

# Understanding Bullying and What We Can Do



CENTER FOR SAFE SCHOOLS



## Presenter

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# Handouts

- [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ATmerdyHLzMse-VW54ny\\_VGjS42A88Hx?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ATmerdyHLzMse-VW54ny_VGjS42A88Hx?usp=sharing)



Have Fun



Be Present



Ask Questions in  
the chat



Take Care of  
Yourself

## EXPECTATIONS

# Agenda

- Evidence-based bullying prevention
- What it is and what it's not
- Different forms of bullying
- How it impacts children, adults, families, schools and communities
- Understanding the bullying behavior
- Intervening in bullying situations

## Rate your understanding of bullying behavior

1. You're an expert, know and understand bullying behaviors and can intervene without hesitation.
2. You have an adequate understanding of bullying behavior, will intervene and follow-up when receiving information on suspected bullying.
3. You have a general understanding of bullying behavior and have some idea of what to do when you see it or it's reported to you.
4. You have a difficult time understanding bullying behavior and do not know when to intervene or follow-up when it's reported.
5. You do not really understand bullying behavior and have little knowledge or understanding of when to intervene or follow-up.

# What Works in Bullying Prevention

1. Focus on the school environment
2. Assess bullying at your school
3. Garner staff and parent support for bullying prevention
4. Form a group to coordinate the school's bullying prevention activities
5. Train your staff in bullying prevention
6. Establish and enforce school rules and policies related to bullying
7. Increase adult supervision in "hot spots" for bullying
8. Intervene consistently and appropriately in bullying situations
9. Focus some class time on bullying prevention
10. Continue these efforts over time

• S.P. Limber, *What Works-and Doesn't Work in Bullying Prevention and Intervention*, Student Assistance Journal, 2004 pp. 16-19

