



Psychological
Services'
Newsletter

FULTON
COUNTY
SCHOOLS

www.FultonPsychologicalServices.com



Inside this issue:

Bullying	1
Bullying Intervention	3
Wonderful Websites	4
Internet Safety	4
School Psych. Week	5
Excellence in Action	6

School Psychology News

Volume 10, Issue 1

Fall 2009

Bullying

By Rebecca Skoczylas

Over the past several years, bullying has drawn increased attention from the media, parents and educators. Most recently, 11-year-olds Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover of Massachusetts and Jaheem Herrera of Georgia committed suicide. Both families reported that the boys suffered from being bullied. As educators, we want to shield our students from bullying. However, it is essential to first understand what bullying is.

Dan Olweus, one of the foremost researchers in this area, describes three main components in his definition. According to Olweus, bullying is (1) intentional harm doing, which (2) occurs repeatedly over time and (3) involves an imbalance of power.

There are three primary types of bullying described in the research:

Verbal bullying is the most common, constituting up to 70% of all bullying. Used equally by boys and girls, verbal bullying is often the first type of bullying demonstrated and is the easiest to go unnoticed. Verbal bullying can often be disguised as teasing, but there are some clear differences between the two, as indicated in Table 1.

Physical bullying is used most commonly by boys and is the most visible form of bullying. It involves actions such as shoving, hair pulling or punching.

Relational bullying is mostly used by middle school girls. It involves subtle gestures such as stares or rumors and involves a diminishment of the target's sense of self (e.g., the movie 'Mean Girls').

Congratulations

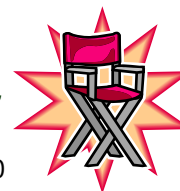
In May 2009, Chris Matthews successfully completed the requirements for his Ph.D. and officially became
Dr. Christopher Matthews!

Additionally, Dr. Matthews is no longer the Director of Psychological Services. He recently accepted the position of
Executive Director of Counseling, Psychological, and Social Work Services.

The Office of Psychological Services extends their full support and best wishes to Dr. Matthews in his new role.

From the Executive Director's Chair...

A Message from Dr. Chris Matthews, Executive Director of Counseling, Psychological, and Social Work Services



Welcome to a new year in the Fulton County School System! The 2009-2010 school year has began and I am very excited to announce that the first 2009-2010 newsletter is ready for release. After reading it, I am sure you will agree that it is just one great example of the many resources School Psychologists can provide. The dedicated and talented team of Psychologists that are employed by Fulton County Schools are best known for sharing strategies, interventions, timely information, and other resources to the entire Fulton County Schools' Community. I hope everyone enjoys this newsletter and finds benefit from the professional learning and very timely information on bullying and internet safety for children and youth. My compliments to the newsletter editor, Dr. Evelyn Backa, and the other psychologists who work very hard to produce such an exemplary newsletter! Please enjoy the information in this newsletter and if there are any questions regarding the Office of Psychological Services, please feel free to contact me at (404) 763-5600 or at matthewsc@fulton.k12.ga.us. Have a Great School Year!!

Bullying – continued from page 1

Table 1: Teasing versus Verbal Bullying

Teasing	Bullying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals can swap roles easily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on an imbalance of power and is one sided
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No intent to harm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intent to harm
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain everyone's dignity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involves humiliation, cruel or degrading comments disguised as jokes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meant to get everyone to laugh 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laughing <u>at</u> target, not <u>with</u> target
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discontinued when person being teased becomes upset or objects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continues <u>especially</u> when the victim becomes upset or objects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is only one small part of group's activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meant to diminish self worth of victim

Bullying tends to occur in places where adults are not present. Thus, bathrooms, hallways and buses can become places victims fear. For these reasons, teachers and other school personnel may mistakenly believe that they intervene in most bullying situations while, in truth, they are not even witnessing most instances of bullying. For example, one study found that 71% of teachers believed that they frequently intervened in incidents of bullying while only 23% of students felt that teachers frequently intervened.



