BULLYING

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Bullying

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Definition of Bullying

▶ Bullying among children is commonly defined as intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words, or other behavior, such as name-calling, threatening and/or shunning committed by one or more children against another.

▶ Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived **power imbalance**.

▶ The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

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Definition of Bullying

▶ In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

▶ An Imbalance of Power: Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

▶ Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

▶ Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose and can be perpetrated electronically (i.e., cell phone, computer, gaming).

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Types of bullying

► Physical:
  □ hitting, punching, pushing, tripping, or kicking
  □ taking or damaging another person's property

► Verbal:
  □ name-calling
  □ constant teasing
  □ racist comments
  □ sexist comments
  □ demeaning, derogatory comments
  □ insults of the person or a relative.

► Emotional:
  □ interference with, or damage to personal property
  □ excluding people from groups/games
  □ spreading rumours
  □ stalking
  □ cyber-bullying involves the intentional use of technology (email, mobile phone, text messaging) to create fear or distress in another person.

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Traditional bullying versus cyberbullying

▶ using technology, including behaviours such as harassing another person via a mobile phone or internet-based social networking site.

Examples of cyberbullying include:

▶ sending abusive texts or emails

▶ posting negative or inappropriate messages or images on social networking sites

▶ taking and sharing private images, including sexual images

▶ forming bullying groups on social networking sites

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Prevalence of Bullying

- Rates for bullying among school-age youth range from 10 % to 30 % internationally with a notable increase during the middle school years (Cook et al. 2010 ; Espelage et al.)

- in the US, between 15 % and 23 % of elementary students and 20–28 % of secondary school students report being bullied within a 6-month to 1-year period (Carlyle and Steinman 2007)

- Rates appear to vary across sex and race/ethnicity. Many studies report that boys are more likely to engage in physical bullying than girls (Espelage et al. 2014)

- several studies have failed to document significant sex differences in relational aggression or social forms of bullying.

- In addition to sex, race/ethnicity has been another major focus of research, and higher frequency of bullying perpetration and victimization among African-American students has been reported (Belgrave 2009)

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Prevalence in Iran

▶ prevalence of bullying behavior and some of its associated factors among male middle school students in Tehran, Iran.

▶ 1803 middle school students, aged 11 to 15, were enrolled in the study, 2012.

▶ Bullying behavior of and on participants was evaluated using Persian version of the revised Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (OBVQ).

▶ More than 55% of students reported being involved in bullying behaviors in school, either as a victim (51%), a bully (31%) or both a bully and a victim (18%). The most common subtypes of bullying were verbal (61.3%), physical (47.6%), and indirect (50.3%) bullying.

(Prevalence of Bullying and its Associated Factors among Iranian Middle

school student)

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Prevalence in Iran

▶ on a sample of 834 Iranian middle school students. Participants completed a self-report anonymous questionnaire measuring bullying and victimization (Iranian-Olweus bullying questionnaire).

▶ Prevalence rates of bullying behaviors based on the cut-off point at 2 or 3 times a month were 5.4% for only bully, 22.1% for only victim and 11% for both bully-victim.

(**Epidemiological Pattern of Bullying Among School Children in**

Mazandaran Province, Iran.)

Meysam Rezapour, et al

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Prevalence in Iran

▶ Another study: 564 students from middle school were selected by cluster random sampling and they completed Illinois Bullying Scale.

▶ 79.6% of pupils in some way from mild to severe are involved in bullying and about 81% are bullied as victims.

▶ 88% of students were categorized as bully/victims. also, 85% of boys and 72% of girls somehow from mild to severe to have attempted bullying.

▶ Approximately, 87% of boys and 73% of girls are victims of bullying.

▶ 92% of boys and 84% of girls were identified as bully/victims.

▶ bullying and victimization is significant difference between boys and girls, Thus, it was found that boys, more than girls, to bully others. And more boys than girls are being bullied or are bullying victims.

   (Bullying and Victimization: Prevalence and Gender Differences in a Sample of

           Iranian Middle school Students)

- Bullying has been documented as early as first grade and, if the behavior is not addressed, can persist into late adulthood.