# Olweus Definition of Bullying

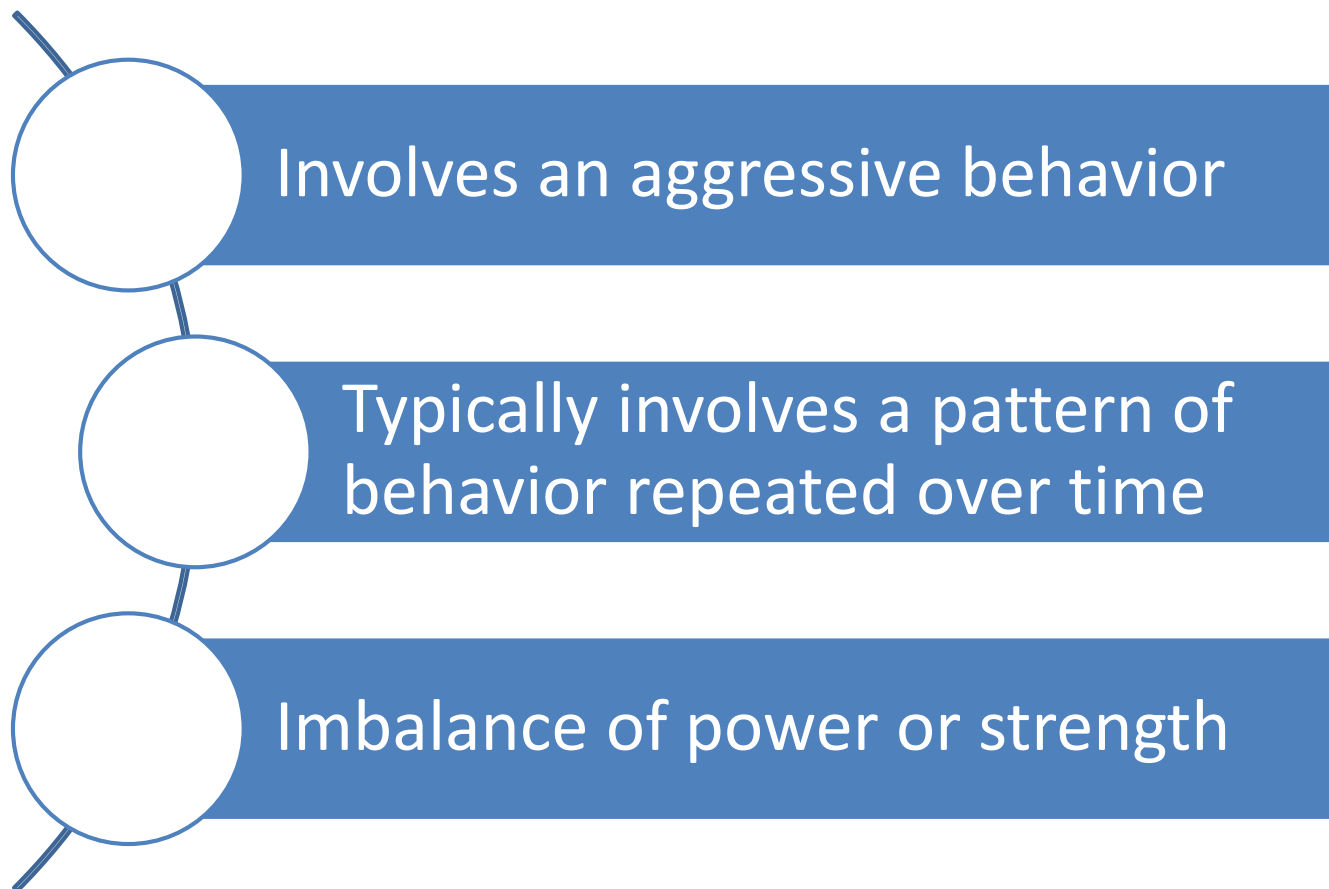


Bullying is when someone repeatedly and on purpose says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending himself or herself.





