The 3 R's To Bullying Prevention: Recognize, Respond, and Report

Lori Ernsperger, Ph.D., BCBA-D
www.stopbullyinginschools.net
drlori@cox.net

Learning Objectives
• Recognize the prevalence of bullying
• Recognize the stereotypes of bullies and victims
• Multi-tiered Interventions
• Respond to the victims
• Report bullying incidents

“Silence of Others”
• Melissa” pseudonym
• Bullying throughout school years
• Multiple reports by parents and Student
• Traumatized by the “Silence of Others”

1. Recognize:

1. Recognize: Bullying Statistics
• 32% of all middle school and high school students (US DOE)
  — One out of 10 dropouts due to bullying
• 60% of children with disabilities (Ability Path)
• 88% of students with ASD (MA State DOE)
• 71% of adults with ASD reported being bullied in schools as a child
Bullying Statistics

• One-third of students who have been bullied, harbor violent thoughts as a result
• May increase in carrying weapons to school
• Everyday, more than 160,000 students miss school because they are fearful of bullies
• Bullying Research
• Olweus (1993) Bullying At School

Walk A Mile in Their Shoes

“Because of difficulty with social interactions, intellectual impairments, communication deficits, and the inability to read social cues; individuals with special educational needs have higher rates of peer rejection and higher frequencies of verbal and physical attacks”

CDC Definition

• The CDC and ED (2014) released this definition of bullying:
  – Bullying is any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm. (page 7)

What is Bullying?

• Repeated interactions that causes harm; both physically and emotionally
• Power and control
• Aggressive and intimidating behavior meant to control others
• Physical, mental, verbal, cyber and social intimidation
• Can take many forms: hitting, kicking, shoving, teasing, name-calling, intimidation, social exclusion, gestures, and texting or cyber-bullying

What bullying is NOT.

• Bullying should not include typical childhood conflict between two equal peers.
  – Can not alleviate childhood conflict and disagreements but we must understand the difference.
• Social contexts and power imbalance are important factors.

Recognize: “Intention”

• I didn’t mean it” or “I’m sorry” is not an excuse
  – “Willful Act” is not part of the definition
  – Must be viewed by the victim not the intent of the bully
• Any behavior that is unwelcomed by either party is bullying (Office of Civil Rights)
• Unwelcome conduct is bullying and can rise to Disability Harassment when it is repeated.
Recognize: Labels

• The specific label used does not determine whether discrimination occurred (OCR, 2010)
  – The school district may call it “teasing” or “bullying” but it is Disability Harassment
  – The “R” word: r-word.org

Recognize: The Legal Ramifications

• Students with disabilities have a greater protection from bullying and disability harassment under three specific federal laws:
  1. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973,
  2. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990,

Recognize: The Legal Ramifications

• Bullying and/or disability harassment that adversely affects a student’s education may also be a denial of FAPE under IDEA as well as Section 504 and Title II (ADA).
• Hostile Environment which denies or limits an educational program
• Dear Colleague Letters:
  – OCR Letter to Schools: July, 25, 2000
  – OCR Letter to Schools: October 26, 2010
  – OSERS August 2013 with Enclosure of EBP

Recognize Signs for the Victims

• Bullying creates a climate of fear for the entire school
• Negative impact on learning
  – Disrupts the learning environment; school safety
  – Increases drop-out rates and decreases academic achievement
• Victims may become:
  – Depressed or anxious; PTSD
  – Low self-esteem
  – Deterioration of physical health: Experience head aches
  – Absence from school or dislike school
  – Think about suicide (US DOE)
  • “Bullycide”
  • 2010: Phoebe Prince

Recognize “The Bully”

“Students who bully” Not a forever label
• Bullying Stereotypes
  – The “Playground” bully
  – The “Mean Girl” bully
  – Movie stereotypes
• According to Psychologist Susan Swearer: “Any student can become a bully given the right environmental conditions”
• Journal of Youth and Adolescence: Survey of 1,900 students
  – The “coolest” students were also named the most aggressive and bullies

2. Respond

- Multifaceted Response
- Individual Level
  - Interventions
- Classroom Level
  - Interventions
- District & School-Wide Level
  - Interventions
  - Universally applied to all students and staff
  - Broad and comprehensive
Respond: District & School-Wide Interventions

- Policies, procedures, and specific interventions for all staff and students to follow
- Written comprehensive guidance manual with required action steps and standard operating procedures
- Posted on the school website
- Disseminated to all students and parents