- The behaviors peak during adolescence, specifically during the middle-school years. The increase appears to be caused by the change in the social world of students at this age.

- Middle-school students become increasingly focused on peer approval rather than the approval of adult authority, and the question of status—how important and powerful they feel relative to their peers—becomes much more important.

Why Focus on Bullying?

- Bullying at age 14 predicted violent convictions between ages 15 and 20, drug use at ages 27-32, and an unsuccessful life at age 48 (Farrington & Ttofi, 2011).

- Bullying has been connected to both homicidal and suicidal behavior; however, greater variance is explained by depression.

- Victims and bully-victims are more depressed and have lower self-esteem than non-victimized youth (Olweus, 1993; Swearer et al., 2001).

- Bullying has become a major public health concern.

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The Costs of Bullying

► Bullying is a **social problem** that negatively impacts 3 out of 4 students during their school years.

► Bullying is a **mental health problem** - the psychological consequences for students involved in bullying is severe-depression, suicide, antisocial behavior.

► Bullying creates feelings of helplessness, anger, and frustration.

► Bullying contributes to negative school climate, which is connected to lower academic functioning.
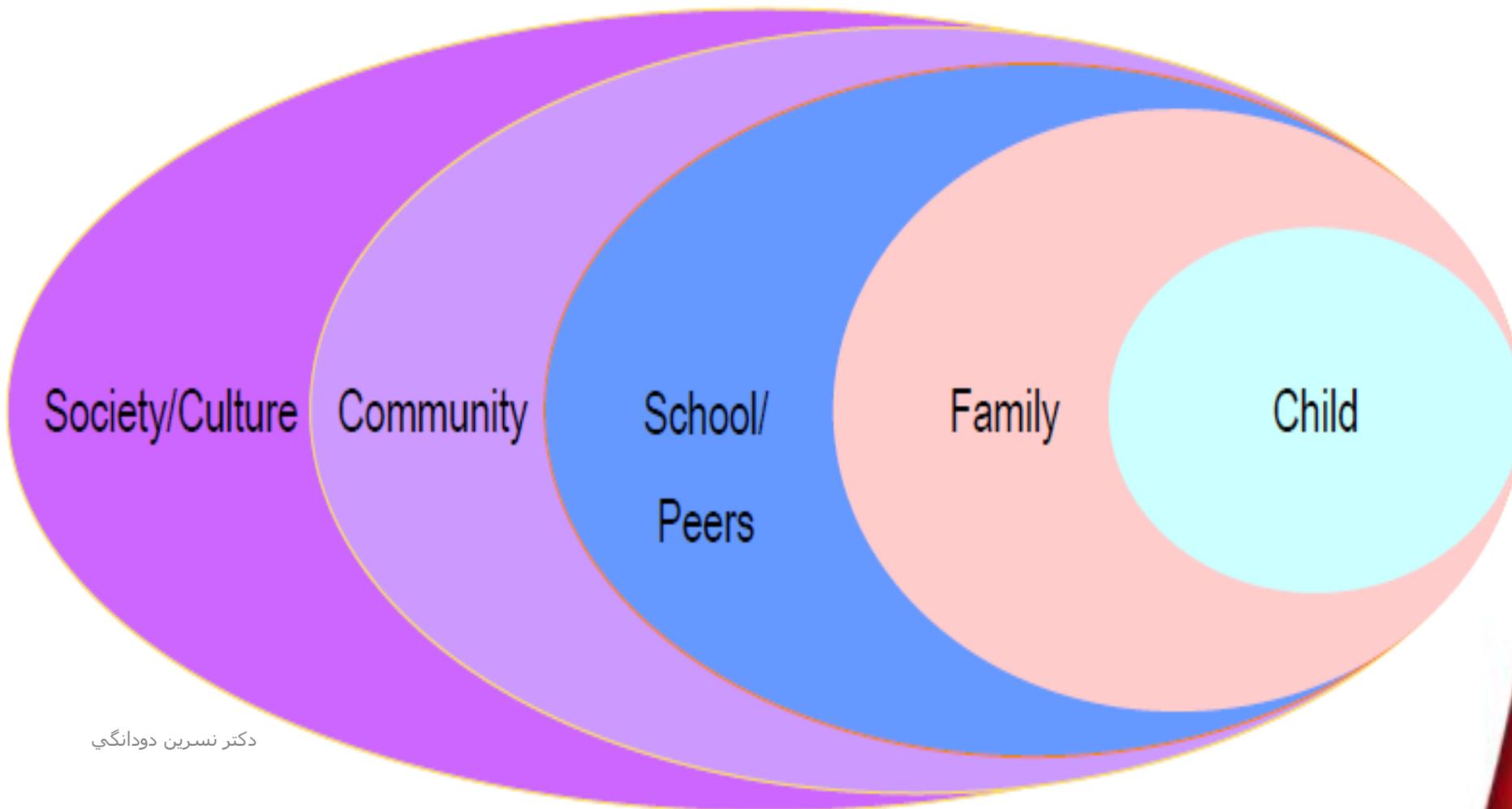
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Etiology of Bullying