# Three Key Components of Bullying Behavior



# Bullying is Peer Abuse



# Types of Bullying

## Direct

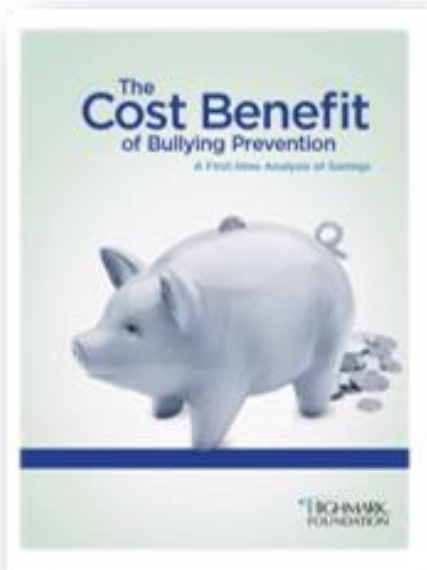
- Hitting
- Taunting
- Name calling

## Indirect

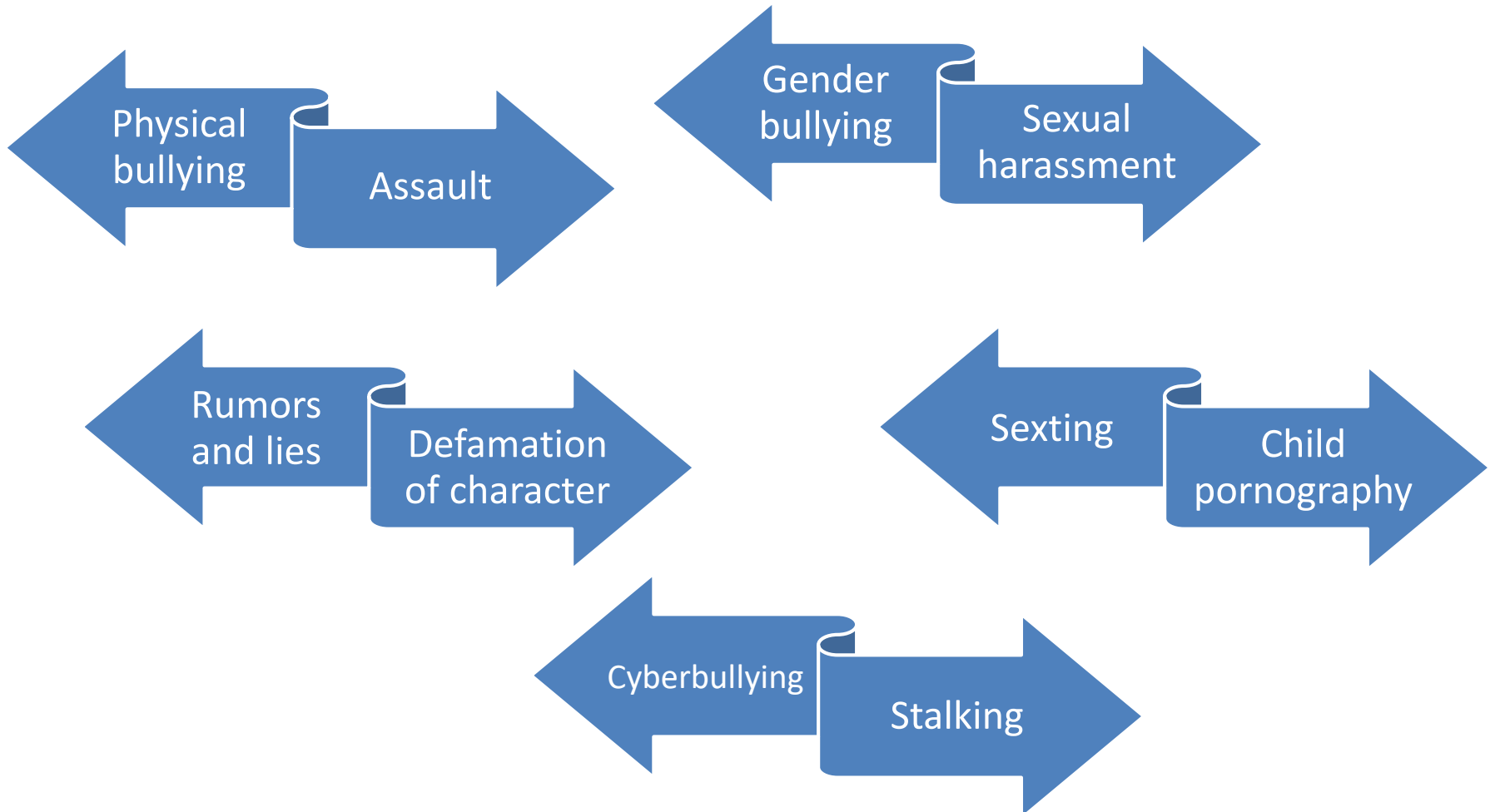
- Rumors
- Exclusion
- Cyberbullying



# Why Address Bullying?

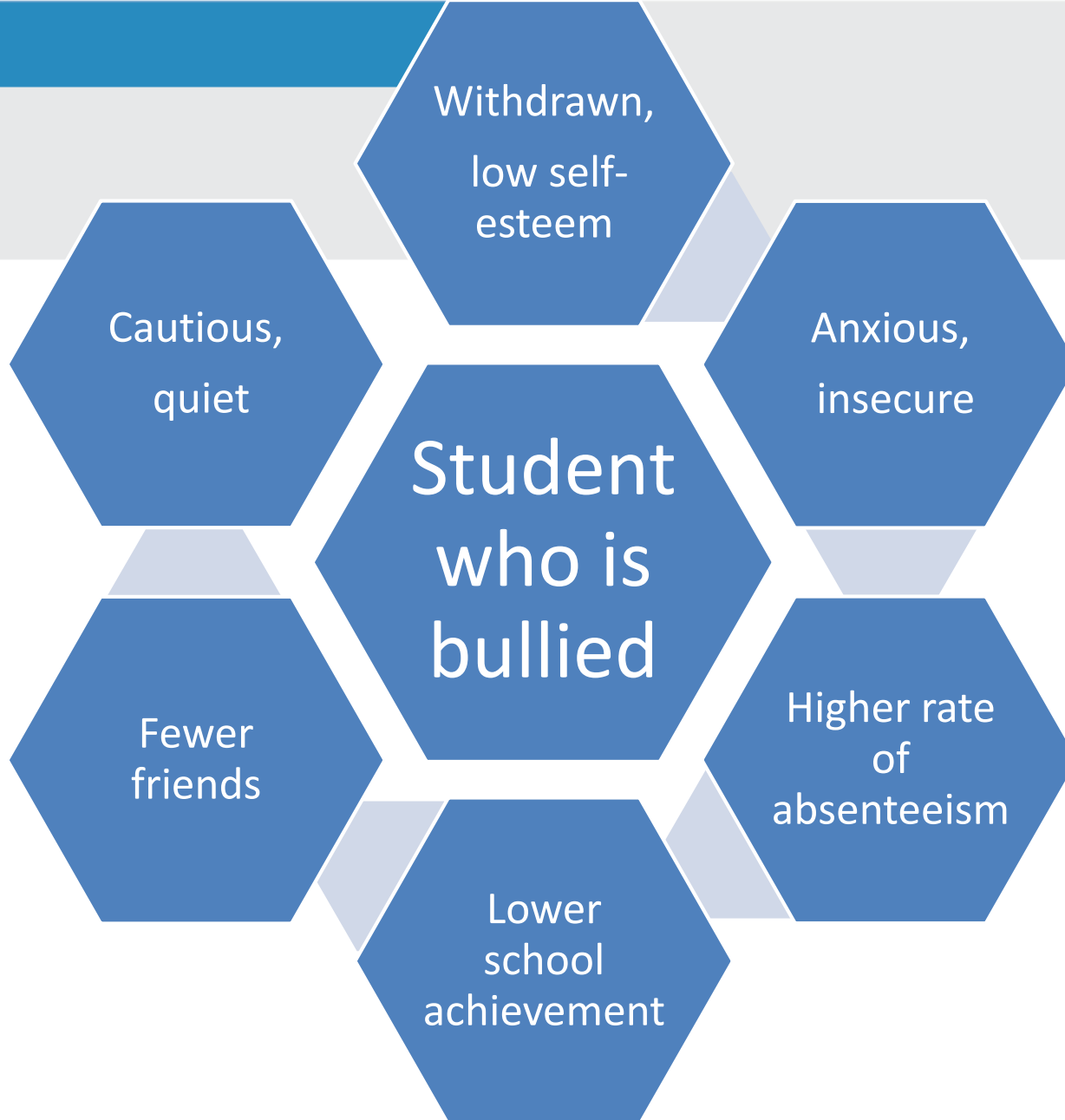


# Bullying Behavior May Violate Criminal Law



# Ultimately, it's a question of rights





# Biological Consequences

Somatic  
Disturbances

Sleep  
disturbances

Headaches

Gastrointestinal  
concerns

Increased  
Risk

Mental  
health  
problems

Cognitive  
problems