Respond: School Safety Team

- Create a school safety team
  - Include all stakeholders
  - Include students and parents (LGBT, students with disabilities)
- Coordinate prevention repeated activities
- Sustainability beyond the first year
  - Create a yearly action plan with detailed school-wide activities
- SST analyzes the data and creates reports for staff and parents

Respond: School Safety Team

- Create a school safety team
  - Include all stakeholders
  - Include students and parents (LGBT, students with disabilities)
- Coordinate prevention repeated activities
- Sustainability beyond the first year
  - Create a yearly action plan with detailed school-wide activities
- SST analyzes the data and creates reports for staff and parents

Respond: Training

Professional Development

- ALL Staff training
  - What is bullying? Myths and Prevalence rates
  - Identify staff who are resistant to change
- Review legal ramifications, policies and procedures
  - Reporting requirements
- Consistent response to bullying by all staff
  - Immediate Response to all bullying and harassment
  - Ignoring or walking by as a student is bullied, is a form of approval
  - Standard operating procedures for adults to respond

Respond: Student Surveys

- ConductAnonymous Student Surveys
- Data based decision making
  - As part of the school on-going evaluation
  - Review Surveys - Free
  - NSCC

CDC- Free Surveys


Respond: Positive School Climate

- School wide promotion of a culture of acceptance and diversity
- Promote Awareness
Respond: School Wide

- Repeated activities embedded throughout the school year with follow-up activities
- Display anti-bullying posters designed by students
- Principal’s Pledge
- Drama Activities
- Special school assembly
- “Awareness Week”
- Student Council involvement

“The End of Bullying Begins with Me”

- A one-time assembly or one-day pledge drive does not constitute an effective comprehensive bullying prevention program.
- Multitiered-interventions, sustained over time with fidelity

Respond: “Hot Spots”

- Increase supervision
- Identify Hot Spots and assign staff

Cyberbullying

What makes Cyberbullying so dangerous... Is that anyone can practice it without confronting a victim. You don’t have to be strong or fast, simply equipped with a cell phone or computer and a willingness to terrorize” Student

- Cyberbullying Resource:
  - Cyberbullying: Bullying in the Digital Age
    (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012)

Respond: Classroom Level Interventions
Respond: Social Emotional Learning

- SEL activities are embedded into the core curriculum:
  - Statewide initiatives in IL, TX, AK, OH
- School professionals teach age-appropriate prosocial behaviors to all students which include:
  - emotional management,
  - problem solving skills, and
  - interpersonal relationship skills.
- Social emotional learning provides the interpersonal skills students need to perform the academic demands and intellectual tasks of the classroom
- Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
  - http://www.casel.org

Respond: Bystander Education

- Bystander Education Programs
  - 85% of bullying incidents occur with bystanders in the area
- Educate the bystanders
  - Dr. Michelle Borba: “Bystanders play a critical role in ending bullying”
    - Role-play
  - Bystanders should be encouraged to take an active role in stopping bullying attempts
    - Simple Concrete Action Steps
  - Build bonds of caring: www.ac4p.org

“Upstander”

- Options for students to respond include:
  - Directly standing up to the bully
  - Spent time with the victim
  - Told an Adult
  - Give advice
  - Helped get away
  - Youth Voice Project (Davis & Nixon, 2014)

Bystander Education

- Bibliotherapy or Literature
- “The Juice Box Bully”
- The Promise
  - I will speak up instead of acting as a bystander
  - I will model good behavior
  - I will accept others for their differences
  - A will talk to an adult if there is a problem
  - I PROMISE to stand up against bad behavior and put an end to bullying

Respond: Individual Level

- Tiered Response
- Individual Level Interventions
- Student with disabilities
- Classroom Level Interventions
- District & School-Wide Level Interventions

Respond: Teach The Victims

- Students with disabilities must have IEP goals and objectives that address the following (PLAAPP):
  - Improve social communication skills such as sharing, taking turns, or thinking before acting
  - Develop ability to carry on a 2-way conversation
  - Practice assertive body language
  - Increase self-advocacy skills so the child can learn to say “no”
  - Improve speech intelligibility so the child can interact with peers
  - Participate in a peer group or social activity to practice social skills
Respond: CALM Approach

- Michelle Borba
  - www.michelleborba.com
- Cool Down: Teach students to recognize stress signals and learn calming strategies. Deep breathing and positive value statements can be practiced with the student.
- Stress thermometer and 5-Point Scale

Respond: CALM

- Assert Yourself: Part of the social skills curriculum for students with ASD should include teaching assertive body language. Role playing and video modeling can assist in teaching non-verbal body-language that can deflect and detour bullying attempts.
- What does assertive body language look like? Clear and concrete
- Visual supports

Respond: CALM

- Look them in the Eye:
  Although eye contact can be difficult, school professionals should teach students with ASD how to face a bully and look them in the eye.

