Bullying Prevention Through School Culture Improvement
Promoting the Role of the School Counselor

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Presenter Information

- Daniel Cinotti, Ph.D.
  - Associate Professor, NYIT
  - Former school counselor
  - Approved DASA Instructor in the state of New York
  - Experience consulting and presenting with school districts and staff.
Presentation Outline

• Define **Bullying** and Relevant State Laws
  o Discuss school culture and climate

• Role of the School Counselor
  o Role conflicts that arise due to ambiguity

• Addressing School Culture While Maintaining Counselor Identity
  o Approaches to intervention
  o Systems approach to the problem
  o Importance of relationship building

• Case Study & School Culture Application

• Discussion/Questions

Poll Everywhere

• During this session, we will use an app called *Poll Everywhere*.

• You can respond to the poll slides by going to *PollEv.com/notobullying* or by using your phone to text your answer.

• If you have your laptop…simply go to *PollEv.com/notobullying* and use the website to enter your answers when prompted.

• If you have your cell phone…text NOTOBULLYING to 22333 once to join, then text your answers when prompted.

• **Here is a test slide...**
In what year was the first state anti-bullying law in the US passed?

A  1975  B  1999  C  2001  D  2010

Which state passed the nation's first anti-bullying law?
Bullying: Definitions and Laws

... Boring...but necessary.

How familiar are you with your state's anti-bullying law or policy?

- Extremely familiar.
- Somewhat familiar.
- Not at all familiar.
Traditional Definition of Bullying

Three Core Components:

1. Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

2. Bullying typically involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time (but has been expanded to include single events targeting “protected characteristics”).

3. Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.

Evolving Definition of the Term

• The idea that behavior needs to be “on purpose” or intentional is up for debate…
  o Some states are very vague about intention and others explicitly state that the reaction of the student supersedes the intention of the person acting.

• Bullying no longer needs to be repeated behavior…
  o Many state laws explicitly state that a single incident should be considered bullying if it “creates a hostile environment” and/or “impacts the educational environment”.

• An “imbalance of power” has been expanded to include historically marginalized populations…
  o Most state laws include “protected” groups or classes. These lists generally mirror federally workplace laws.
Protected Groups

Many laws include that...*no student shall be subjected to harassment or discrimination by employees or students on school property, a school bus, at a school function and/or that may occur outside school property based on their actual or perceived*:

- Race
- Color
- Weight
- National Origin
- Ethnic Group
- Religion/Religious Practice
- Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender/Gender Identity
- Sex

Components of State Law

- **Definition of Terms**
  - Purpose
  - Scope
  - Prohibited Behaviors
  - Protected Groups

- **District Policy**
  - Model Policy
  - Review of Policy

U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services [2017]
Components of State Law (cont.)

• **Components of Policy**
  - Reporting
  - Investigating
  - Keeping Records
  - Consequences to Student(s) Who Bullied
  - Referrals for Services

• **Additional Components**
  - Training

*Helpful resource: [http://www.bullypolice.org](http://www.bullypolice.org)*

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**Have you attended anti-bullying training that fulfills your state's requirements for certification?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I have already attended.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I have not but I am required to.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I have not and I am not required to.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have no idea what my state requires.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is my anti-bullying training.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Culture

• The purpose of anti-bullying laws is to address the underlying school culture issues that encourage bullying or do not discourage it enough.
• You need to accept that bullying is a school culture issue and cannot be addressed by giving consequences to individuals or small groups of students.
• A comprehensive anti-bullying program is necessary to lesson the number of incidents in your school.

The Role of the School Counselor

“You want me to do what?”
Role Ambiguity

- If the school counselor’s role is ambiguous, school counseling priorities will be set by school administrators and other stakeholders!

- Clear, transparent, proactive dissemination via numerous strategies to all key-stakeholders offers a way to advocate for profession.

