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### **What are the Psychological Effects of School Place and Cyber Bullying on Children?**

The horror of violence is all around us and penetrates deeply into our society, creating turmoil, emotional damage, and invisible scars in the very centers, beings, souls, and minds of our children. As the world evolves within the age of technology, it creates additional avenues in the twenty-first century for bullying. Bullies are fulfilling a need within themselves for power or dominance, satisfaction, and/or gratification, while sometimes projecting learned behaviors or may actually be victims themselves of the same maltreatment they project onto their victims. (Olweus) There are many causes and effects embodied within the topic of bullying, together with obstacles that stand in the way of effectively deterring such acts of violence. Some progress has been made in the realms of anti-bullying tactics, but more needs to be done. We have an epidemic within our society because the psychological and social effects of school place and cyber bullying are taking a devastating toll on today's youth, the future of our country.

When an individual is exposed repeatedly, as well as over time, to actions that are negative on the part of one or more other individuals, that person has trouble defending themselves and fits the classic description of a person who is a victim of bullying (Olweus). This description incorporates three main components, according to Dan Olweus who was one of the earliest researchers in the field of bullying: "Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted,

negative actions . . . involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time . . . involves an imbalance of power or strength” (Olweus), (Fried). Furthermore, the act of bullying occurs often: “Every seven minutes a child is bullied on a school playground with over 85% of those instances occurring without any intervention” (Sheridan). This in itself is a tragedy. Also, a study was done by Psychologist, Tonja Nansel, PhD, and colleagues, where over 15,000 students in the United States were surveyed and it established that, “in grades six through ten . . . seventeen percent of students reported having been bullied "sometimes" or more often during the school year” (School Bullying is Nothing New, But Psychologists Identify New Ways to Prevent It).

It is important for all individuals to be educated and the first aspect of education is understanding who bullies are and why they engage in such devastating and hurtful types of actions. There are three main reasons why children bully according to Olweus. Bullies strive and have a strong desire and need to gain dominance and power; are given a sense of gratification in inflicting pain, to include injury as well as suffering to other peers; or to earn an incentive; for example, they have a tendency to be motivated with either material or psychological rewards as a result of engaging in such awful behaviors. (Olweus)

Dr. Dombeck adds an additional definition to what bullying is: “Bullying . . . is selfish and/or sadistic, destructive, and often violent acts perpetrated upon victims who do not in any way, shape or form deserves to be treated in that manner” (Dombeck Ph.D.). Bullying occurs at high rates and more than fifty percent of students suffer at the hands of some form of violence within the realms of bullying. “Over 75% of our students are subjected to harassment by a bully or cyber bully and experience physical, psychological, and/or emotional abuse” (Sheridan).

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Forms of Bullying:**

As our world is changing and evolving within this globalized biosphere, so are the forms of bullying. The explosion of technology has many wonderful effects in our society, but all avenues of technology harbor the ability for bullies to display their antipathy through the use of cellular texting; internet sites such as YouTube; and social networking sites, like Facebook, Twitter, and others. These new forms of bullying are penetrating the psychology of our children and are also enhancing the horridness of violence displayed in the school place and school bus. This abjection comes in many forms according to Dan Olweus, the creator of the “Olweus Bullying Prevention Program,” and they are all categorized as forms of abuse and violence:

Verbal bullying, including derogatory comments and bad names; bullying through social exclusion or isolation; physical bullying, such as hitting, kicking, shoving, and spitting; bullying through lies and false rumors; having money or other things taken or damaged by students who bully; being threatened or being forced to do things by students who bully; racial bullying; sexual bullying; and cyber bullying via cell phone or Internet. (Olweus)

Ronit Baras, a Life Coach, summed up bullying into four categories: Physical, verbal, social, and cyber bullying. (Baras)

Years ago, bullying had a narrow definition, which encompassed, one who harmed another through physical aggression, but today, the definition captures a much larger spectrum. Bullying was accepted more years ago, but nowadays, especially with the infiltration of so many people of many different backgrounds, handicaps, and psychological disabilities, there is much more social

disapproval, laws, and awareness for the victims, that did not exist twenty to forty years ago. Years past, it was common and customary to be excluded and/or called names as a result of one's gender, sexual orientation, race, physical appearance, disability, special needs classification and/or anything that made one stand out and/or appear different. According to the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) in the article titled, "20<sup>th</sup> Century Bullying: Crueler than Ever," yesteryear's mentality and cultural acceptance of bullying was:

Parents told victims to take the Biblical advice to "turn the other cheek" in the belief that if their child didn't react the perpetrator would derive no satisfaction from his teasing and go away. Studies . . . have documented the damage of bullying to the self-esteem of children and other scholastic and mental health issues bullying may cause. Bullying is not seen as a serious problem by parents, educators, medical and mental health professionals, and scholars. (20th Century Bullying: Crueler than Ever)

Physical mistreatment (bullying) is classified as one person or group of people who inflict pain on their victim(s) to cause physical agony, humiliation, and/or intimidation. Physical bullying includes pushing, striking, intentionally tripping, sexually harassing, jabbing, and/or abusing another individual's belongings "by taking them without their consent, damaging, hiding, and/or stealing" them (Baras). "According to Bullying Statistics 2010, there are about 2.7 million students being bullied each year by about 2.1 students taking on the role of the bully" (Bullying Statistics).

The most common form of bullying is verbal bullying, which was accepted in our society with respects to parents who utilized this form of abuse towards their children. Actions that are categorized in this area include, but are not limited to, insults, name calling, and destructive remarks

pertaining to “sexual preferences, gender, age, race, ethnic background, religion, physical appearance, familial status, economic status, skills, abilities, or group affiliation” (Baras).

Social bullying references the use of rejection or exclusion amongst one’s peers, which encompasses an imbalance of power between the victim and bully. (Olweus) This classification of bullying also includes the act of the bully teasing the victim and pointing out their differences and/or abnormalities. Furthermore, it encases the actions of spreading rumors, too. (Oracle) This type of terror causes great emotional damage and hurts the esteem of the victim, especially when the abuse is targeted in a negative way towards one’s desire to “be accepted and part of a group” (Baras). It is much easier for the bully to engage in this style of bullying for the reason that they have difficulty in directly bullying their victim by themselves or for another reason; it’s just not enough to give them satisfaction in doing it alone. They get more gratification in the fact that their target is publically humiliated and left powerless. Ultimately, the bully is looking to win the power-game in reducing his/her victim and making them feel inferior. Mimicking, “making a fool of someone by playing a nasty joke,” gossiping, revealing their victim’s secrets, and/or lying about the person who is being victimized by “blaming them for a problem” are all aspects of social bullying (Baras).

Cyber bullying is and has been on the rise with the development and increased usage within the digital age and is defined in the realms of a youngster exploiting technology with the goal of hurting another young person. This includes the uses of bullying via online, cellular phones, and emails. One of the main large problems of cyber bullying is the fact that everything and anything that is put into cyberspace remains indefinitely, and “can never be fully erased” (20th Century Bullying: Crueler than Ever). “The top 5 states in regards to reported incidents of bullying and cyber bullying are California, New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Washington” (Sheridan).