- recent research documenting the dynamic and fluid nature of children's involvement in bullying across roles and over time.

- Among youth who are involved in bullying, found that frequent victims and frequent perpetrators were the least stable subgroups, and that students assumed different roles in bullying across school years.

- Youth can observe bullying (i.e., bystanders), experience bullying (i.e., victims), and perpetrate bullying (i.e., bullies) across different situations and/or over time. Across contexts, for instance, a student may be victimized by classmates at school but bully his or her siblings at home.

Bully/Victim Continuum*

- Bully Perpetrator– reports bullying others
- Victim/Target – reports being bullied by others
- Bully-Victim – reports bullying others & being bullied
- Bystander – reports observing others being bullied
- No Status/Not involved – does not report any involvement with bullying

  *IMPORTANT: This is a dynamic continuum; kids move between these roles

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A Social-Ecological Model of Bullying

Society/Culture Community School/Peers Family Child

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Research on Individual Factors in Bullying

- Gender: Males involved more frequently in direct aggression than females (Card et al., 2008; Cook et al., 2010)

- Grade Level: Bullying increases during transition periods (i.e., from elementary to middle school) (Pellegrini, 2011)

- Social skills: Lacking (Cook et al, 2010) or superior (Rodkin et al, 2006)

- Ethnicity: Students in the ethnic minority are at greater risk for being bullied (Graham, 2006)

- Religious orientation: Religious minority youth are at greater risk for being bullied (Eslea & Mukhtar, 2000)

- Sexual orientation: LGBTQ youth are at greater risk for being bullied (GLSEN, 2009; Rivers, 2011; Robinson, Espelage & Koenig, 2011; Russell & Joyner, 2001)

- Disability status: Students in special education (Rose, 2011; Swearer et al, in press).

- Conduct problems: (DSM-IV, 2000; Cook et al., 2010)

- Depression and anxiety: (Cook et al., 2010; Bauman & Walker, in press

Individual factors for bullying

Individual factors for being bullied:

- callous-unemotional traits, psychopathic tendencies, endorsement of masculine traits, conduct problems, antisocial personality traits.

- susceptibility to peer pressure anxiety and depression

- some students who bully their peers have higher social intelligence and social Status.

Individual factors for victimization:

- poor physical health and poor school adjustment, including being unhappy, feeling unsafe, being truant, performing poorly and, in some cases.

- Internalizing and externalizing difficulties including loneliness and withdrawal, anxiety and social avoidance, depression, and suicidal ideation, as well as hyperactivity, delinquency, and aggression, less accepted, and more rejected by peers

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Research on Family Factors in Bullying

- Domestic violence: Modeling of aggressive behavior is a risk factor for bullying (Duncan, 2011; MacKinnon-Lewis et al., 1997)

- Authoritarian parenting: Parenting styles that are punitive and unsupportive (Baldry & Farrington, 2000)

- Poor parental supervision: Lack of supervision is related to bully perpetration and to being bullied (Cook et al, 2010)