Emotional  
dysregulation

Linked to

Depression

Anxiety

Alcohol/drug  
abuse in  
adulthood





# Bullying and Risk of Suicide

- The causes of suicide are complex.
- Although children involved in bullying are at increased risk, numerous factors contribute:

- Individual
- Relational
- Community
- Societal



# Vulnerable Groups with Disparities in Prevalence of Bullying

Disabilities

Weight status

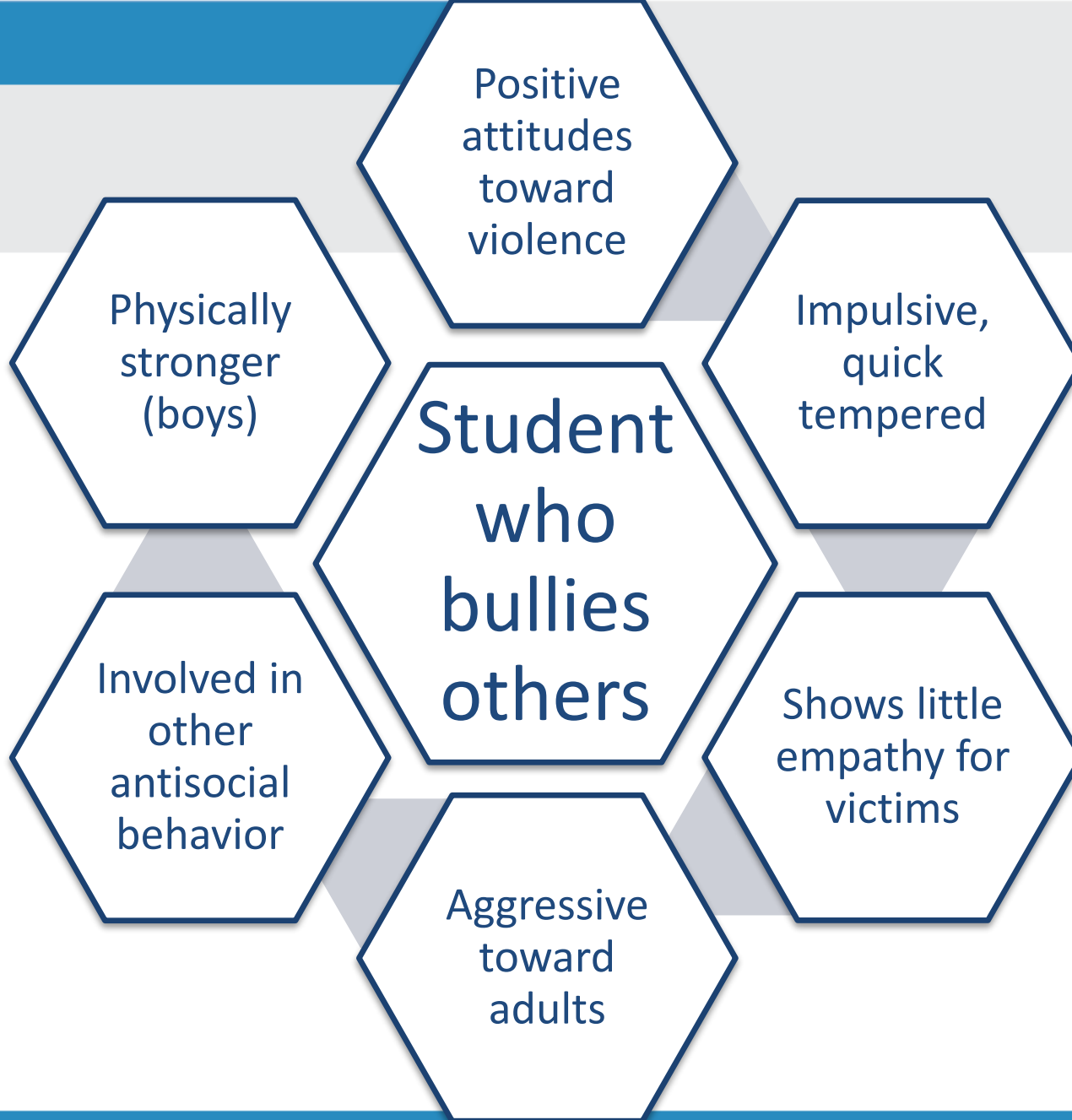
Sexual orientation and gender  
identify

Socio-economic status

Immigration status

Minority religious affiliation







# Myth or Fact?

Children who bully are loners.