Years ago, when a student was bullied, his/her home was a safe haven and a temporary escape from their tormenter. With the age of technology, the availability of escaping this abuse is very limited as a result of these new age tools. Author Tim Brown shares some of his research findings:

At least fifteen percent of children have received threatening messages online or on their phones, the majority of those bullied being girls. Another survey puts the figure as high as twenty-five percent for text message bullying. . . . Students are now able to transport home type technologies to school, such as cell phones or mobile devices that provide the students with mediated forms of communication. Through handheld devices, students are now able to communicate virtually without supervision and without permission. (Brown)

In addition, the telephone and facsimile used to be the main forms of communications and they were not cost effective uses for bullies to inflict horror on others via telecommunications, years ago. With the availability of technology, to most individuals, the costs involved in bullying with digital technology have decreased substantially. Abusive children utilize social networking sites, email and chat, text messages and SMS, which is “a text messaging service that allows short text messages to be sent,” in an effort to poke fun at, gossip, threaten, and/or intimidate another child (Bing Dictionary). Furthermore, it includes using digital technologies and communications to expose one’s secrets without consent, spread rumors, and/or insult other individuals. (Baras) Moreover, cyber bullying also encompasses the exclusion of another juvenile from group interactions or through blocking that particular person from gaining access to information that is available to their peer group. (Baras) Other types of bullying are discriminatory towards an individual as a result of their race or sexuality.

On a separate note, hazing is not categorized as bullying, but can be considered another facet for this type of violence. This act tends to begin a couple of days or weeks after children begin high school as freshman. Adolescents are looking to fit in and many are in search of belonging and becoming a part of a group. As new students, they have a tendency to find themselves facing the harshest of initiation rituals. Hazing has pervaded our world for many years and has “existed in ancient and medieval schools in Greece, North Africa and western Europe” (Newer).

Hazing within the setting of “high schools across the country is becoming an increasingly pervasive problem that students, parents, school administrators and educators, and communities must address—in a preventative way” (Newer). All aspects of bullying are acts of violence and intended for malicious purposes. Some of the hazing rituals, though they vary significantly, include players of a high school team wearing their uniforms to pull off a shoplifting spree; individuals enduring beatings and/or being pressured to ingest large consumptions of alcohol; being forced to simulate sex, and many other acts, as well. Furthermore, hazing does not discriminate against genders. (Newer)

Hazing is essentially, the victim accepting the bullying for the sake of being accepted into a group, at which point he/she can then become the bully towards the next group of individuals seeking to become part of the clique. There are two types of hazing: Physical hazing where the victim of such anticipated bullying engages in activities that can cause them physical harm and mental hazing, in which the bullies utilize harassment to scare the new students by making them think they are going to be castigated or punished far worse than what the bullies were going to administer. Another mental hazing action includes new students being made to think that they are going to have to carry out an action that is illegal, such as stealing, when that is not truly one of the

requirements or what is actually going to be asked of the persons being hazed to receive the honor of being initiated into the clique. (Newer)

Chicanery is at the heart of all aspects of hazing. The victims of such bullying are lied to, adults are lied to, the bullies of hazing lie to each other, and when hazing takes a turn for the worse, the bullies of hazing lie and turn the incident around to place blame on the victim. Ultimately, all aspects of bullying are acts of deception, horror, and violence.

### **Victims, Bully-Victim, and Bullies:**

Children who have been bullied can become victims for a variety of reasons: Because they are smaller or younger than their bully; they are “of a different race or culture;” because of a physical and/or mental abnormality; or because they are shy or timid and easy targets for their bullying counterparts (Bullying - What is It, nvcv.org). Furthermore, victims also tend to have the characteristics of being anxious, insecure, “cautious, sensitive, quiet, withdrawn and shy,” which are “likely to be both a partial cause and a consequence of the bullying” (School Bullying is Nothing New, But Psychologists Identify New Ways to Prevent It).

Youngsters who bully can also be victims of bullying: This is categorized as “bully-victim” (Marini). Anyone can be a victim, bully-victim, or bully, though there tends to be differences. For example, boys are more susceptible to engage in physical bullying, and girls usually apply words in the realms of verbal abuse and social bullying with an emphasis in participating in gossip, spreading rumors, and/or threatening another child. “Over 20% of our kids admit to being a bully or participating in bully-like activities” (Sheridan).

According to the National Center for Victims of Crime, NCVC, this abjection can occur at any grade and by either boys or girls. “Sixty percent of victims/targets report being bullied by boys, and forty percent report being bullied by girls” (Bullying - What is It, nvcv.org). In a national study it was reported that “29.9% of students are involved in bullying either as a bully {13.0%}, a victim {10.6%} or both as a” bully-victim {6.3%}” (Nansel), (University-VA). Furthermore, acts of violence at this magnitude has been reported to be the most severe within grades seven to nine, with the next most severe aspects of bullying occurring in grades four through six. Moreover, there are hardly any variations between areas that are rural, urban, or suburban pertaining to this facet of violence. (Bullying - What is It, nvcv.org), (Nansel), (University-VA) “A study by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development estimated that 1.7 million U.S. children in grades six through ten can be identified as bullies” (Nansel), (University-VA). Also, school-aged children have been a target for violence on school premises and one in twelve students who miss school days, “do so because they are afraid to go to school” (Bullying - What is It, nvcv.org). Furthermore, “on a daily average 160,000 children miss school because they fear they will be bullied if they attend classes” (Sheridan).

A victim may have feelings that encompass the emotions that they are all alone; as well as feelings of anger, sadness, anxiety, and/or depression. It appears that the world is against them and do not have anyone to lean on since they have no true close friends. Victims may also have no idea as to why they are being bullied. Mark Dombeck, Ph.D., shares his own story as a young boy forced to live as an object of an older group of boys’ tyranny:

The bullying I was subjected to did not occur on the playground, but rather on the school bus. I can vividly recall days when I would have to launch myself out of the school bus door and run as fast as I could up the hill to the shelter of my house. A

group of older neighborhood boys would be after me for reasons that were never entirely clear. I was younger, more sensitive, certainly more vulnerable and not talented at fist fighting. Most days I'd make it home safely, but some days I'd end up belly up on the grass trying to fend off blows and kicks while a ring of kids jeered and cheered that day's aggressor. A blow to the head and you'd see stars like in the cartoons. . . . I'm 40 years old now; it's been something like 30 years since that sort of thing last happened. Still, the experience has not left me, it sucked so much. I don't think about it much these days, but I know that having lived through those experiences has shaped me as an adult, and not for the better. (Dombeck Ph.D.)