Respond: CALM

- Mean it: The speech and language therapist and school team should work directly with victims of bullying on specific language scripts. Students should learn non-confrontational scripts such as “stop that” “leave me alone” “get away from me” or “you are being a bully.”
- “101 Great Comeback Lines”
  - Bullystoppers.com

Respond: IEP Goals

- Modifications to the IEP:
  - Supervision
  - Leave class early
  - Staff training
- Teach in a variety of methods
  - Social Narratives
  - Role Play
  - Direct Instruction
  - Video Modeling

Respond: What NOT to Do!

- Do not tell a student to handle the harassment on his/her own, particularly when the student’s disability affects social skills, communication skills or cognitive issues. (OCR)
- Don’t punish the student who is being bullied
  - Lunch isolation- change of services
  - Do not move the victim
  - Avoid conflict resolution conferences:
  - Re-traumatization
  - Ignore it
  - Zero Tolerance- The Brooke Situation
3. Report

- Reporting Systems are inconsistent across the US
- What are your state or school district’s reporting policies?
- 49 States have passed laws that address bullying and Disability Harassment (MT)
- www.stopbullying.gov
  - Go to your state; review state laws

According to the American Educational Research Association (2013),

- “adults often report that school safety is mild or moderate, while students within the same school often report that is a severe problem” (pg. 37).
- Teachers underestimate
- www.aera.net

Anonymous Student Surveys

- Anonymous Student Surveys are critical for accountability
- Surveys are free and cost very little teacher time
  - Ask the students directly- primary data sources
  - School Climate surveys for parents are inadequate
  - California Healthy Kids Survey
  - Yes/No responses

We Manage What We Measure

- Show me the data
  - Accountability requires data
- The bullying report form is critical to addressing and measuring school improvement as “we manage what we measure.”
- Bullying Reports and Surveys
  - Data driven school improvement plans that focus on student safety and a positive school climate can only succeed when it is truly teacher/principal-owned, meaning teachers/principals must personally analyze their own classes’ (schools’) data- not national statistics or statewide prevalence rates

Report: Procedures

- Immediate report must be written/ formal grievance
- Maintain good documentation and follow through
  - “telling” the teacher or principal is not enough
  - Verbal reporting is insufficient
- Identify all incidents
- Prompt, thorough and impartial investigation
- Investigate
  - 10-days is optimal (OCR)
  - Scope of harassment/bullying can take longer
  - Interview any and all witnesses
  - Survey the school
  - Don’t limit investigation to the 2 parties only

Reporting: School District Website
Report: Victims and Bystander Reporting

• “Hero in the Hallway”
• Victim and Bystander reporting systems
• Develop Policy
• Student Awareness
• Investigate and follow-up
• Promote and Reinforce

Report: Immediate Action (OCR)

• End harassment and prevent recurring events
• Limit interaction amongst bully and victim
  — Move the Bully to another classroom or school
• Eliminate hostile environment
• Provide additional services to student who was denied services; remedy the effects
• Provide counseling
• Implement harassment monitoring program
  — Prevent retaliation against the complainant

Report: Annual Report

• At least once in every school year
• Gather data and monitor, continuous improvement plans
• Both Quantitative and Qualitative data analysis
• Qualitative: Portfolio Assessment
  — Photographs; videos; websites;
  — Parent meetings’ minutes
  — Focus groups
  — Survey: open ended questions
• Quantitative: Surveys and Likert Scales
  — Strongly agree- Disagree: 1-4

Free Resources

• A Not In Our School Campaign (NIOS) is an ongoing commitment to empower students to create safe and inclusive environments that are free of bullying, anti-gay harassment, bigotry, racism, and all forms of intolerance.
  Free guide for teachers and students
• Free films, Lesson Plans and Action Guides
  www.niot.org

End Bullying, Don’t Be the:

Silence of Others

Thank You
Dr. Lori
drlori@cox.net