- Physical discipline: The use of physical discipline is correlated with bullying (Espelage et al, 2000)

- Physical abuse: Parental physical abuse of children is linked to bullying (Schwartz et al., 1997; Strassberg et al., 1994)

- Sibling aggression: Sibling bullying at home is associated with bullying at school (Duncan, 1999; Wolke & Samara, 2004)

- Parental drug and alcohol abuse: (Swearer, Espelage et al., in press)

- Marital discord: (Duncan, 2011)

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Family Influences for bullying perpetration:

- family members' involvement in gangs, poor parental supervision, negative family environment, parental conflict, domestic violence, low parental communication, lack of parent emotional support, authoritarian parenting, inappropriate discipline, and parental abuse.

Family influences on victimization:

- links to abuse, neglect, and overprotective parenting

Research on School Factors in Bullying

- Teacher attitudes: When teachers ignore bullying, higher rates of bullying exist (Holt et al., 2011)

- Teacher responses: Teachers have less empathy for victims of relational bullying and are less likely to intervene (Bauman & Del Rio, 2006)

- Classroom characteristics: Classrooms that have negative peer friendships, poor teacher-student relationships have higher levels of bullying (Doll et al., 2011)

- Academic Engagement: Schools with lower levels of bullying have higher levels of academic achievement (Twemlow et al., 2001)

- School climate: Negative and punitive school climate is associated with higher levels of bullying (Cornell, 2006; Elias, 2011; Kasen et al., 2011)

- Sense of school belonging: Students who feel connected to school are less likely to be involved in bullying (Swearer et al., in press)

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Research on Peer Factors in Bullying

- Aggressor-victim relationships: Important to understand bullying within the larger peer context—bullying can be the route to popularity (Card & Hodges, 2009; Hawley et al., 2007; Rodkin at el., 2000)

- Delinquency: Engaging in delinquent behaviors is a predictor of involvement in bullying (Cook et al., 2010; Swearer et al., in press)

- Alcohol/Drug use: Victims and bully-victims are more likely to use drugs and alcohol (Brockenbrough et al., 2002)

- Peer norms: When bullying is accepted by peers it is more likely to occur (Craig & Pepler, 1997; Salmivalli et al, 1997)

- Social Support: Victims and bully-victims report lower levels of social support than bullies and peers not involved in bullying (Holt & Espelage, 2007)

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Peer Influences:

▶ Bullying and victimization are more likely in classrooms characterized by peer norms that support bullying, and by high peer conflict.

▶ Affiliation with aggressive peers is also associated with greater bullying perpetration, as is peer victimization, and negative relationships with classmates.

▶ the correlational nature of these studies makes causal interpretation difficult, and several of these associations may simply reflect *homophily*, the tendency to affiliate with similar peers.

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Research on Community and Societal Factors and Bullying

► Less research exists on examining community and societal influences on bullying and victimization because this work is complex and expensive.

► Neighborhoods: Unsafe, violent, and disorganized neighborhoods are risk factors for bullying (Cook et al., 2010; Swearer, Espelage et al., in press; Youngblade et al., 2007)

► Media: Meta-analysis of media violence and aggressive behavior suggests a relationship between violent content and aggressive behavior (Gentile, 2003)

► Youth Engagement: Youth who are positively engaged in their communities are less likely to be involved in bullying (Slee, 2001; The P.E.A.C.E. Pack)

► **Intolerance**: Homophobia, sexism, classism, racism, etc. all create conditions for bullying

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Community/Cultural Influences:

▶ higher levels of bullying linked to negative or unsafe neighborhoods, gang affiliation, and poverty Research has also linked bullying perpetration to exposure to violent TV and video games.

▶ increased bullying and victimization are found in communities in which violence is modeled and/or condoned, although, again, the causal nature of these relationships remains unclear

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Consequences of Bullying/Victimization

▶ bullying perpetration often leads to anxiety and depression, social withdrawal and delinquent behavior, poor academic achievement, and adult diagnosis of antisocial personality Disorder.

▶ bully perpetrators experience adverse psychosocial consequences, a result that does not garner much empathy, given the public's advocacy for suspension, expulsion, and incarceration for aggressive behavior.

