

## Bullying: What Does School Climate Have to Do with It?



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[ocde.us/healthyminds](http://ocde.us/healthyminds)

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## School Climate and Bullying

- 1. What is school climate and how does it impact student behavior?**
- 2. What school factors facilitate bullying behaviors?**
- 3. What school factors decrease bullying?**
- 4. What school-wide practices prevent and reduce bullying?**

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**Perceptions of Students, Staff, Community**

**Unwritten rules and traditions**

**Norms, beliefs, expectations**

**Way people think, act, dress, treat each other**



**School climate and culture is the glue that holds the school together. It is the context for learning, teaching, and performance.**

### Impacts of School Climate on Students

Motivation to learn

Learning & academic achievement

Victimization & delinquency

Feelings of connectedness and attachment to school

Emotional & mental health

Group cohesion

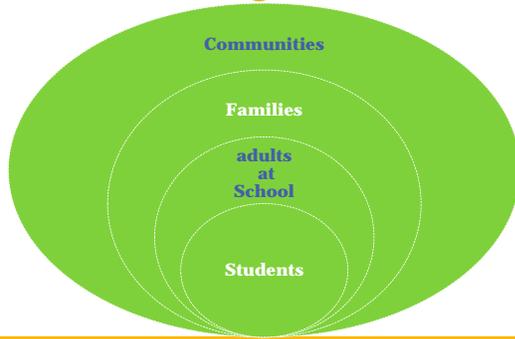
Respect and mutual trust

Feelings of safety & threat

Absenteeism & suspension



### A Social-Ecological Perspective



### Context for Bullying

A bullying interaction occurs not only because of **individual characteristics** of the youth who is bullying, but also because of **actions of peers, teachers, and staff; physical characteristics of the school environment;** and most importantly, **student perceptions** of these contextual factors.

Pintado, 2006

### Student Perceptions Matter

- Middle school boys with positive perceptions of school climate tended to have fewer aggressive and antisocial behaviors.
- Middle school youth who were highly self-critical did not show expected increases in internalizing and externalizing behaviors when they perceived their school to be a positive place.

Kuperminic et al. 1997 and 2001

### What Are Student Perceptions about Bullying?

- Teachers mean it when they make a rule.
- Physical fighting between students is a problem at this school.
- I am afraid of being beaten up at this school.
- There are areas of this school where students do not feel physically safe.
- Harassment or bullying among students is a problem at this school.
- It's common for students to tease and insult one another at this school.
- Harassment or bullying towards lesbian or gay students is a problem at this school.
- I worry that someone from this school will spread mean rumors or lies about me on the internet (e.g. Facebook, blog, Twitter, etc.)
- I often have received mean or nasty text messages or emails from other students at this school.
- I often have had mean rumors or lies spread about me on the internet by other students at this school.
- I often have had nasty pictures, photos, or videos sent to others about me.

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OCDE School Climate Student Survey Items

**Students' beliefs about violence**

**Role modeling of adults**

**Personality characteristics**



**The social climate of the school will influence students' engagement in aggressive behaviors. Baker 1998**

### Is School a Risk or Protective Factor?

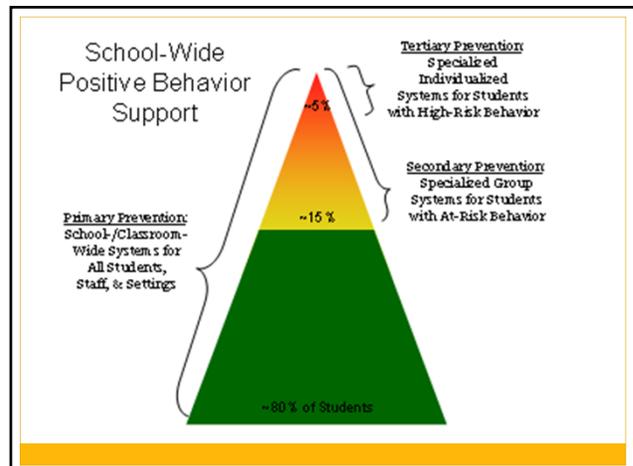
- A school can contribute to bullying behavior if the school community chooses to ignore obvious signs or is truly naïve about what happens in unsupervised hallways and playgrounds.
- Deliberately hurtful actions can easily affect individual students and escalate to serious safety issues on campus.

### Middle Schools with Less Bullying...



- Positive disciplinary actions
- Strong parental involvement
- High academic standards

Ma, 2002



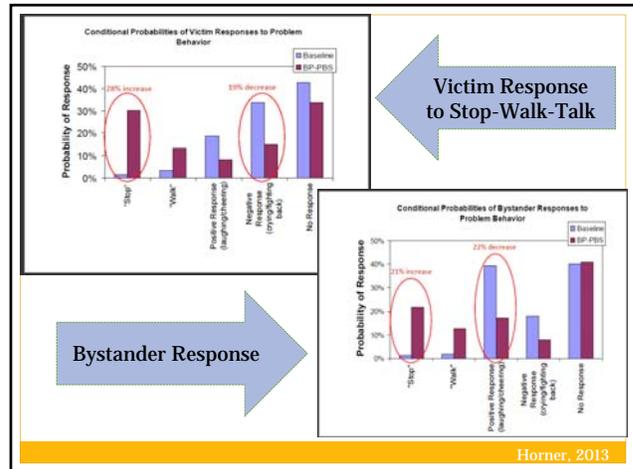
Teach a **Three-Step Skill** that can be used in all places at all times. Keep it simple

If you encounter behavior that is NOT respectful

Stop ----- Walk ----- Talk

Say and Show "STOP" → Walk Away → Talk to an Adult

Horner, 2013



### Adult-Student Relationships Matter

Reduced bullying behaviors were linked to positive teacher-student relationships.