Victims are typically students who are anxious, insecure, lack social skills and don't know how to defend themselves. In addition, they tend to be less popular, socially isolated and physically smaller than their bullies. Students who receive special education services may be at higher risk of victimization than their general education counterparts. One study found that 38% of special education students reported victimization as opposed to 17% of general education students.

REMINDER:

Online Community Resource Directory

This directory of mental health resources in and around the Atlanta-Metro area includes licensed psychologists, psychiatrists, and other physicians and therapists who treat children and adolescents.

Please visit

www.FultonPsychologicalServices.com and click on *Community Resource Directory*.

WAY TO GO!

Thelma Milner became an ordained minister with the African Methodist Episcopal Church on June 4th.
Congratulations Thelma!

Warning signs of possible victimization

- Shows an abrupt lack of interest in school.
- Takes an unusual route to school.
- Withdraws from family and friends/wants to be alone.
- Is hungry after school; saying lost lunch money or wasn't hungry.
- Takes parents' money and makes poor excuses of where it went.
- Goes straight to restroom when arriving home.
- Acts sad or scared after email or phone calls.
- Demonstrates behaviors that are out of character.
- Uses negative language when talking about peers.
- Stops talking about peers and other activities.
- Has disheveled, torn or missing clothing.
- Has physical injuries inconsistent with explanations.
- Suffers from stomachaches, headaches, panic attacks, insomnia, exhaustion.



It is important to have a firm understanding of what bullying is and how it can be demonstrated before making use of the wealth of resources for prevention and intervention.

References

Cohn, A. & Canter, A. (2003). *Bullying: facts for schools and parents*. National Association of School Psychologists. www.nasponline.org/resources/factsheets/bullying_fs.aspx

Coloroso, B. (2003). *The bully, the bullied and the bystander*. Harper Collins: NYC

Skiba, R. (2004). *Bullying and bullying prevention: Information for educators. Helping Children at Home and School II: Handouts for Families and Educators*, S4, 24-28

Varjas, K., Lopp, G., Marshall, M., Graybill, E., Bryant, A., Skoczylas, R. & Meyers, J. (March 2007). *Using mixed methods to investigate bullying: Urban youths' perspective*. Presented at the National Association of School Psychologists' Annual Convention.

WELCOME!

The Office of Psychological Services would like to welcome the following new school psychologists to our staff:

Dr. Jasolyn Henderson
Hapeville ES and Cliftondale ES

Jessica Smith
Campbell ES and Cliftondale ES





Bullying Prevention and Intervention Strategies

By E. Pem Lewis Wilson



We, as teachers and school-based staff who are ever watchful and protective of our students, naturally are distressed when we suspect one of our students has become a victim of bullying. Below are some evidence-based strategies that have proven beneficial in creating safe and respectful learning environments.

School-Wide Bullying Intervention and Prevention

- **Assess students' behavior** in school and the community.
- **Clearly re-define and communicate what constitutes bullying behavior.** Distinguish between positive social interactions and/or harmless teasing from bullying. Include discussions of *Cyberbullying*.
- **Build school-wide teams**, including administrators, faculty and students, to identify and practice effective behavior strategies and communication skills to replace bullying behavior.
- In the classroom, include adult and student **role modeling/practice** to build specific social skills.
- **State Zero Tolerance** of bullying and by-standing. Increase adult supervision in all areas of the school and at all student activities.
- **Set clear behavioral expectations**, related recognitions and rewards, and consequences for bullying.
- **Integrate projects into the curricula that require teamwork and collaboration**, problem-solving and positive peer interaction. Require students to see others' perspectives, collaboratively set goals, define individual roles/responsibilities, identify the benefits of teamwork, practice being a supporting group member and develop leadership skills by earning respect instead of using bullying to take control.
- Establish a consistent, school-wide **bullying intervention protocol**.
- **Increase parent education and involvement.** Keep parents informed and teach them how to reinforce the problem-solving and leadership strategies at home. Educate them on the effects of parenting styles and connect them with community resources to learn about parenting, positive discipline

strategies, and effective communication skills.