▶ **Bystanders** who witness bullying can experience feelings of fear, anger, guilt, and sadness. they may also play a role in maintaining bullying behavior by positively responding (e.g., laughing, joining in) or passively watching instead of intervening to help the victim.

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Effects of bullying

▶ **Bullying behaviour impacts the whole school community. Bullying has detrimental effects on students' health, wellbeing and learning.**

▶ **Both the targets and initiators of bullying are at increased risk for adverse outcomes in the long-term, including early school leaving.**

▶ **Although most research in this area focuses on the impacts of bullying on initiators and targets, bullying may also impact negatively on bystanders, ie, those who witness bullying.**

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Early Detection

▶ Ask screening questions during wellness exams and patient visits, such as:

❑ I'd like to hear about how school is going. How many good friends do you have in school?

❑ Do you ever feel afraid to go to school? Why?

❑ Do other kids ever bully you at school, in your neighborhood, or online? Who bullies you? When and where does it happen? What do they say or do?

❑ What do you do if you see other kids being bullied?

❑ Who can you go to for help if you or someone you know is being bullied?

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Early detection (continue)

- Gently probe about being bullied when a child has an unusual new onset of school phobia, attention problems, or psychosomatic conditions.

- Routinely monitor for and intervene quickly when risk factors are evident for children who bully and those who are bullied.

- ❑ Pay particular attention to special populations that are at higher risk.

- Assist families/parents and caregivers in detecting and responding to signs of bullying and in accessing support and resources.

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Prevention of Bullying

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Prevention strategies for Families

1. Increase Communication

▶ Initiate discussion about your children's social and online lives on a regular basis. Ask specific questions that generate meaningful dialogue.

2. Monitor Behavior

▶ Observe your children in different settings by volunteering at school, participating in extracurricular activities and being watchful during social gatherings.

▶ If you notice that your children are overly aggressive, vulnerable to peer pressure or exhibit other behavior that troubles you, talk to them about your concerns and redirect the behavior.

▶ Be vigilant about the warning signs associated with bullying behavior (e.g., social withdrawal, fear of attending school, avoidance of or preoccupation with technology) and trust your instinct to intervene if your children don't seem to be their usual selves.

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Prevention strategies for Families

3. Facilitate Positive Social Experiences

- Help your children to choose friends and hobbies that make them feel good about themselves.

- Guide your children in finding friends and interests in varied settings so that they do not rely on only one place as their social outlet.

- Help your children to stay bonded to at least one close friend—feeling socially connected can help to mitigate the effects of bullying.

4. Promote Responsible Online Behavior

- Talk with your children about ethical online behavior, including respect for privacy.

- Make sure that they understand how to protect their own privacy online (e.g., keep personal information, passwords and PINs confidential) and how to respond when targeted by negative online behavior.

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Prevention strategies for Families

5. Talk about Bullying

▶ Specifically define bullying, what it looks like and what to do when it occurs. Communicate your values and expectations regarding their social behavior on and offline.

▶ Discuss and rehearse ways to respond to social cruelty, and make it is clear that your children can and should come to you for help.

6. Be a Role Model

▶ Think about the messages your children receive when you make judgmental comments, gossip or behave aggressively toward friends, family members, drivers on the road or help staff in stores. Use technology responsibly and avoid forwarding mean or biased jokes and posts.

7. Be Involved at School

▶ Advocate for policies, programs and practices that encourage positive social.

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Prevention strategies for Schools

1. Assess Bullying at Your Institution

▶ Administer anonymous surveys among youth, families and staff/faculty in order to gather information about the nature and extent of bullying in your community as well as perceptions about climate and safety

2. Create a Team

▶ Charge a committee with oversight of bullying related matters.

community members who may need to be involved in response to serious

incidences.

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Prevention strategies for Schools

3. Educate the Community

▶ Provide ongoing professional development and family education for adults on bullying prevention.

▶ Implement ethical standards for on and offline communication and interpersonal behavior.

▶ Teach youth that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and help them identify strategies for responding to social aggression and acting as allies to targets.