- Easier time making friends than peer (Nansel et al., 2001)
- Average or somewhat below-average in popularity among peers (Olweus, 1993)

Children who bully have low self-esteem.

- Those who bully have average or above-average self-esteem (Olweus, 1993; Rigby & Slee, 1993)



# What Motivates Children Who Bully?

- Like to dominate others in a negative way
- Gain satisfaction from inflicting injury and suffering
- Receive rewards by bullying others (prestige, attention, possessions)



# Students Who Bully Others

- May be part of a conduct-disorder behavior



- Pattern may continue into young adulthood



- Middle School boys who bullied others were 4x as likely to have 3 or more convictions by age 24



# Students Who Are Bullied and Bully Others

Share characteristics

- with those who are bullied
- with those who bully others

Are less effective in bullying

Behave in ways that cause irritation and attract negative attention



# Effects of Bullying on Bystanders

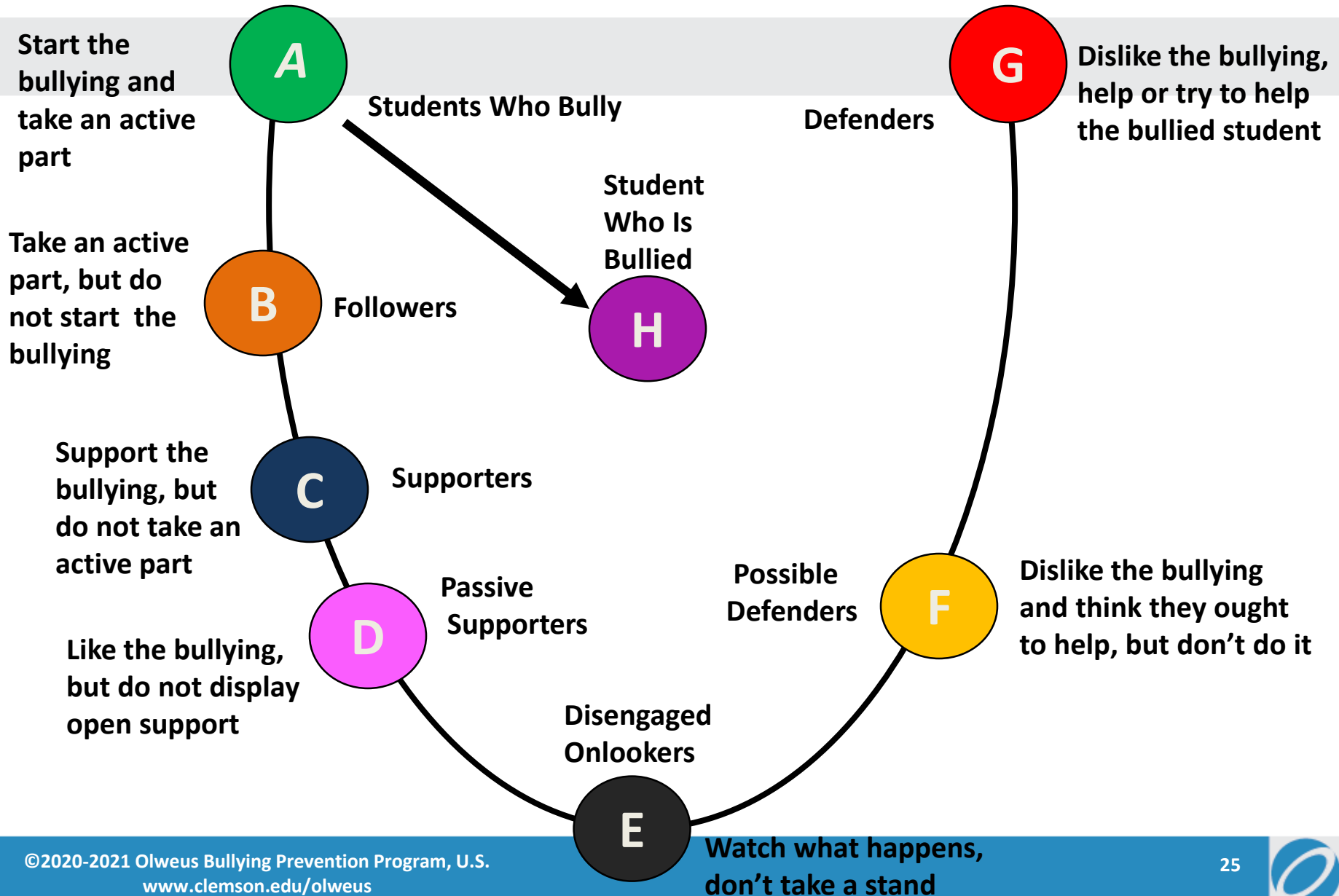
Bystanders may feel:

- Afraid
- Powerless to change the situation
- Guilty for not acting
- Diminished empathy for bullied students over time





# What Roles Do Students Play In Bullying Situations?



# Group Mechanisms in Bullying

- Social contagion
- Weakening inhibitions
- Decreased sense of responsibility
- Gradual changes in the view of bullied student(s)



# Implications for School Climate

School safety

Increases fear  
and disrespect

Interferes with  
learning

May increase  
dislike of  
school

Perceived lack  
of control and  
caring





# Adults Who Bully

How might an adult bully  
other adults?

How might an adult bully  
a student?



# Misdirections in Bullying Prevention and Intervention

- Simple, short-term solutions
- Program du jour approaches
- Group treatment for children who bully
- Anger management or self-esteem enhancement for children who bully
- Zero tolerance policies for bullying
- Selecting inappropriate supplemental materials
- Mediation/conflict resolution to resolve bullying issues



# Assess the School Climate

- Provides information on bullying and school climate
- Creates a planning tool
- Establishes baseline data for gauging progress



# Review Existing Policies

- Involvement of superintendent, school board, and attorney
- Determine policy, investigation, reporting, and tracking guidelines
- Ensure compliance with state and federal regulations
- Include cyberbullying



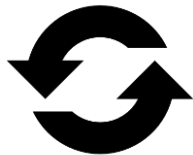
# Addressing Cyberbullying



Correlation between being bullied online and in person



Potential for anonymity but perpetrator usually known



Varied interpretations of what *repeated* looks like





# Refine the Supervisory System

Determine the hot spots

## Suggested Strategies

- Expectations
- Proximity
- Scanning
- Active engagement
- Non-verbal signals
- Re-direction
- Re-teaching



# Involve Families in Schoolwide Efforts

- Invite them to participate
- Offer schoolwide meetings
- Provide information
- Seek input
- Encourage conversation with their children about bullying



