Sticks and Stones *Can* Break Your Bones: The Bio-Psycho-Social Consequences of LGBT Bullying

Dominican College Social Work Program
Community Day Event

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What is Bullying?

- Bullying is behavior that is meant to harm or disturb;
- It occurs repeatedly;
- It occurs between individuals who do not have equal power.

Bullying can be:
- physical (hitting, shoving);
- verbal (threats, teasing, insults);
- psychological (shunning, spreading rumors).

What is CyberBullying?

- Cyberbullying, is willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices, can have equally harmful effects on adolescents as physical bullying.
- Teens often use phones or the Internet to post texts or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.

CyberBullying Statistics

- Between 30 and 60 percent of teens have been bullied online.
- Between 85 and 90 percent of those teens have not told their parents about their experience.

Bullies are likely to:

- suffer symptoms of depression
- experience suicidal ideation
- suffer from psychiatric problems
- suffer from eating disorders
- engage in substance abuse
- engage in fighting behaviors; criminal & academic misconduct
- have parents who use punitive forms of discipline
- have less-responsive and less-supportive parents
- come from harsh home environments
- have poor parent-child communication
- lack adult role models
- have suffered child abuse
- have lower academic achievement

Victims are likely to:

- suffer symptoms of depression
- experience suicidal ideation
- suffer from psychiatric problems
- suffer from eating disorders
- suffer feelings of loneliness
- have low self-esteem
- suffer from anxiety
- be less popular than other children
- spend a lot of time alone
- have suffered child abuse
- come from harsh home environments
- have parents who allow few opportunities to control social circumstances
- have problems with school, i.e., absenteeism
- experience physical health problems

Harassment Puts Gay Youth at Risk

While trying to deal with all the challenges of being a teenager, LGBTQ teens additionally have to deal with harassment, threats, and violence directed at them on a daily basis. They hear anti-gay slurs such as “homo”, “faggot” and “sissy” about 26 times a day or once every 14 minutes.

*Mental Health America: Bullying and Gay Youth. 2011.
Bullying and Gay Youth

- Even more troubling, a study found that thirty-one percent of gay youth had been threatened or injured at school in the last year alone!

- Their mental health and education, not to mention their physical well-being, are at-risk.

**Bullying and Gay Youth**

*How is their mental health being affected?*

- Gay and lesbian teens are at high risk because ‘their distress is a direct result of the hatred and prejudice that surround them,’ not inherently because of their gay or lesbian identity orientation.

- Gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual counterparts.

*Mental Health America: Bullying and Gay Youth. 2011.  
http://www.nmha.org/go/information/get-info/children-s-mental-health/bullying-and-gay-youth*
Bullying and Gay Youth: How is their education being affected?

- Gay teens in U.S. schools are often subjected to such intense bullying that they’re unable to receive an adequate education.

- They’re often embarrassed or ashamed of being targeted and may not report the abuse.

- GLBT students are more apt to skip school due to the fear, threats, and property vandalism directed at them.

Bullying and Gay Youth: How is their education being affected?

- One survey revealed that 22 percent of gay respondents had skipped school in the past month because they felt unsafe there.*

- Twenty-eight percent of LGBTQ students will drop out of school. This is more than three times the national average for heterosexual students.

- LGBTQ youth feel they have nowhere to turn. According to several surveys, four out of five LGBTQ students say they don’t know one supportive adult at school.

Bullying and Gay Youth: What can we do to help?

- Schools should offer a safe and respectful learning environment for everyone. When bullying is allowed to take place, it affects everyone.

- Also, we know that bullying was a contributing factor in the Columbine shootings and other school violence. Students, teachers, and school administrators who look the other way are contributing to the problem. In contrast, kids who said that they had a supportive faculty or openly gay staff member were more likely to feel as if they belong in their school.
How to Help End Bullying:

- Be alert to signs of distress.

- Work with student councils to have programs on respect, school safety, and anti-bullying.

- Ask school personnel to have a discussion at an assembly or an after school activity about gay prejudice.

- Discuss and review facts about social networking sites with children.
How to Help End Bullying:

- Help start a Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN: http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/home/index.html) chapter at your local high school. Youth whose schools had these kinds of groups were less likely to have reported feeling unsafe in their schools.

- Arrange for a group like GLSEN to present bullying prevention activities and programs at your school.

- Do encourage anyone who’s being bullied to tell a teacher, counselor, coach, nurse, or his or her parents or guardians. If the bullying continues, report it yourself.
Resources

Books


Resources

Documents and Resources

  http://www.nrcpfc.org/is/downloads bullying.pdf

- Bullying Guidelines.
Resources

Websites

- Suicide Prevention Resource Center
  http://www.sprc.org/
- National Runaway Switchboard
  http://www.nrscrisisline.org/
- The Trevor Project
  http://www.thetrevorproject.org/
- Safe Kids and You
  http://safekidsusa.ning.com
- BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services)
  http://www.brycs.org/
- The Anti-Violence Project
  www.avp.org
Resources

Websites

- Bullying Prevention and Response
  www.bullyinginfo.org

- Cyberbullying Research Center
  www.cyberbullying.us

- Anti-Defamation League: Bullying Resource Center
  www.adl.org/combatbullying/

- Bullying.org
  http://www.bullying.org

- Mental Health America: Bullying and Gay Youth
  http://www.nmha.org/-youth
Resources

Videos

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) YouTube Channel: Working with LGBT Youth
  http://www.youtube.com/user/SAMHSA#p/u/11/48mC89f6PgA
- The Kids are Listening, The Opening Doors Project
  http://thekidsarellistening.org/
- Let’s Get Real!
- It Gets Better
  www.itgetsbetter.org
References:

- “Bullying Guidelines.” NO Bullying website. p. 3-4


- Mental Health America: Bullying and Gay Youth. 2011.
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