  Shaimoni & Greenberger (2005)

Possible Role Conflicts for PSC’s

- **School counselors are often tapped to be the “Anti-Bullying Coordinator”:**
  - receive reports of bullying and follow-up with the person who submits.
  - conduct investigations which include the student(s) who was (were) bullied, student(s) who bullied and bystanders.
  - participate in assigning disciplinary consequences to students who bully.
  - provide counseling services as a result of the incident, often viewed as another consequence.
Appropriate Use of the School Counselor’s Time

Appropriate Duties

• providing counseling to students who have disciplinary problems
• collaborating with teachers to present school counseling core curriculum lessons
• interpreting student records
• providing teachers with suggestions for effective classroom management
• ensuring student records are maintained as per state and federal regulations
• helping the school principal identify and resolve student issues, needs and problems
• providing individual and small-group counseling services to students
• advocating for students at individual education plan meetings, student study teams and school attendance review boards
• analyzing disaggregated data

Inappropriate Duties

• performing disciplinary actions or assigning discipline consequences
• teaching classes when teachers are absent
• maintaining student records
• supervising classrooms or common areas
• keeping clerical records
• assisting with duties in the principal’s office
• providing therapy or long-term counseling in schools to address psychological disorders
• coordinating school-wide individual education plans, student study teams and school attendance review boards
• serving as a data entry clerk

ASCA (2017)

Maintaining a Counselor Identity

Don’t forget to be awesome!
Schools as Systems

- School is part of and contains an interconnected web of subsystems and supra systems.
- Schools, and school systems are complex, interconnected dynamic institutions.
- Students cannot be truly understood without understanding the system that they are housed within.
- Moreover, student challenges cannot be understood by looking at the child alone, must understand the multiple levels.
- Student issues can often be traced back to issues within a system.

McMahon, Mason, Daluga-Guenther, Ruiz (2014)

School Counselor as Change Agent

School Counselors are in the unique position, due to our training in culture, development, relationships and systems, to strengthen bonds within schools and also help bridge to communities and link to families.

Approach to Intervention

- Traditional strategies include counseling and intervention for the students who bullied, the bullied student, and bystanders.

- Research suggests that a comprehensive, systems approach to intervention is most effective:
  - **Community level** (involving parents and families)
  - **School level** (policy, school climate, system support)
  - **Classroom level** (curriculum)
  - **Individual level** (targeting at-risk students)

  Pearce, Cross, Monks, Waters, & Falconer (2011)

Social Capital Model

Social Capital Model to Strengthen School as System

- **Bonding Social Capital**
  - Relationships among people within school community at same level of power.

- **Bridging Social Capital**
  - Relationships between members of school community and those outside of school community at same level of power.

- **Linking Social Capital**
  - Relationships among groups with differing status and power; fosters sense of responsibility across system.

Case Study: The Case of “Grace”

Oh, now it gets real.

Grace is a 7th grade student from Korea. She entered your school at the beginning of the year and yours is her third school in two years in America. She has had trouble making friends since arriving and has often clashed with peers and teachers. Her father is a Diplomat and has been in this country for several years, while her mother came with Grace to America only recently. One day before school, a few students tease Grace, call her a “chink” and pull their eyes back to mock her appearance. Grace tells the students she will “blow them up.” Several of the students come to the office to tell the Vice Principal of her threat...
Based on what you know to be bullying, which of these students or groups are exhibiting bullying behavior?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The students who came to the VP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of them</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State Law Application

- The boys and girls who called Grace an ethnic slur and mocked her race are clearly exhibiting bullying behavior.

- Grace’s behavior is certainly more debatable...
  - Is it _bullying_ because it is a serious threat and some of the students fear for their physical safety?
  - Is it a _threat_, which could be considered more serious?
  - Is it a _reaction_ to being bullied and therefore something different?
Protected Groups

Many laws state that NO student shall be subjected to harassment or discrimination by employees or students on school property, a school bus, at a school function and/or that may occur outside school property based on their actual or perceived:

- Race
- Color
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Privilege

- “Refers to the systematic and unearned benefits select group of persons in society are bestowed based on specific variables” (Crethar, Torres Rivera, & Nash, 2008, p. 269).

- The advantages one holds as a result of membership in a dominant group (McIntosh, 1990).

- Address privilege from a systems approach...it is a school culture issue, after all.
School Culture (Systems) Application

- **Bonding**: School counselor-led professional development for staff (including administrators)

- **Bridging**: Summit between school and community members/organizations

- **Linking**: Faculty/student experiential learning opportunities

Comments/Questions?

Don’t be shy…
What questions do you have about what we just discussed?

Please provide us with any feedback on this session.