4. Establish Policies

▶ Make sure your institution's anti-bullying, harassment and non-discrimination policies are current, reflect district and state guidelines.

▶ Establish technology use guidelines and have students/ families sign acceptable use agreements.

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Prevention strategies for Schools

5. Monitor "Hot Spots"

▶ Ensure that typically unsupervised/unstructured areas (e.g., cafeteria, hallways, locker room, bus, school yard, etc.) are adequately monitored and that students are aware of behavioral expectations in these locations.

6. Promote Online Safety

▶ Increase awareness of Internet safety strategies among youth and their families.

▶ utilize appropriate blocking and filtering software.

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Prevention strategies for Schools

7. Encourage Reporting

▶ Establish safe and confidential reporting mechanisms for bullying incidents and clear procedures for investigation and response. Make youth aware of these procedures.

▶ Reinforce the difference between "**tattling" and responsible reporting**.

8. Be Vigilant

▶ Look for warning signs that a young person in your care might be the aggressor or target of bullying. If you observe **social withdrawal, truancy, depression, obsessive technology use, fear or avoidance of technology** or other behaviors that concern you, talk with your supervisor or a mental health expert.

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Levels of Intervention

- **Tier 1: Universal, whole school approaches**

- **Tier 2: Targeted strategies focusing on students at risk of bullying**

- **Tier 3: Intensive, Individualized services when you see or hear bullying**

Tier 1: Universal, whole school approaches

▶ Effective whole-school approaches consist: **teacher training, school-wide rules, classroom curricula and management strategies, parent education, improved playground supervision, and peer involvement to combat bullying.**

▶ Teach children appropriate ways for standing up to a bully,

▶ **Focus on friendships**! Research suggests that having high-quality friendships, or at least one good friend, can help prevent children from being a victim of bullying (www.casel.org).

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2: Targeted strategies focusing on students at risk of bullying

▶ Teach friendship skills during individual or group interaction. Examples include, knowing how to enter a group, giving compliments appropriately, cooperating in groups, and demonstrating empathy.

▶ Help children identify interests and join a club or group after school in order to develop friends with similar interests. Use coaching strategies for those who are reluctant.

▶ Encourage teachers to embed reading books on topics related to bullying and the importance of tolerating differences.

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During the bullying incident

- Intervene immediately, even if you're not sure it's bullying.

- Respond calmly but firmly. Describe the bullying behavior observed and why it is unacceptable; indicate the bullying must stop.

- Avoid lecturing the bully in front of peers.

- Praise any helpful bystanders.

- Stick around to ensure the bullying has stopped.

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Follow up after the bullying incident

- Bullies must be told that bullying will not be tolerated. They must understand what they did, why it was wrong, and how it affects their victims and others. Assist the bully in apologizing or making amends with the victim.

- Victims must know that adults care and support them. Listen to what happened; offer support; help them develop strategies for preventing further bullying.

- Inform appropriate staff. Follow procedures at your school. Parents must be informed.

- Record the incident.

- Check up regularly with the victim, bully and staff to ensure the bullying does not continue.

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Best Practices in Bullying Intervention

▶ 2008 meta-analysis by Ttofi, Farrington, & Baldry found that reductions in bullying were associated with:

▫ Parent training

▫ Increased adult supervision

▫ Non-punitive disciplinary methods

▫ Home-school communication

▫ Effective classroom rules

▫ Effective classroom management

▫ Use of training videos (i.e., "Stories of Us;" "Bully Dance")

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Intervention strategies for Families

1. Offer Support

▶ If your child is being bullied, take a deep breath and listen openly and without judgment. Convey the **<u>bullying is not her/his fault</u>**.

▶ Take some time to research and think things through together.

▶ Keep the lines of communication open and reassure your child that her/ his safety and well-being are your top concerns.

2. **Reach out to the School**

▶ Meet with the appropriate authority at your child's school and/or other institutions where the bullying is taking place.

▶ Convey that you want to work together to solve the problem rather than taking a confrontational tone. Ask for a concrete plan of action before leaving and check in regularly to ensure follow-through.

