



SIX KEY POINTS ON BULLYING, BIAS AND SCHOOLS

1) **Safe students are more successful students.**

Research clearly shows that there is a connection between social and emotional well-being, school connectedness and improved academic achievement.

2) **Some words DO hurt more than others.**

Bullying and hurtful name-calling based on identity has more severe effects than other kinds of bullying.

3) **It takes more than a few good lesson plans to create safe schools.**

Programs that involve the entire school community including administrators, teachers, other school staff, parents and guardians, and students are most effective in creating a school environment that reduces hurtful, mean behavior and allows students to thrive.

4) **Young students see and know more than we think.**

Most educators underestimate the amount of bullying and name-calling that students experience. Students are counting on the adults in the school community to help them figure out what to do about it.

When students report a more severe bullying climate, school-wide passing rates on standardized tests are up to 5% lower.
Virginia High School Safety Study, 2008

Compared with students harassed for other reasons, students who report being harassed for their race, religion, ability, perceived sexual orientation, or gender:

- are twice as likely to have their personal belongings stolen or deliberately damaged at school;
- are more likely to report being depressed and attempting suicide;
- are more likely to skip school and have lower grades;
- and are up to 4 times as likely to have been threatened with a weapon at school.

Stephen Russell et al. 2012
American Journal of Public Health.

Key strategies to change the school climate and norms of behavior include:

- the whole school working together,
- establishing school wide rules and consequences for bullying,
- educator training,
- parent engagement,
- classroom management,
- playground supervision,
- and cooperative group work.

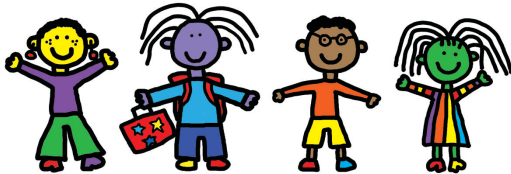
Maria Ttofi and David Farrington, 2011
Journal of Experimental Criminology

Elementary school staff often underestimate the number of students involved in frequent bullying. While the majority of the school staff estimated that less than 10% of their students were bullied in the past month, over 30% of the students actually said they were frequently bullied.

Catherine Bradshaw et al. 2007
School Psychology Review

5) There are many ways to be an ally.

Students can learn to support someone who is hurt by bullying behaviors by speaking out, seeking support from an adult, listening to someone who has been hurt, talking to those involved, and learning about and appreciating differences.



6) Noticing differences is natural.

We can learn not to make negative judgments on the basis of difference. When a student notices differences, adults' responses can set in motion that student's understanding and acceptance of difference – or the opposite. Use these times as “teachable-moments.”

**BE WHO
YOU ARE!**

According to the 5th graders included in a study of over 13,000 students in grades 5-12:

Peer actions that make things better are:

- spending time or talking with them at school,
- helping them get away from the situation,
- making a distraction,
- and helping them tell an adult at the school.

Peer actions that make things worse are:

- blaming them for what happened,
- making fun of them for being teased or for asking for help,
- and ignoring the situation.

Adult actions that make things better are:

- listening, giving advice and encouragement,
- checking in over time to see if things got better,
- increasing adult supervision,
- and disciplining the student who was mean.

Adult actions that make things worse are:

- telling them to stop tattling,
- telling them to solve it themselves,
- telling the student that they should have acted differently,
- and ignoring the situation.

Stan Davis and Charisse Nixon, 2010
Youth Voice Research Project

- Babies and children are driven to make sense of their world. One way they do this is to sort things and people by categories.
- Infants as young as 6 months of age notice skin color differences.
- By age 2-3, toddlers pick up the implicit and explicit messages about categories of people including stereotypes.

Meagan Patterson & Rebecca Bigler, 2006,
Child Development;

Phyllis Katz, 1997, Race, gender,
and young children;

Lawrence Hirschfeld, 2008,
in the Handbook of Race, Racism,
and the Developing Child