Individualized Interventions

Teach students who are victims:

- To state a positively assertive sentence.
- To use the "HA HA SO" procedure: request **Help** from someone you can count on, and an adult; **Assert** yourself; use **Humor** to laugh at the situation, use a surprising tactic, and don't be put down by the bully; **Avoid** prolonging the situation, walk away; use positive **Self-Talk**; **Own** it if it is something you can change; Shrug it off.

Teach students who are bystanders:

- Do not remain silent, and do not encourage the bullying.
- Become an ally. Interrupt name-calling. Change the subject and deflect attention.
- Inform the bully that bullying is not tolerated in the school.
- Do not intervene if it's physical. Get help from an adult.
- Write down what happened and provide the report to the teacher and administrator.

Teach students who are bullies:

- Bullying is not accepted or tolerated at the school.
- Require the bully to participate in supervised, group projects. Teach the bully that he/she will earn the respect of others and develop friendships by demonstrating support for other students rather than through intimidation.
- Involve the student's parents in reinforcing respectful behaviors.

When a Student is the Victim of Bullying

- Identify the bully's and victim's behaviors, as well as the events prior to and during the incident. Ask parties involved (e.g., victim,

bully, bystanders, school staff) to provide accounts of the incident, and identify possible "triggers".

- Reassure the victim that no one has a right to bully.
- Communicate that bullying is justification for a parent conference and, if continued, more severe disciplinary actions. Provide immediate consequences for bullying (i.e., educationally relevant activities that contribute to the school community).
- Reinforce to the entire group that bullying is unacceptable and is not tolerated in the school.
- Meet with the victim's parents to explain the situation and review what the school is doing to address the bullying, provide a safe learning environment at school, and help the child develop effective strategies and build a stronger social network of friends.

References

- Feinberg, T. (2003) Bullying prevention and intervention. National Association of School Psychologists in cooperation with National Association of Secondary School Principals. Washington D.C.
- Horne, A. M., Bartolomucci, C. L. & Newman-Carlson, D. (2003). Bully busters: A teacher's manual for helping bullies, victims, and bystanders (grades K-5). Champagne, Illinois: Research Press.
- Olweus, D. (1997). Bully/victim problems in school: Facet and intervention. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 12(4), 495-510.
- Orpinas, P. (2009). Take a stand. Lend a hand. Stop bullying now. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia. Presentation to the Fulton County Schools school psychologists, August 14, 2009.
- Orpinas, P. & Horne, A. M. (2006). Bullying prevention: Creating a positive school climate and developing social competence. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association. www.apa.org/books/4317082.html
- Skoczylas, R. & Joyner, C. (2009). Bullying: Understanding prevalence, prevention and intervention. Atlanta, Georgia: Fulton County Schools Best Practices Conference, June 5, 2009.



Internet Safety for Families

By Katie Aldrich

On-line computer exploration opens a world of possibilities for children, expanding their horizons and exposing them to different cultures and ways of life. Unfortunately, children can be exposed to dangers as they hit the road to explore the information highway.

A study released by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration noted that the amount of time the average person spent on the Internet increased from 15 hours per year in 1995 to 160 hours a year in 1999 and there is evidence that children's use is likely to have grown even faster than that of adults. Though clear statistics are not available for children's usage, surveys conducted by the National School Boards Foundation indicated that in almost half of the households included in the study at least one child uses the Internet. By the time they are teenagers, nearly three out of four children are online. As web usage increases among children, it is vital that parents and supervising adults assume an active role in monitoring this Internet use.

