  
used to refer to the  
problem

to **CHANGE** people's  
**UNDERSTANDING**  
of the problem

# It starts with VOCABULARY Changes

- Anti-abortion → Pro-life
- Pro-abortion → Pro-choice
- Domestic violence → Spousal-abuse  
child-abuse  
elder-abuse

VOCABULARY Changes →

ATTITUDE Changes →

BEHAVIOR Changes

# Physical BULLYING

- Pushing
- Shoving
- Hitting
- Kicking
- Punching
- Tripping
- Stealing personal things = **Robbery**
- Knocking things from hands
- Vandalizing things
- Teasing

= **Assault &/or  
Battery**

**Physical  
ABUSE**

# Emotional BULLYING

- Teasing
- Name calling
- Taunts
- Threats
- Ridicule
- Insults
- Spreading rumors
- Shunning
- Ostracism
- Saying mean things
  - **To child**
  - **About child**

= Emotional **ABUSE**

# SUGGESTED EXPERIMENT #2

Impose **NEGATIVE**  
consequences  
so the children **LEARN**  
that bullying abuse will  
**NOT** be tolerated

# SUGGESTED EXPERIMENT #3

## CHANGE the LAW

- MANDATE that
  - Teachers report any knowledge of bullying incidents to administration
  - Administrators investigate all incidents thoroughly and intervene or report to ...  
[devise appropriate “next steps”]

**Bullying ABUSE**

is

*Child Abuse*

by *Children*

**If we don't allow ABUSE by adults,  
why do we allow children to do it –  
thereby LEARNING that behavior?**



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