Additionally, the victim, especially a bully-victim, may find themselves getting into fights constantly, wanting to defend themselves, and sometimes contemplate hurting others or themselves. Excessive violence can leave the victim feeling hopeless and helpless to ever stop the maltreatment that they are enduring, which can also leave them to have lowered self-esteem, suffer from heightened anxiety on a regular basis, and to be afraid of attending school. (Bullying - What is It, [nvcv.org](http://nvcv.org)) The other extreme is that some victims become so full of rage that they make the decision to end the bullying once and for all: Delivering death or extreme destruction to their bully or bullies. “Over 85% of our teenagers say that revenge as an aftermath of being bullied is the leading cause for school shootings and homicide” (Sheridan). Furthermore, research was done by both the Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education with regards to thirty-seven school shootings, including Columbine High School’s shootings, located in Littleton, Colorado, which had findings that indicated approximately “two-thirds of student shooters felt bullied, harassed, threatened or injured by others” (School Bullying is Nothing New, But Psychologists Identify New Ways to Prevent It).

With regards to the Columbine High School shootings, two boys named Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris ended the lives of twelve of their fellow peers and injured one teacher and twenty-three additional students before they made the ultimate sacrifice of taking their own lives. This scenario encompasses a tragedy of lost lives, but the underlying provocation for this horror stemmed as a result of the two boys being bullied and ostracized.

They had to endure the pain of dealing with a hostile school environment before they were pushed over the edge into the realms of death. The media plastered, all over the new channels, the stories of the lost lives taken by two sick individuals with twisted minds, but they failed to indicate what the two boys endured in the “school culture which humiliated and tormented them in ways that are all too familiar to most Americans” (Leone 11).

Though no one condones the actions Klebold and Harris took, many can empathize with the pain the two shooters harbored. “. . . I used to imagine bringing weaponry to school and making the fuckers who made my life miserable beg for mercy” (Leone 11). People of all different professions from lower paying jobs to higher salaried ones expressed comprehension of what the killers’ mindsets were when they gunned down their fellow students: The comments that were shared of these different professionals included the facts of remembering their own childhoods where they could recall comments made by their gay friend who “half-jokingly wished he’d had access to guns while in high school, and to a confession of an athletic standout who felt sick at the bullying company he kept during the same years” (Leone 11).

Bully-victims, according to one study, account for one-third of all children. The bully-victim struggles immensely as a result of having difficulty in controlling their emotions. As a result, within this classification, the bully-victim will “unintentionally prompt children to bully them again by

reacting very emotionally to teasing, threats or physical aggression, and may have similar problems directing feelings of anger and frustration, predisposing them to retaliatory aggression” (Marini).

These types of youngsters also have a greater tendency to have and project problems they encompass emotionally and socially, which are commonly found in victims: These include, but are not limited to anxiety; lack of close friendships; depression; and peer rejection. On the contrary, they have commonalities with characteristics found in bullies; such as, hyperactivity, cognitive and behavioral problems, propensities towards reactive aggression, as well as an elevated acceptance of engaging in behaviors of breaking rules.

Unfortunately, these juveniles are at greater risk of psychiatric disorders such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, ADHD, and Oppositional Defiance Disorder, ODD, together with criminal offences once they reach the stage of young adult. (Marini) They are also at risk of abusing alcohol and/or have a higher reality of carrying a weapon. (Healthwise) “In 2009 surveys showed over 100,000 children carried guns to school as a result of being bullied” and “28% of students who carry weapons in school have witnessed violence in their homes” (Sheridan).

It is imperative that these children are given services and support to aid them in addressing their full spectrum of needs. The school system, parents, and sometimes additional counselors, need to work together as a team to aid the bully-victim child to be able to deal with and learn to manage their anger and emotions in a positive way; and how to function and participate in society as a good citizen; which aids in getting them on the path to becoming a productive and law-abiding citizen.

My own child, Hunter, has a tendency to be a bully-victim, but has improved tremendously with the aid of counseling by the State of New Jersey, counseling within the school system, and a team of teachers and administrators who continuously care and work with him and us, his parents,

on a regular basis. He was bullied from the time he was six through the age of nine, by one boy in particular, together with the child's buddies. Additionally, he was also bullied by his first grade teacher.

The primary school teacher, who bullied him, was extremely cruel, which aided in the reduction of Hunter's self-esteem and also an escalation in his behaviors that were negative and unacceptable; such as, throwing pencils, breaking crayons, refusing to do his classwork, making noises to be disruptive in class, and in total, aggravating his adult aggressor. I had been warned by other parents that this particular teacher, who we will call Mrs. Smith in an effort to protect her privacy, was nasty and unkind to male students. They stated that she only liked girls as a result of a nasty divorce she had endured. Parents warned me: "Get your son out of her class!"

As a result of my upbringing, I was always taught to treat others as I would like to be treated and did not want to judge Mrs. Smith by what others said about her. I believe all people deserve the opportunity to show who they are and in my opinion, it was unethical for Mrs. Smith to be unfairly treated, as a result of what I thought were rumors and gossip. Keep in mind that Hunter was considered the worst of all the boys in her class, and I presume part of it was due to his psychiatric diagnosis. This diagnosis would later be uncovered after moving out of the Pennsylvania school district. Ultimately, still today, I feel like I failed my son, whereas other parents, back then, had their male children removed from her class before the school year started.

This particular educator put Hunter's desk in the closet, where it remained until my husband, Michael, found out about it while attending the school parent-teacher conference in November, two months from the start of the new school year. She showed no signs of having any problems or reservations with walking my husband over to see Hunter's desk isolated in a small six foot by six

foot closet, away from all of the other students' desks. Hunter's father demanded that she move his desk to be in the classroom with the other desks. She stated she would ask the janitor to do it the next day. Ultimately, she moved it herself after my husband was persistent, expressed his disgust with her unprofessionalism, and with his refusal to continue the conference until it was done. Michael told the instructor that if Hunter's desk was moved away in isolation again, she would have a big problem.

Furthermore, she humiliated Hunter in front of his peers on a regular basis; for example, she frequently called him retarded, told him he was a bad kid, picked on him, and announced in front of the entire class, repeatedly, that no one would ever want to be his friend. This aided in furthered and elevated taunts by many children, of the class, who fed off of the teacher's harassment, essentially acting as bystanders in both the negligent way in not saying anything or in joining the horrific acts, by being malicious and cruel to him. Many times, bully-victims are disliked by teachers and children who witness this in the classroom setting become an extension of the negative educator who acts unethically, as Mrs. Smith did. As a result, bullying reared its ugly head and plagued Hunter early in his young life. This was an introduction of reality and he learned how harsh the world really was in becoming the target of multiple bullies.