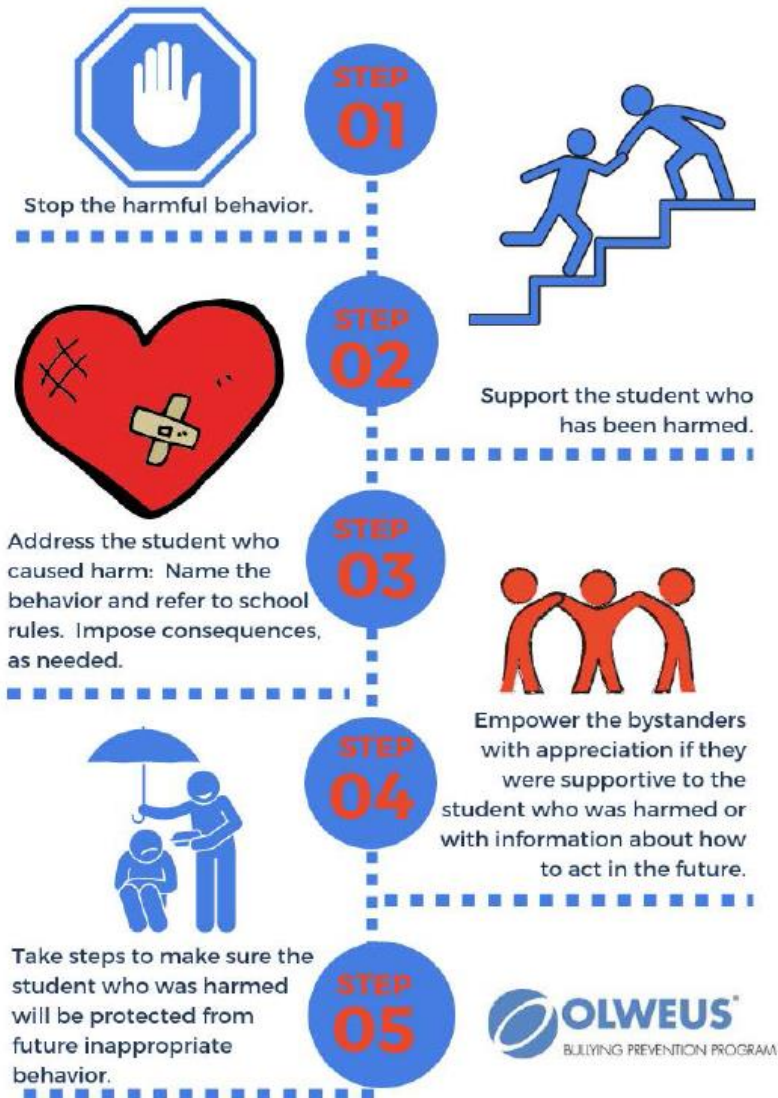
# Why Adults Don't Always Intervene

- Have difficulty recognizing bullying
- Fail to recognize the importance of intervening
- Uncertain how best to intervene
- Lack of time



# On-the-Spot Interventions

## The Teachable Moment



# When There Are Suspicions of Bullying

- Intensify your observations of the child
- Confer with colleagues
- Talk to or survey students
- Contact parents




What can we  
do?





Do Now

A black and white photograph showing a hand holding an empty birdcage. A bird is seen flying away from the cage in the upper left corner. The background is a light, hazy sky.

Sometimes letting things go  
Is an act of far greater power  
Than defending or hanging on.

*~ Eckhart Tolle ~*



Sometimes letting things go  
Is an act of far greater power  
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~ Eckhart Tolle ~

Why do you sometimes have to  
“let go” in order to live a better  
life?

What can you do if you make a  
choice that turns out to be the  
wrong choice for you?

What happens  
when  
someone else  
makes  
important  
choices for  
you?



# What is Social Emotional Learning?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

Casel.org



## CASEL Five Core Competencies

- **Self-awareness:** The ability to accurately recognize one's emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.
- **Self-management:** The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.
- **Social awareness:** The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

## CASEL Five Core Competencies (cont.)

- **Relationship skills:** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.
- **Responsible decision-making:** The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

# Relationships

Developmental relationships are the roots of young people's success. They are essential for all young people, in every community. When young people experience these relationships in their families, schools, programs, and communities, they are more likely to be resilient in the face of challenges and grow up thriving.

Through developmental relationships, young people . . .

- Discover who they are;
- Cultivate the abilities needed for them to shape their own lives; and
- Learn how to engage with and contribute to the world around them.

[Search-institute.org](http://Search-institute.org)

# Let's Talk About Relationships

What defines a  
positive, healthy  
relationship?



## More on relationships

Young people need adults in their lives who:

- Express care
- Challenge growth
- Provide support
- Share power
- Expand possibilities

Search Institute

## Hinduja Blog

“Social media and related technologies are incredible tools to bring people together and foster connection when we are physically apart, and they should be regularly used to build, maintain, and grow a positive school climate. Based on what I’ve seen anecdotally, when educators seek to interact with students online (in appropriate and transparent ways, like public school-based Instagram and Twitter accounts), the environment created there is something really special.”

<https://cyberbullying.org/coronavirus-online-learning-social-isolation-cyberbullying>



# SEL Three Signature Practices

1. Welcoming Inclusion Activities
2. Engaging Strategies
3. Optimistic Closure

SEL 3 Signature Practices Playbook, CASEL

## Welcoming Inclusion Activities

Welcoming inclusion activities – quick interactive strategies that allow all participants in the room to make a connection to the work for the day.

# SOCIAL DISTANCING GREETINGS



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## Upper Grades

- Air High Five
- Virtual Fist Bump (or physical distance fist bump)
- Self Pat on the Back
- Peace Sign
- Wave

All with a “Good Morning, Name.”

Then when they’re seated, ask them to put thumbs up if they’ve have a great day, thumbs down if it’s a not so good day, or thumbs horizontal if it’s just an okay day.

## Virtual welcoming activities

### Hold a Scavenger Hunt

- Have students get up from their seats, find something interesting from around the room, and bring it back to the meeting.
- It's a great way to get kids up and moving.
- It also allows you to spend time working on vocabulary in an enjoyable way.
- Can you find something with a unique texture? Two objects that are complementary colors? A piece of clothing with a pattern? The possibilities are endless!

## Engaging Strategies

Methods to guide and facilitate the learning process while being responsive to neurological, biological and social and emotional needs of all learners.

They should provide a balance of interactive and reflective experiences.

# Language Matters

- What
- How
- Where
- When

“The Power of Our Words, ” Paula Denton, EdD

# Affirmations besides “Good Job”

- You did it! (Or repeat back to them what they did, “You DID put your dish in the sink!”)
- How did that make you feel?
- You took a risk!
- You should feel proud of yourself, I do.
- I love that idea!
- You made a plan.
- That is interesting, tell me more.
- I love your creativity!
- You are learning to do XYZ on your own.
- You used so much {green} in your picture.
- I like the way you are thinking.
- You showed kindness.
- That was brave.
- You are an....artist, painter, builder, climber, etc.
- You worked really hard on that.
- I can’t wait to see what you do next.
- You made a good choice.
- You can do hard things.
- Show me what you learned (or what you did).
- You solved your problem.