Children are often better at navigating the Internet than their parents and teachers. While access to the Web can provide children with important learning experiences, it also exposes

them to risks not encountered in the "real world." Predators can easily use it to locate children. In fact, the results of a recent national survey indicated that one in five youth is sexually solicited over the Internet annually. Because sexual abuse is extremely harmful to children's development, this statistic is very disturbing. Children who are sexually victimized often experience high levels of anxiety, depression, substance abuse, eating disorders, relationship problems, and suicidal ideation. Because sexual abuse is so harmful, laws have been established to protect children from sexual predators. Nonetheless, the Internet makes it difficult to protect children because it provides access to large numbers of children and allows the sexual predator to remain anonymous.

Children's and teen's natural curiosity about sex may increase their vulnerability. A recent study by the computer security firm Symantec Corp identified the top 100 searches conducted through its popular family safety service OnlineFamily.Norton, which monitors children's internet use. The list was compiled after Symantec studied 3.5 million searches made between February and July of 2009. The top 10 searches included YouTube videos, Google, Yahoo, Facebook, and MySpace. But the words "sex" and "porn" also made it to the top 10. The results of this study and others indicate that adults need to increase their awareness of children's online activities and communicate with them about appropriate online behavior.

In its Parent's Guide to Internet Safety, the Federal Bureau of Investigation identified the following **warning signs** that a child may be at risk on-line:

Wonderful Websites

By Rob Shultz

www.acaletics.com/ - math flash cards. Free things for students on the Students link.
www.incompetech.com/graphpaper/ - different kinds of graph paper in .pdf format to print out.
www.teacher.scholastic.com/activities/clf/tguidesitemap.htm - computer lab online activities for kids - 10-15 min. in length.
www.kbears.com/ - for younger students.



- Your child spends large amounts of time on-line, especially at night.
- You find pornography on your child's computer.
- Your child receives phone calls from individuals you don't know or is making calls to numbers you don't recognize.
- Your child receives mail, gifts, or packages from someone you don't know.
- Your child turns the computer monitor off or quickly changes the monitor screen when you come into the room.
- Your child becomes withdrawn.
- Your child is using an on-line account belonging to someone else.

Strategies for Internet Safety

1. Establish a parent-child **Internet use contract**. A contract formulated by the National Association of School Psychologists may be found at: http://www.nasponline.org/publications/cq/cq342internetsafety_ho.aspx.
2. Explain to older children and adolescents the **potential hazards** of online sexual solicitation and the risks associated with Internet communication with strangers. Younger children may not need as detailed a discussion, but should be cautioned about the dangers of talking to people they do not know.

Continued on page 5



New Arrivals!

Best Wishes are extended to
Jennifer Moore on the birth of
Brooke Olivia Moore
May 15th

and Nancy Lamb on the birth of
Beckett Alexander Lamb
June 15th



Time well spent!

During the 2008-2009 school year, FCS psychologists:


- Conducted **6,558** evaluations
- Participated in **4,972** Student Support Team (SST) Meetings
- Performed **22,783** consultations with parents, students, school personnel or outside agencies.


SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY AWARENESS WEEK

November 9 - 13th, 2009 has been proclaimed as “School Psychology Awareness Week.” This year’s theme is, “See the possibilities in you. We do!” School psychologists provide in-service presentations; conduct psychological evaluations; assist the county’s Crisis Response Teams; and consult with teachers, administrators and parents to develop effective strategies to help students succeed academically and socially.

Please take a moment during School Psychology Awareness Week to acknowledge your school psychologist!