As a parent, looking back after the fact, I did recall noticing aggressive behaviors and at that point, where it became apparent as to why he displayed signs of anger and sadness starting from the age of six on a regular basis. Moreover, he did not seem to have any friends during that timeframe. His only friends were our family dog and his brother. Furthermore, he used to have nightmares at least three to six times a week; wet the bed frequently; and would act out with negative behaviors at home, too. Again, these behaviors surfaced when he was in first grade. Therefore, while he was enduring the constant bullying during the day, his mind would deliver more excruciating,

humiliating, and emotionally damaging visions in his dreams at night. The bedwetting did not stop until after quite a few months of counseling, but the nightmares went on for approximately two years after the initial counseling before they ceased. Hunter's unconscious mind taunted him further at nighttime and he was forced to relive the horrors, even during the times he was away from his bullies, in what should have been a safe haven from such abjection: In his home with his family, safe and sound in his own bed. Therapy was a significant need and also a huge blessing. Today, he does not have those reoccurring visions of awfulness during his slumber.

I found out he had been bullied by one boy, in particular, from the time he was in first grade right through to fourth grade while in the Pennsylvania school district. The only way this was ever brought to my attention was when the school counselor called, a week before we were to move to New York, to let me know that Hunter was being suspended from school for three days because he defended himself against another child who was punching him in the school's bathroom. At this point, he was nine years old and in the fourth grade; therefore, he had been bullied for over three years. After picking Hunter up after school and asking him what had happened during the day, he proceeded to state, "Nothing at all." When the incident in the bathroom was brought up by me, he stated that he was not going to snitch on anyone. Later, we learned that he was picked on because he was the smallest kid in the class. I reassured him that his parents were and will always be there for him and he should always tell if anyone is making him uncomfortable or bullying him. Also, with regards to Mrs. Smith, we, as parents, were not aware that Hunter was being bullied until we moved out of the Pennsylvania school district to New York. Hunter was in the New York school district for eight months. As a parent it pains me to know that my child was injured emotionally and physically for four years before we were ever made aware of it.

Upon moving into one of the New York school districts, Hunter became the bully, instead of the bullied. As parents, we were stunned and horrified. We could not believe why our child was bullying other children, especially knowing how awful it felt being bullied in the previous school district. All of the children in his new school classroom were afraid of him. Other parents complained about Hunter Gonzalez, the new kid, who was bullying their child and demanded that their child be protected from him. As parents of the newly labeled bully, it was embarrassing and essentially was a reflection of us, as parents, in the views and opinions of the mothers and fathers of the children who were being bullied by my son. During school functions, parents would make disparaging and mean comments either directly to us or within hearing distance while pointing us out: "That is Hunter Gonzalez's parents. He is the class bully." Most people do not understand or care to know why the other child is bullying their child; they just want it to stop, which is understandable, but ignorant at the same time.

The new teacher was put in a difficult predicament because he understood the need to protect Hunter's victims, but also understood that Hunter was not a bad kid, and was a child who was in need of some sort of intervention to get to the root causes of his destructive behaviors. The educator and school advisors suggested and recommend counselors to my husband and me. An intervention was needed and we took the teacher's advice and sought professional counseling for Hunter.

Counseling was a healing process for Hunter and it was during those counseling sessions that we learned of the negative impact he suffered as a result of being bullied. It was at that point, we learned of the bullying that had taken place by Mrs. Smith, the first grade teacher in Pennsylvania, along with a deeper look into what his former peer bully had done and how it had made him feel.

Additionally, the New York school officials suggested we have Hunter evaluated by a psychiatrist. We took their advice and he was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD). ADHD was the cause of many of Hunter's impulse and control problems. The ODD label was why he always behaved so defiantly and seemed to go against all sorts of authority; for example, his teachers and parents. With the psychiatric evaluation and diagnosis, we, as parents, were able to get an individualized education plan (IEP) within the school program in the states of New York while attending and then in New Jersey at his current school, which gave Hunter additional services to aid him in changing his destructive behaviors and in helping him with his academics. He, still, currently has an IEP, which helps him to remain on target and to be successful in the school place.

After the eighth month of school in New York, we moved to Freehold, New Jersey, and enrolled him into school after much research had been done pertaining to the Freehold school district and its great reputation. The findings included that the district had exemplary services, skills, and a complete understanding in how to work with my child. The Freehold School District worked with him and he was held accountable for his actions, which helped him to come away from being the school bully. They have a zero tolerance program and he did have to endure some in-school suspensions and other consequences along the way.

Overall, his education team continues to work with us, to this day, on a regular basis and the progress he has made has been tremendous. It is sometimes hard to believe that he used to be so defiant and was once a massive trouble maker. The counseling sessions that were offered through the State of New Jersey were phenomenal and gave Hunter many additional needed tools to deal with his feelings, as well as how to behave, act, and engage with other children. Today, he has close friends, does very well with his grades and studies, and is, in actuality, a totally different child.

It takes a lot of commitment and work on behalf of the parents, school district, and counselors to make lengthy strides. Hunter has been in the Freehold School District for three years and it certainly took a lot of work before he started to show any positive signs that he was not acting on his bully-victim tendencies. It is not perfect, nor do I anticipate it ever will be, because the invisible emotional scars take a long time to heal and at times, such damage might not ever be able to fully heal to the state that he was in, prior to being traumatized.

Furthermore, Hunter still has signs of anxiety and therapy is ongoing; therefore, there are still some times where he has been caught picking on another child, but it is dealt with right away. He is dealt consequences at school and at home, and knows that when he falls off the wagon, he has a support system to help put him back on the right track. The fact that the school has a zero tolerance policy, which is strictly enforced, is an enormous help for Hunter and, ultimately, a savior for many other children who would, otherwise, have possibly been bullied by my son.

Additionally, consistency, structure, and follow-through are extremely imperative to the steps of aiding a bully-victim with their progress towards being a functional and healthy citizen and overall adult. Therefore, Hunter is also spoken to periodically in occasional conversations, as well as during any bullying incidents so that he understands the harm and emotional damage he is or could be responsible for when engaging in such horror. Now, he enjoys having the opportunity to aid and help the special needs children with learning as a reward for his good behaviors. It gives him a lot of pride and aids in his positive self-esteem.

With bullies, there are very strong possibilities that they have been witnesses to physical and/or verbal violence or aggression in their homes. They have a tendency to be physically strong; may be physically abusive towards other children; do not show concern for others feelings; have

problems with following rules; and “may or may not be popular with other children” that are about the same age (Healthwise). Additionally, at times, some bullies engage in actions of violence for the purpose of hiding their own inadequacies. (Bully-Online)

A lot of children, who engage in these actions of horror, seek power and dominance; therefore, they enjoy having others look up to them and also, think highly of themselves. Aggressors are usually not taught how to be empathetic and understanding towards others’ feelings; therefore, they do not learn how to think in relations to how their actions make others feel. Furthermore, children, who are bullies, that do not get counseling to learn proper and healthy ways to interact with others and to learn and develop empathy, have a higher tendency to continue engaging in negative and hurtful behavior, and each bully is at risk of being a “school failure and drop out” leading to criminal acts in young adulthood (Healthwise).

