

# Improving School Climate to Combat Bullying



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# Goals of this session:

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Participants will be able to:

- Define psychological safety
- Explain how bullying affects school climate
- Take away kindness activities to do with their students



# Psychological Safety

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- A belief that interpersonal risk taking can happen without the fear of ridicule from others
- Most often applied to workplaces to enhance team collaboration
- Psychological safety exists when you're NOT AFRAID TO:
  - Be Yourself
  - Make Mistakes
  - Ask Questions
  - Take Risks
  - Raise Problems
  - Disagree...while respecting a code of conduct.

# Discussion

How does psychological safety fit into a classroom instead of a workplace?

How does bullying and psychological safety affect the climate in a classroom?



# Students Who Bully

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- Have average or above average self-esteem
- Tend to be impulsive and have quick tempers
- Like to dominate others in a negative way
- Gain satisfaction from inflicting injury and suffering (prestige, attention, possessions)
- Are more likely to be involved in other antisocial or rule-breaking activities
- Are more likely to have criminal convictions as young adults

# Students Who Are Bullied

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- Have higher rates of absenteeism
- Have lower rates of school achievement
- Are more likely to suffer depression and anxiety
- Have higher incidences of health consequences such as headaches, sleep problems and abdominal pain
- Have an increased risk of suicidal ideation



# Bullying Affects the Bystanders Too

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Bystanders may feel:

- Angry
- Guilty for not intervening
- Powerless to change the situation
- Diminished empathy over time toward the student who is bullied

# Implications for School Climate

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School Safety



Increased Fear



Interferes with Learning



Increased Dislike of School



Perceived Lack of Control and Caring



# Since Bullying Affects the Whole School

IT TAKES A WHOLE  
SCHOOL APPROACH  
TO STOP BULLYING!

# Relationships Are Most Important!

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## STUDENT – STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

“We don’t bully each other when we like each other.” ~Student from South Paulding High School in Douglasville, GA

Evidence-based programs like Sources of Strength, Restorative Practices and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program teach students the skills needed to build relationships with each other.

## TEACHER – STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

Students must feel psychologically safe to learn but they also need adults to intervene in bullying situations. Students need to trust that adults in their lives will protect them.

Evidence-based programs like PBIS, Sources of Strength, Restorative Practices, Capturing Kids Hearts, and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program help to build relationships between teachers and students.



# Adult Relationships Matter Too

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- Teacher to Teacher
- Administrator to Teacher
- Parent to Teacher
- Students model their behaviors after the adults in their lives
- Students can feel if the adults in their lives care for each other
- The parent-teacher relationship can be broken if bullying is not handled quickly and safely

# Discussion

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When a student is being bullied, what relationships are affected by that behavior?

If bullying is happening throughout the school, how is the climate in the school impacted?



# Kindness Activities

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## Take One, Leave One





Student to Student  
Sidewalk Chalk Affirmations

# Random Acts of Kindness

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Large index cards with affirmations/compliments.

Start with a group of students who write and give one to another student.

The receiving student brings to the counseling office for a surprise (candy, bracelet, etc.).

The student gives the card to someone else who gets the candy, etc.

The cards go throughout the student body passing along compliments and kindness!

Bulletin board with sticky notes with positive affirmations.

Take it when you need it.

You never know who is taking them but you will be amazed at how quickly they're gone!

Have a different group of students write the notes each time.

# Kindness Activities

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“A single act of kindness  
throws out roots in all  
directions and the roots spring  
up and make new trees.”





Thank You!



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