Continued from page 4 – Internet Safety

3. Discuss the dangers of face-to-face contact with someone met online.
4. Teach your child to **avoid sending identifying information** (e.g., real name, address, school, telephone number, photos) via the Internet.
5. **Install** a firewall (e.g., Norton Personal Firewall), privacy filtration software (e.g., Net Nanny5), anti-ware/spyware (e.g., Ad-Aware), and an antivirus program (e.g., Norton antivirus).
6. **Encrypt** your wireless home network. 
7. **Discourage** your child from downloading games and other media that could contain programs that enable remote access to computers by unauthorized users.
8. **Supervise/monitor Internet friends** in a fashion similar to how neighborhood and school friends are monitored.
9. Set the Internet browser (e.g., Internet Explorer) **security feature to “high.”**

10. **Monitor the amount of time your child spends online** and frequently check the computer’s Web browsers, which provide information on the websites that have been accessed. 
11. **Understand and approve screen names**—predators target sexually suggestive screen names.
12. **Place the computer in a public location** such as a den as opposed to a child’s bedroom.
13. Contact the **Cyber Tip Line** at (800) 843-5678 or www.cybertipline.com if you suspect an online predator has contacted your child.

Because there is great potential for sexual predators to solicit youth via the Internet, there is a need for greater awareness regarding how to protect children from this crime. This can be achieved through increased education about the potential risks of Internet use and by greater monitoring of children’s online activities by parents and adults in supervisory positions.

References

Dombrowski, S. C. & Gischlar, K. L. *Keeping children safe on the Internet: Guidelines for parents*. National Association of School Psychologists, Communiqué, 34-2.

Federal Bureau of Investigation, Cyber Division, Innocent Images National Initiative (2005). *A Parent’s Guide to Internet Safety*.

Goldsmith, B. (2009). *Children Use Web to Watch Videos, Look Up “Sex”: Study*. The New York Times.

Leung, B. P. *Expanding practice: Helping families develop a family Internet plan*. National Association of School Psychologists. Communiqué, Vol. 33, #4

U.S. Department of Congress (2002). *A nation online: How Americans are expanding their use of the Internet*. Washington, DC: Economics and Statistics Administration, National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

Web-Based Resources for Parents

- www.safekids.com/child_safety.htm
- www.kidsdomain.com/brain/computer/surfing/safe_surf_parents.html
- www.nypl.org/legal/safety.cfm
- www.yahooligans.com/Parents

Fall 2009 Feedback Form

Please return this form to: Evelyn Backa, Newsletter Committee
Office of Psychological Services, Jo Wells or email Backa@fultonschools.org

What I liked best about this newsletter: _____

What needs changing: _____

What I would like to see in future issues: _____

Name/School (optional): _____





Excellence in Action!

Take a look at what Fulton County school psychologists are doing!

- On June 5, **Corri Joyner** and **Rebecca Skoczylas** presented "Bullying: Understanding, prevalence, prevention and intervention" at the 2009 Fulton County Best Practices Conference.
- **Pam Harrison** participated in a Linguistic and Cultural Immersion Program in Panama this summer. The course covered issues related to psychological service delivery systems to English Language Learners. The course included supervised fieldwork in local schools in Panama and provided an opportunity for immersion in Spanish language and culture as well as an examination of the many needs of students from various ethnic, cultural, religious, language, and social class groups.
- **Robert Shultz** completed his EMT training over the summer and is now a Nationally Registered and Georgia Licensed EMT-Intermediate. Mr. Shultz has used his experience with the Roswell Fire Department and with EMS and Fire in New York to help support safety initiatives in his schools and in Fulton County. Mr. Shultz has served on the Crisis (now C.A.R.E.) team for FCS and has been involved in district wide training and planning for Emergency Preparedness. Mr. Shultz has recently joined the Safety and Planning team at Chattahoochee HS.



Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.

-- William James



Newsletter Committee

Editor: Evelyn Backa

Staff Writers:

Robert Abernathy
Katie Aldrich
Melissa Eddy
Nancy Lamb
Darnell Logan
Rebecca Skoczylas

Websites: Rob Shultz

Distribution:

Beth Koehler
Beth Blanchard
Cheryl Colton-Schenholm
January Few
Corri Joyner
Thelma Milner
Susan Neel
Janalyn Pruitt
Sabrina Rogers

Psychological Services Department
Jo Wells Building
554 Parkway Drive
Hapeville, GA 30354