### **Causes and Effects:**

Systematic international research has shown school bullying to be a frequent and serious public health problem. (School Bullying is Nothing New, But Psychologists Identify New Ways to Prevent It) Bullying has the ability to cause serious affects to a child’s physical health and mental health. The victim often experiences solitude and sadness regularly, which leads to having negative feelings about themselves, aiding in the demolition of the child’s confidence. Physical symptoms can include headaches and stomach aches that are an onset of the constant worrying of the next bully occasion and constant manipulation to find ways to avoid the setting of school. Ultimately, these young children can be exposed to negative feelings about themselves, in general, quite a while after the bullying has ceased, even into adulthood. (RC)

One of the main malfunctions that are caused within the victim is stress. Stress affects one's entire immune system. When one encounters the violence of bullying, it causes the body to be unable to keep within homeostasis; the body's goal of maintaining a physiological state that is both stable and consistent. It is stress that has the ability to affect one's health. (Hales 67)

Each person's stress levels can be affected at different levels depending on the level of resilience the individual child has. Stress can aid in triggering psychological disorders depending on the biological and psychological factors, including genetics, which put individuals at greater risk, but cannot trigger the illness only as a result of stress. Additionally, the stress of being bullied can cause "increased heart rate, digestive problems, and tight muscles, which aid in an immune system malfunction where the child might endure respiratory infections and sore throats, together with varying aches. (Ellis), (RC)

Stress hormones have the ability to affect memory and can cause neurons to degenerate and die. As a result, the child can experience anxiety, headaches, depression and disrupted sleep. The "immune system is depressed," aiding in "increased susceptibility to infection" as well as a slower healing process (68,69). The juvenile's breathing quickens during these stressful situations and their vulnerability to colds and respiratory contagions increases. Furthermore, stress related to social isolation puts the individual at risk for cardiovascular disease within the onset of adulthood. "Stress may be the most significant inherited risk factor in people who develop heart disease at a young age" (Hales 70). Victims of the horrors of bullying may develop feelings of being mistrustful and suspicious of people, in general, as a defense mechanism and are "twice as likely to suffer blockages of their coronary arteries. . . . Social isolation, depression, and stress may be an even stronger risk factor" for men who were bullied as boys (70).

Many of the common defense mechanisms that individuals use to ease anxiety and eliminate stress include denial; displacement, which would explain bully-victims, because they redirect their feelings from the person(s) who bullied them and place that anger onto a more safe substitute; and repression, where the child's feelings are pushed down into subconscious, revealing themselves in other forms of psychological problems such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Individuals who suffer from PTSD have a higher tendency to suffer from "cognitive impairments, including memory problems," which make the tasks of schoolwork and memorization more difficult and compounds the original horrors of bullying (Hales 82).

The act of bullying is an epidemic problem throughout the world, which can and does cause harm to both the victim and the bully. Through the emotional damage, a child's self-esteem is one of the things that bullying has a profound effect on. When the victim is targeted for the purpose of bullying, their self-image changes drastically. They view themselves as undesirable and incapable of being able to protect themselves and view the world, in general, as unsafe. Essentially, they are branded, like a deep seeded scar, that they are less than their true worth. Their mind, in essence, becomes their enemy. These scars can and usually stay with the victim for the remainder of their life making it difficult to have productive relationships because of the emotional damage that had been endured. Dr. Dombeck offers supporting information:

Children lose out on opportunities for advancement and further study, and ultimately, employment. I've read retrospective studies where people report having left school early so as to avoid continued bullying, and this of course will have altered and limited the job prospects they have available to them as adults. . . bullying harms and developmentally delays people's progress. (Dombeck Ph.D.)

The physical effects of bullying can lead to physical harm and possibly even death. For the victim, they can incur cuts, scrapes, bruising, and even damage to their clothing and property. The physical effects can lead to death for the victim if he/she chooses suicide. Moreover, it can also lead to a finalized result and a premature end of additional life or lives if the bullied child starts carrying a weapon to protect themselves and utilizes it against their bully or bullies.

This leads into psychological effects which can affect both the bully and the bullied. Bullies are also injured psychologically, as a result of bullying. For example, the “United States Health Resources and services Administration (HRSA)” states that youngsters who engage in bullying have a higher rate, than those who do not bully, “to skip school, drop out of school, smoke, drink alcohol, and get into fights, . . . which can lead to drug abuse and alcohol abuse,” as well as the participation of criminal behaviors (Hamel). Such abuses have a high probability of the bully having negative health effects.

Klebold and Harris, the victims of bullying, who took their own lives after taking out their bullies, suffered psychologically; for example, students’ stated that the two murderers were members of a self-proclaimed group called the Trench Coat Mafia and were bullied viciously for a minimum of at least four years. The two boys wore black colored trench coats, army gear, and displayed Nazi symbols. Furthermore, they talked to each other in German and were open about their fascination about both Hitler and World War II. This aided in instigating heightened levels of bullying from the other cliques in the school. (Leone 28) Additionally, “HRSA states that 60% of boys who were bullies in middle school had at least one criminal conviction by the age of 24” (Hamel). Moreover, the destructive actions that bullies engage in cannot be sustained later in life as they get older because social interactions of this magnitude are not acceptable.

It has been reported that children have a tendency to be impacted at a reduced rate if they were bullied before their teenage years than those who experience being bullied for the first time within their teen years. Those that felt the effect of being bullied in the earlier years “report experiencing higher long-term stress levels than do people who were never bullied” and those who fell victim for the first time as a teenager, engaged in “long-term social withdrawal” (Dombeck Ph.D.).

The drastic and most devastating effect of bullying can lead to feelings where the child thinks they are worthless and become depressed, which has a high probability of interfering within the juvenile’s schoolwork. The child’s psychological state and mood is altered. The constant worrying about being bullied and anticipating the next occurrence of violence that they will be plagued with makes it difficult for the victim to concentrate on essential tasks. (Hamel) It can take a grave turn and lead the sufferer to the final conclusion, with the goal of ending the extreme misery and agony in an effort to deal with the ongoing tragedy by making that last and only decision left, to end the horridness once and for all: Suicide. The pain and horror become too much for the child to deal with and death seems to be the only choice left to end the continuous and knife-biting pain that is dealt with on a daily basis.

“Do you know what it is like to walk into the bathroom and see your child’s lifeless looking body lying on the bathroom floor?” (Alexander) “It is a parent’s worst nightmare to have to mentally, physically, and emotionally anticipate the situation as you feel for your child’s pulse to see if you were too late.” (Alexander) “My life flashed before my eyes,” stated the mom. As Danielle reached down to feel for her daughter’s pulse, her whole life and family dynamic changed that day because they could no longer resume life and daily tasks in the same manner. Thankfully, the tiny and faint pulses tapped against her fingers. It was a sigh of relief that she did not lose her

first born child. Acting in the moment, she shouted out for her twelve year old daughter to call 911, while holding Alexandra in her arms. This bittersweet moment had other effects at that instant.