## Three Step Interview



To use the three step interview process:

1. Divide students into groups of three, and assign three roles: interviewer, interviewee, and notetaker.
2. After also assigning a theme or topic of discussion, have students participate in a five to 10 minute interview to discuss what they found to be the key information relating to the topic.
3. After each interview, have students rotate roles. Depending on factors including the grade level of your students and their experience with the strategy, you may adjust the length of the time for each interview.

Prodigy

# Practice

## Classmate Interview

{ Pair up with a classmate and use this form to interview each other. Then use the information you collect to complete a Top 10 about your new friend. }

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Tell me about your family...

What are your interests and hobbies?

What 3 words would best describe you?

Who is someone that you admire?

What do you want to be when you grow up?

What are some of your favorite things?  
(Feel free to improvise : foods, music, movies, books, etc.)

## Optimistic Closure

Highlights an individual and shared understanding of the importance of the work.

An intentional way to engage, helping everyone leave with appreciation and energy, looking forward to connecting again.

## Elementary

### Closing Circle:

1. Wrap up the lessons for the day
2. Set a plan for tomorrow
3. Ask each student to identify one activity they enjoyed today and something they would like to learn tomorrow

# Upper Grades



## Future Me:

Provide students with paper/notecards and envelopes or use the [futureme.org](http://futureme.org) website to email themselves a letter.

1. What have you learned that you plan to apply to in the year ahead?
2. What message of encouragement do you want to send to yourself?

## Class Time

The purpose of class meetings, morning meetings or advisory meetings:

- Building those connections with the adults in school
- Supporting and creating relationships with peers
- Providing a safe place to students to build those SEL skills, develop the tools to address bullying and other social problems

# Journaling



Journaling, as a stress management and self-exploration tool, works best when done consistently, but even occasional, sporadic journaling can be stress relieving when the practice is focused on gratitude or emotional processing.

[Verywellmind.com](https://www.verywellmind.com)

# Self-Care



- Maintaining work / life balance
- Social support
- Self-reflection
- Personal therapy
- Mindfulness and spirituality

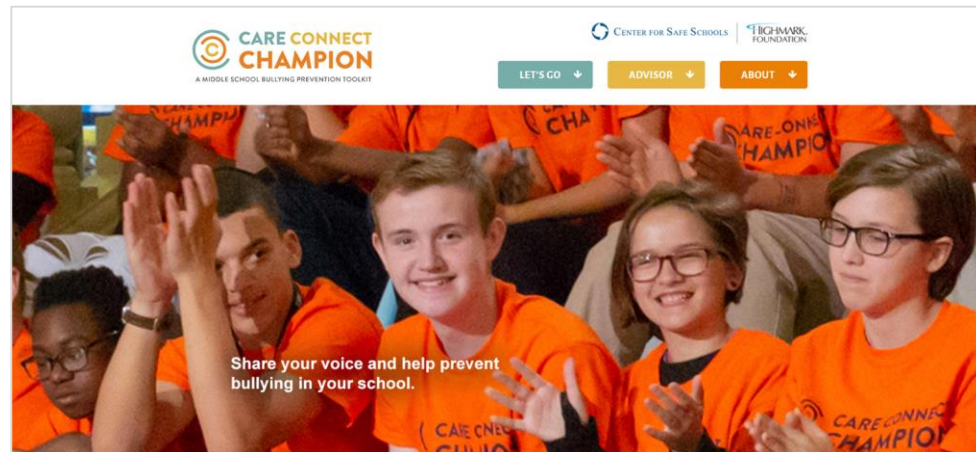


## Why This Topic Matters

- Human service work is largest risk factor for burnout
- Compassion fatigue (CF) often goes undetected
- Early detection can prevent symptoms from reaching incapacitating levels
- Education about CF is a protective factor

*(Newell & MacNeil, 2010)  
(as cited in Cole, Craigen, & Cowan, 2014)  
(Gray & Taie, 2015)  
(Lerias & Byrne, 2003)*

# Bullying Prevention Toolkits



[bptoolkit.safeschools.info](http://bptoolkit.safeschools.info) | [msbptoolkit.safeschools.info](http://msbptoolkit.safeschools.info)

## Upcoming Webinar

### **Being Safe, Kind and Respectful Online: What Educators Need to Know**

Thursday, May 20, 2021, from 3 to 4:30  
p.m. EST

For more information go to  
[thirdthursday.safeschool.info](http://thirdthursday.safeschool.info)