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Intervention strategies for Families

4. Contact Law Enforcement

▶ If the bullying/cyberbullying involves possible criminal behavior, report the incident(s) to law enforcement.

5 . Keep Your Child Safe Online

▶ Report serious instances of cyberbullying to Internet/cell phone service providers.

▶ Work with your child to change screen names, email addresses and passwords, if necessary, and learn how to use the blocking features on your child's technology.

▶ Do not punish your child by limiting access to technology, but guide them to spend time in forums that are safe and positive

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Intervention strategies for Families

6. Build Resilience

▶ Work with your child to develop strategies and skills for responding to future bullying in ways that feel comfortable.

▶ Rehearse specific words and actions that can be used in response to bullying and identify safe people to go to for help.

▶ Guide your child to get involved with new friends and interests that build their confidence and make them feel good about themselves.

▶ If emotional problems related to bullying persist, seek out a mental health professional.

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Intervention strategies for Schools

1. Investigate and Respond

▶ Interview the individuals involved in the incident as well as bystanders

▶ gather relevant evidence, including emails, texts, screen shots and images

▶ work with Internet service providers to remove offensive content.

2. Consult Law Enforcement

▶ If the incident involves harassment, stalking, physical or sexual assault, threats of violence, distribution of pornography or other behaviors that may amount to a criminal offense, <u>contact your district counsel, school resource officer and/or local law enforcement liaison</u>.

Intervention strategies for Schools

3. Provide Support

▶ Assist the target and the target's family in coping with the impact of the bullying and building skills for dealing with such problems in the future.

4. Educate

▶ Discuss strategies for responding to bullying and being an ally with all youth.

▶ Work with local schools, youth groups and community organizations to share information.

▶ Communicate with the different youth-oriented institutions

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Responding to bullying

- When bullying arises within a group situation use the 'no-blame' approach

- Assure the victim that nothing is wrong with them and it is not their fault.

- Talk with the person alleged to be bullying another person, explain the situation, and try to get the "bully(ies)" to understand the consequences of their behaviour.

- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behavior by asking open questions for example;

  - o Tell me what happened?

  - o What were you thinking that led you to behave that way?

  - o can you tell me how that person has been affected by your behavior?

  - o What do you think you need to do to make things right?

- Inform parents and where necessary inform coaches or volunteers working the group.

For Parents

- IF YOUR SON/DAUGHTER IS BEING BULLIED

- ▢ Encourage your child to discuss the incident with you. It may be difficult so be patient.

- ▢ Try not to over react; listen calmly and work out the facts.

- ▢ Give assurances that you believe the situation can be changed.

- ▢ Reassure them that bullying happens to many people at some time.

- ▢ Help them use it as a learning experience, as a challenge to be met and overcome.

- ▢ Talk with other parents and share ideas and experiences.

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For Parents

▶ IF YOUR SON/DAUGHTER IS BULLYING OTHERS:

▶ ▫ Explain that bullying for any reason (eg. out of revenge, irritation or fun) is not acceptable.

▶ ▫ Teach them the difference between assertive and aggressive behaviour.

▶ ▫ Advise them that consciously hurting or distressing another person suggests that they may have social/emotional problems.

▶ ▫ Explore the possibility that the young person is seeking attention or love. Determine whether any specific home or school situations are contributing to the young person feeling angry, alone, or lacking in confidence.

▶ ▫ Explore the need for development of self confidence and success in an area to improve their self esteem.

▶ ▫ Sensitive discussion may indicate that the bully has also been a victim. This is a delicate situation and requires sensitive and empathic communication.

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Summary

- Bullying is a serious problem for all age levels, with pre-adolescents particularly at risk.

- All forms of bullying (i.e., verbal, physical, relational, and electronic co-occur).

- Adults need to become better informed in order to be credible resources for young people.

- Bullying in all forms (verbal, physical, relational, electronic) are connected to mental health difficulties.

- Interventions need to be tailored across the social ecology (individual, family, peer, school, and community).

- A commitment to change is **on-going and never ends.**

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THANKS

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