“Mommy, is Alexandra dead,” asked the youngest child, age five. Her big sister, who always played with her and helped to take care of her, did not look so good. The two youngest children who have Autism witnessed the scene, which may affect them psychologically and with them, it is a waiting game to see if there will be any affects.

The mother of this child had lost her own mother to cancer when she was just a child and was extremely thankful that she did not have to endure any parent’s worst nightmare: Burying their own child. Danielle stated that it was such a senseless way for her daughter to feel as a result of other children’s bullying; children that had been in her home, shared and broke bread at the same table in which she prepared. Alexandra’s mom shared a thought, “It is astonishing what a negative turn jealousy can take. It is like she has a target on her back and those bullies are continuously going after my daughter. They are so vicious and it is just not fair.” (Alexander) Danielle had spoken with the other parents and was shocked by the denial and unresponsiveness to holding their children accountable for aiding in one of the most destructive acts of violence: Bullying and almost being successful at bullying another child to death.

Alexandra had to go away for six months to a psychiatric facility for treatment as a result of her attempted suicide. A bottle of pills was what she felt would be the ultimate remedy and only way out from all of the emotional pain she had been suffering. “It was the most difficult time of the family’s life because we were not able to see her for Christmas or Easter,” Danielle shared. The parents told the younger siblings that Alexandra went away to visit a family friend for a vacation to aid in shielding Alexandra’s sisters and brother, from the added horror.

Once Alexandra had come back home, from the facility, the bullying persisted in school, on the social website, Facebook, which she was not on, and on the bus. Danielle advocated for her child with the school district, to no avail. The school had stated they could not do anything about the cyber bullying and also said that they had “no proof” of the bullying in school. The already financially struggling family, with the mounding bills as a result of the medical attention that was needed for the two younger autistic children, had no choice but to remove their daughter from the public school and put Alexandra into a paid private school, which they would have to somehow finance. Danielle said that they had no other choice because they had to answer Alexandra’s pleas for help. “Please do not make me go back to school, Mommy. It is horrible and I feel like I just want to die,” cried Alexandra.

Bullying did not only affect Alexandra, but her entire family. Danielle takes Alexandra to see a psychiatrist once a week and also has her on anti-depressants. “We are behind on our mortgage and bill collectors are saturating the phone line and voicemail, but I have to pay for Alexandra’s medication and for her to attend this private school,” stated Danielle in a heavy and saddened voice. She then perked up and the strength darted through her eyes and she said, “We will do everything we have to in order to protect our daughter!”

Alexandra has been attending a private Catholic school and she is doing well, to-date. Danielle and her husband still continuously have to check in on their daughter and their awareness to any sadness that Alexandra is feeling is extremely heightened. They even have to parent differently and are afraid of the fact that their fear of telling their daughter, “no,” might be aiding in other problems down the road. “We do not want to take the chance on having her give up on life; therefore, we choose our battles,” said Danielle. She can no longer lean on Alexandra to help with babysitting her younger siblings because they are afraid to leave her alone at any time. The way the

family now parents their children has changed and so has their lives. Additionally, the entire family dynamic has been altered, but the mom said that she was just thankful God did not call her baby back home that frightful day. When she has more available time, in a couple years after the two youngest are older, she wants to take steps to advocate against bullying.

There were other parents who were not so lucky. Hope Witsell, a thirteen year old girl from Florida, made a mistake in sending a “topless photo of herself to a boy in hopes of gaining his attention,” but instead, she ended up getting the negative attention of her entire school, together with another high school, nearby. She was out-casted by her peers: “They literally surrounded Hope as she walked the hallways while other students shouted “whore” and “slut” at her” (Inbar). Hope wrote in her journal of the bullying, which eventually became too unbearable. “I’m done for sure now. I can feel it in my stomach. I’m going to try and strangle myself. I hope it works” (Inbar). Unfortunately, she was successful in having the bullying push her over the edge. She hung herself: An innocent child lost to suicide as a result of bullying. (Inbar)

Kameron Jacobson, took his life at the age of fourteen, just a couple months before his next birthday. He was a freshman in high school and was also the victim of bullying where he endured a brutal assault during one of his sports travel team practices. He only weighed 72 pounds. According to Kameron’s father, his son had signs of being bullied because he started to withdraw, quietly, from his family, but did eventually gather up the courage to finally open up and let his family know that “ he was being bullied both in school and over the internet” (Jacobsen). Kameron was a victim of intense cyber bullying via Facebook, where the bullies taunted him about their perceived perception that he was gay. (Simon) Another innocent life lost to suicide as a result of bullying.

Tyler Clementi made the ultimate sacrifice after being bullied by his roommate in 2010 when the roommate, from Rutgers University, engaged in cyber bullying, captured him via webcam and then posted Tyler kissing another person of the same sex; a man. (Bindley) This roommate watched with amusement and got a laugh with another observing student. Tyler was an eighteen year old freshman and accomplished violinist. The end result of this cyber bullying incident was that Mr. Clementi jumped to his death into the Hudson River, from the George Washington Bridge on September 22, 2010. (Foderaro) “A child commits suicide as a direct result of being bullied once every half hour with 19,000 bullied children attempting to commit suicide over the course of one year” (Sheridan).

In Massachusetts, a younger high school child, age fifteen, named Phoebe Prince was tormented by a group of six of her peers. (Bindley) After enduring continuous bullying of “taunting and physical threats” Phoebe was pressed to the end of her will and hung “herself from a stairwell” (Eckholm). Eckholm indicated the bullies will be charged and face the possibility of having criminal records as a result of their sadistic behaviors: “In the Prince case, two boys and four girls, ages 16 to 18, face a different mix of felony charges that include statutory rape, violation of civil rights with bodily injury, harassment, stalking and disturbing a school assembly” (Eckholm).

Another devastating effect of bullying can result in furthered deaths and injury to school children and staff members. Over thirty students and teachers have become deceased as a result of school shootings and just about one hundred and fifty individuals have been injured as a result of the same within the schools of America. (Leone 7)

Students who are extremely bright and known for their intelligence can also be the perpetrators of such violence as a result of being bullied; for example, in February 1996, an honor

student in Moses Lake, Washington, by the name of Barry Loukaitas, shot and killed an algebra teacher and another student. The honor student, turned killer, was the “target of taunts by fellow classmates” (Fried xi). Nathan was teased and bullied because he was overweight and because of his intelligence. He was also labeled a geek. Nathan was bullied as early as his elementary school years and “endured endless name-calling, teasing, humiliation, and isolation” (Fried). He had hopes of things changing when he moved up into the middle school and kept a positive attitude that it would get better because he thought his fellow peers would mature. Unfortunately, this was not the case and not only did the bullying continue, but it escalated and got worse. The kids were much more brutal. He could not deal with the pain after years of suffering, especially with the heightened level of cruelty, which led him to furthered horror as he shot another student and teacher. He then turned the shotgun on himself and left the awfulness of the action in the minds of all his classmates who were witnesses. As a result, all of the bystanders became victims and might have been psychologically injured for the rest of their lives, with the horror their eyes saw that dreadful day.

