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 $\rightarrow$ Violence = Suicide or Homicide = School Shootings

- **As Adults**
  - Road Rage $\rightarrow$ Violence
  - Homicide = School or Workplace Shootings
  - Lower earnings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Healthy</th>
<th>Depressed</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
<td>$28,000</td>
<td>- 49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>$28,000</td>
<td>$17,000</td>
<td>- 39%</td>
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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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTCOME</th>
<th>BEHAVIOR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ REWARD</td>
<td>← REPEAT</td>
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<tr>
<td>- PUNISHMENT</td>
<td>← REPRESS</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
No NEGATIVE outcome

= POSITIVE experience

= REWARD

= REPEITION of behavior
Children **LEARN** what they **LIVE**

Then they **LIVE** what they **LEARNED**
BULLYING = CHILD ABUSE

Bullied
Consequences:
Pain Through
Adulthood

Bullying
Consequences:
Another Generation
of Abusers
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
- 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?
Bullying is Child Abuse by Children