Boyce 2004

### Ask Students about Their Relationships with Adults

- There is at least one adult at this school who I can go to for help with personal problems.
- There is at least one adult at this school who listens and pays attention to students like me.
- There is at least one adult at this school who tells me when I do a good job.
- There is at least one adult at this school who I trust.
- There is at least one adult at this school who takes a personal interest of me.
- There is at least one adult at this school who believes that I can be a success.
- There is at least one adult at this school who treats me with respect.

© 2012 Orange County Dept. of Education OCDE School Climate Online Survey

### Where Do We Go From Here?



- Create a positive, caring school climate.
- Develop youth social competence skills for engaging in healthy relationships.

Orpinas and Horne 2006

“We should want more from our educational efforts than adequate academic achievement, and we will not achieve even that meager success unless our children believe that they themselves are cared for and learn to care for others.”



Nel Noddings  
Stanford University

### TEACHING TOLERANCE

What is Mix It Up at Lunch Day?

Just what is Mix It Up at Lunch Day?

In one report, students have identified the cafeteria as the place where divisions are most clearly drawn. It is one day a week in the school year – one day students do not sit at their usual lunch table and instead sit at a table with students from other ethnic, racial, and religious groups. It is a simple act with profound implications. Studies have shown that interethnic contact during these lunch tables reduces prejudice. When students interact with those who are different from them, tension and misperceptions can be allayed.



Resources

Mix It Up offers a series of free online resources designed to help school groups and classroom teachers explore the value of mixed lunch tables. These activities can be used as ice breakers during the planning process, to get the group prepared for the event, or they can be used as in-service activities to reinforce after working to support the Mix It Up effort.

### Impacts of a Caring School Community

- Engages students in learning
- Develops and models caring relationships
- Increases prosocial skills
- Decreases aggressive and at-risk behaviors
- Improves academic achievement

Gardner 1991, Noddings 1992, Sergiovanni 1994, Berkowitz & Bier 2003; and others

### What Does Positive School Climate Look Like?

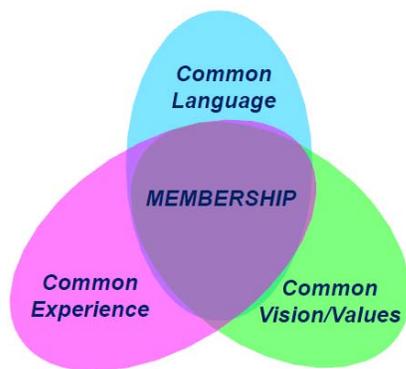
- Norms, values, expectations making students and adults socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe.
- All school community members are engaged and respected.
- Students, families, and educators work together to achieve shared school vision.

Cohen and Elias, 2011

### What Does Positive School Climate Look Like?

- Educators model and nurture an attitude emphasizing the benefits of and satisfaction from learning.
- Each person contributes to school operations and the care of the physical environment.
- Visitors to the school feel welcomed.

Cohen and Elias, 2011



Horner, 2013

### Proactive Systemic Prevention

- Establish school wide positive values (Respect, Responsibility, Civility, Safety...) and frame (permeate) interactions and interventions with this language
- Teach and reinforce behavior expectations per context
- Clearly define disrespectful behavior
- Clearly define and teach concept of "being respectful"
- Remove the reinforcers that maintain socially aggressive behaviors
- Utilize student pledges (created by students)
- Include values, expectations, etc. in student planners

Hill, ND

### Teach Students How to Get Along: It's About Skill Development



- Self-management
- Self-awareness
- Social awareness
- Relationship management
- Responsible decision making

CASEL - Consortium for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning

### What is Social and Emotional Learning?

SEL is a process of acquiring knowledge and skills related to five core competencies:



- Recognize one's emotions, values, strengths, and limitations** (Self-awareness)
- Manage emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals** (Self-management)
- Show understanding and empathy for others** (Social awareness)
- Form positive relationships, work in teams, deal effectively with conflict** (Relationship skills)
- Make ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior** (Responsible decision making)

CASEL

### Taking Action

- Collect data from all stakeholders
- Focus on the students' perceptions and insights
- Take a prevention and early identification approach
- Initiate ongoing training for staff and students
- Identify your hot spots
- Educate parents
- Include your community

### Resources

- Bully Prevention in Positive Behavior Support**  
[www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)
- The Collaborative for Academic Social Emotional Learning**  
<http://casel.org>
- Orange County Dept. of Education School Climate Survey**  
Contact Dr. Lucy Vezzuto at [lvezzuto@ocde.us](mailto:lvezzuto@ocde.us) [www.ocde.us/healthyminds](http://www.ocde.us/healthyminds)
- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program**  
<http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/index.page>
- Second Step: Social Skills for Early Childhood-Grade 8**  
<http://www.cfchildren.org/second-step.aspx>
- Steps to Respect: Bullying Prevention for Elementary School**  
<http://www.cfchildren.org/steps-to-respect.aspx>

The screenshot shows the Orange County Department of Education website. The header includes the OCDE logo and the text "ORANGE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION" and "Where Every Student Succeeds". The main content area is titled "Student Mental Health Matters" and features several articles and resources. A red arrow points to the left sidebar navigation menu, which includes links such as "Student Mental Health Matters", "Orange County Student Health Matters", "Why Student Mental Health Matters", "Early Childhood Support", and "Healthier Youth Are...".

**ocde.us/healthyminds**