### **Obstacles to Effectively Deter Bullying:**

Bystanders are a major obstacle in effectively deterring bullying. There are two main categories of bystanders: Hurtful and helpful. The helpful bystanders take the initiative to either directly intervene to stop the bullying or call for help to aid the victim. The negative or hurtful bystanders are individuals who are barriers to the reduction of violence. Bystanders that instigate, encourage, and/or join in and become participants of such horror do not discourage bullying and actually give incentives and rewards to the originator of the bullying. The last category of bystanders, which most children have a tendency to be classified in, encompasses those who passively accept the violence they are witnessing and do not take any steps to stop it. These individuals, are usually oblivious to the fact that they are contributors to the horridness they are

witnessing and also do not realize that they are rewarding the bully by providing an audience the merciless individual seeks to entertain and empower their ego. The silent recognition by these passive and accepting bystanders encourages the bully or bullies to continue the viciousness of their actions. (Craig) Author Marian Wilde shares an example:

An eighth-grader approaches a sixth-grader in a crowded girls' locker room. The older girl says to the younger, "Those are some ugly shoes you've got there." Then, in front of everyone, she takes out a permanent marker and slashes X's on the younger girl's shoes, ruining them. The bystanders stare and shake their heads, but do not intervene or try to discourage the bully. (Wilde)

Bullying is usually enacted when adults are not present and the children who are spectators are part of the problem pertaining to bullying. This needs to be changed. "According to John A. Calhoun, president and CEO of the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), six out of ten American teenagers witness bullying in school one or more times each day" (Athealth).

Freud's death instinct plays a large role with respect to the bully and the bullied. The bully sublimates these negative feelings that he/she has through subjecting another to violence and as a result, he/she feels a moment of glory. Within the victim, the life and death instincts simultaneously engage in combat inside the individual. It is nature, and each person is unique, but all have this dueling fire and ice that resides within. "Aggression is an innate human response . . . teasing, taunting, and bullying will always be a part of life in general;" therefore, authors Suellen Fried and Dr. Paula Fried believe that bullying can never be fully eradicated (Fried). Bullying has always been prevalent in society, but it is through education and awareness that can make the weak people, who are usually classified as victims, become stronger and more aware of ways to protect themselves in

non-violent ways, while on the other hand, the strong who take advantage of their strength can learn the impacts of their tyranny and acquire empathy and compassion for others.

Moreover, parents and guardians play an important role in the solutions to bullying. It is important for parents to listen to their children and to have open dialogues with regards to “school, social events, other kids in class, and the walk or ride to and from school” (Bullies: A Serious Problem for Kids). Additionally, educators need to be trained effectively to be open and listen, also. Therefore, it is important to take all complaints seriously, with regards to bullying. Acting in an investigative way towards the grievance is necessary, since it enables the educator to possibly uncover a problem that may be much more severe and complicated than what was initially stated. It is imperative to pay attention, very closely, because many children tend to be embarrassed and/or afraid to share their situations of being bullied. (Bullies: A Serious Problem for Kids) Furthermore, adults, including both parents and school officials, need to keep a watchful eye to catch symptoms that may be indicating that a child is being subjected to bullying; for example, if a child who used to play with the other children starts to withdraw and/or his/her grades start to slip and go south; this can be an indication of a red flag.

Additionally, a problem lies in the fact that students have rights and they are quick to remind teachers that their parents can sue, makes it difficult because just about half of all teachers (49%) criticize our culture and laws stating that they have been “accused of unfairly disciplining a student” (Daniels 11). Students that bully, as well as students that are bullied, can display behavioral problems and the attitudes in many schools are that the teachers want the students with behavior problems removed from their classrooms, or put into specialized schools for troubled youths. This is a deterrent to effectively eradicating bullying because the underlying causes of the behaviors are not researched and dealt with.

The bullies, victims, and bully-victims are being ostracized, even further, by their teachers because the primary attitude that is held is that the child with the behavior problem is causing the other students to suffer as a result of their negative behavior. Seventy-seven percent of educators “admit their teaching would be a lot more effective if they didn’t have to spend so much time dealing with disruptive students” (Daniels 12,13).

When Hunter, the bully-victim discussed earlier in this paper, was treated with this negative type of mentality from educators, while attending the Pennsylvania school district, it aided in lowering his self-esteem. It also made him feel like an outcast, not only from the students and his bullies but from the adult school officials, as well. He would engage in more negative behaviors. Keep in mind that the school’s attitude towards his behavior was that he was a bad kid and they broadcasted this message to Hunter’s parents on a regular basis. They would state, “We have never had such a bad kid in our school system. He is just the worst.” After his parents sought help to identify the problem, within the Pennsylvania school system, the school’s suggestion was to try and get the pediatrician to label him ADHD so that they could put him on medication. It was not until the family moved into New York that the parents were encouraged to have Hunter visit a psychiatrist to get an official evaluation done. He was diagnosed, at that time, with both ADHD and ODD.

The Pennsylvania school district did not show empathy towards the child, Hunter, but looked to get the best quick fix in having the child drugged-up. They were not skilled at working with a child who was not only being bullied, but who suffered from his own psychological and psychiatric problems. The solution and mentality does not lie in ridding the classroom of students who misbehave or even in encouraging the parents to get a note from the pediatrician based on a form the school officials and parents complete to label the child with a diagnosis without a full

evaluation, but in addressing the issues behind the negative behaviors. That is significant: Getting to the root causes of the negative behaviors.

Therefore, our nation's colleges and universities need to include academic requirements within the curriculum to teach and prepare new graduating teachers how to effectively deal with children who have behavioral problems. It can be the difference in bullies', bully-victims', or the bullied children's lives. Additionally, it can give an opportunity to these children in making sure they know that they have someone in their corner who cares about them and also helps them to get the proper counseling, while aiding them onto a path of unlocking the underlying root causes with regards to their sufferance at the level of being the bully, being the victim of being bullied, or both.

### **Solutions to Bullying:**

"Forty-one other states have anti-bullying laws of varying strength" (Eckholm). Cyber bullying is problematic within the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and proactive steps are a necessity to reduce the threats of technology. It needs to be tackled at different levels; for example, through educating our country's children, parents, and guardians, as well as the community and schools with regards to the importance of internet safety. The same needs to be extended to get people involved in advocating for stricter laws to deter individuals from engaging in cyber bullying. If an individual is going to make the merciless choice of bullying, they should have to be faced with the daunting task of being held accountable in the court of law for their actions.

In the Phoebe Prince case, the school "did not violate any laws," but their actions, as well as the inactions of the school officials were bothersome (Eckholm). Our society needs to have laws enacted across all fifty states and also needs to have enforcement of those laws that place more accountability on bystanders and witnesses to such awfulness. A study done by Whitney and Smith

(1993), stated that “eighteen percent of the participating middle and high school students said that they would join in if their friends were bullying someone” (Athealth). If there were tough consequences in the law books, then negative actions would be deterred.

Moreover, states need to impose government regulations to ensure that all states have enacted laws that require educators, at the school level, to teach their students the importance of safety, as well as the impact of technology, on others. This teaching tool, essentially, would lead into all aspects aside from bullying. Freehold, New Jersey, Township and Borough, as well as other schools have taken responsibility to ensure the safety of all of its students. When utilizing technology, every child and their parents/guardians are required to sign an acknowledgement to the policies that are expected to be followed. This signed contract also indicates what is and is not appropriate behavior. The child does not get to utilize any technology until the contract is signed, and turned into the class teacher. This extends to the use of technology brought to school from home, too. Cellular phones, in many school districts are not allowed to be in the classroom and are expected to be left in the locker. (Brown)

Some educators will choose to implement blogs into their teaching programs and need to be highly sensitive to the ugliness that this type of teaching tool can turn into: A gossiping center, where children can fall victim to bullying. The article written by Eckholm showed some insight to a prospective solution to aid with bullying and suicide with their interview:

"The idea is that if you adopt a broad spectrum approach to preventing mental health problems, that you're also going to reduce the bullying," said Cook. "If you look at the scientific literature, bullying prevention programs haven't shown to be effective. It's addressing the symptom and not the cause." Cook suggests teachers adopt a

social emotional learning curriculum as they would a reading curriculum. "We'd teach kids how to exhibit care and concern for others, how to manage their emotions before they get the best of them," Cook explained. (Eckholm)

Some other solutions to aid in the deterrence of bullying includes placing metal detectors in the schools; adding additional security; removing lockers to eliminate a space for harboring weapons; and enacting zero tolerance policies for bullying all together. Within the classroom setting, parents and school officials can implement a teaching program to help children have a better understanding of each other. Outlets to discuss any problems should also be provided for the students. It is stated that most schools are hostile environments for children; therefore, it is the responsibility of the school institutions to come up with ways to “ensure that students become more accepting of each other” (Leone 8). Knowledge is power!

Another important facet includes the media which has played an important role in the aspect of awareness. In broadcasting the horrors of suicides as a result of bullying; violence as a result of lashing out at one's aggressors or stories showing how the bully or bullies took it too far aid in bringing this sour issue to light. Also, features on television in the form of films also raise awareness with regards to online cyber bullying. Other celebrity-like figures such as Ellen Degenerates and Dr. Phil Mc Graw have used the platform they have been given to discuss and broadcast the need for continued awareness in the realms of bullying and violence.

Moreover, psychologists are using research to develop bullying prevention programs that are being implemented in schools around the world. The American Psychological Association states that “Dr. Olweus' research has led to the development of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, a comprehensive, multilevel, school-wide program designed to reduce and prevent bullying among

students in elementary, middle, and junior high schools” (School Bullying is Nothing New, But Psychologists Identify New Ways to Prevent It). Olweus’s program, which is focused in the realms of intervention, is constructed on four main principles. This aids in giving fewer incentives to the bully and also includes:

Creating a school - and ideally, also a home - environment characterized by: (1) warmth, positive interest, and involvement from adults; (2) firm limits on unacceptable behavior; (3) consistent application of non-punitive, non-physical sanctions for unacceptable behavior and violation of rules, and, (4), adults who act as authorities and positive role models. The program works both at the school, the classroom and the individual levels, and important goals are to change the "opportunity and reward structures" for bullying behavior, resulting in fewer opportunities and rewards for bullying. (School Bullying is Nothing New, But Psychologists Identify New Ways to Prevent It)

Advocating and furthered research are needed, too. Olweus’s research, together with fellow “psychologists such as Susan Limber, Ph.D., of Clemson University,” has been utilized as part of an effort for a “bullying prevention campaign launched in 2004 by the United States Department of Health and Human Services {“Take a Stand. Lend A Hand. Stop Bullying Now!”}” (School Bullying is Nothing New, But Psychologists Identify New Ways to Prevent It). Both public service radio announcements and television ads are featured by this campaign. (School Bullying is Nothing New, But Psychologists Identify New Ways to Prevent It)

Also, it is necessary for parents and educators to be knowledgeable and transfer this information to the young in order to help them. The silent passive bystander usually does not

intervene with bullying, essentially heightening the environment for the bullying to continue because they either feel the occurrence has nothing to do with them; therefore, it is not their business; are afraid and fear becoming the victims themselves and do not want to draw any negative attention to themselves, especially any sorts of retribution; may feel powerless; have the mindset that the victim deserves the violence they are enduring because of a dislike they have for the victim; are afraid that they will make the situation worse for the victim by intervening; or just do not know what to do. (Craig)

With knowledge comes power and it is important for our children to be skillful in conflict resolution and in ways to help deter and stop violence in its tracks. This can be done by adults advocating and preparing the youth of our culture to take steps to be helpful bystanders. For example, parents should have conversations with their children and discuss the ways children have available to them to alter the course of another who is being victimized and also let them know that they have the full support of the adults around them, in taking the steps to end the violence.

Adults encompass a wealth of life experiences and wisdom, which can be transferred down through the generations to educate and provide solutions in how young people can be helpful citizens by sharing their own stories of courage in helping a victim. In painting a visual picture for children on the positive effects and differences they can make in our world through the knowledge of real-life situations and learned stories of their elder's experiences, would aid in the reduction of bullying. Also, teachers can contribute in a positive way, through sharing their stories and knowledge for the resolution of violence. (Craig) A key to taking steps towards eradicating bullying might include bystanders who are empowered. "A number of experts today say that bystanders have the power to drastically reduce bullying at schools" (Wilde).

Our society is on the right path in taking steps to minimize bullying, but still have a long way to go. The children of our culture are our country's future and it is imperative that stronger stances and increased awareness on the devastation and prevalence of bullying violence is elevated to aid in steps towards eradicating bullying; a social, psychosocial, and physiological destructor of young citizens, who are changed as a result of such negativity. The twenty first century has seen added and new forms of bullying with the onset and evolutionary change within technology that is available to our children. Bullies, bully-victims, and victims are all, in the end, part of destruction in the ultimate sense. The awfulness that this action comprises includes mayhem, damage emotionally and physically, and it also leaves deep seeded scars in the core of our children's minds and souls, which ultimately changes who they would have been without having endured such devastation. The bully and the uncounseled bully-victim are both seeking to satisfy their death instincts together with their desire for control, dominance, power, as well as satisfaction and/or gratification when they engage in these acts of horror. This type of violence encompasses many causes and effects, and obstacles that stand in the way of deterring the actions of bullying. Though steps have and continue to be taken to fight this epidemic, furthered progress needs to be made to significantly reduce the levels of such violence and bring it as close to the levels of eradication as possible. We have an epidemic within our society because the psychological and social effects of school place and cyber bullying are taking a devastating toll on today's youth, the future of our country.

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