

# Psychological Issues in Bullying

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**UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN**

# Mental Health in the Schools: Using Partnerships to Reduce Bullying

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- Target Bullying: Ecologically-Based Prevention and Intervention for Schools.
- Working with school personnel, students, and parents since 1999.
- A partnership between individual schools and/or districts and the University of Nebraska - Lincoln School Psychology Program.
- Researchers provide yearly feedback to participating schools.
- Elementary, Middle, and High Schools.
- University researchers work in tandem with school personnel, students, and parents.



# Target Bullying: Ecologically-Based Prevention and Intervention for Schools

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- A partnership between individual schools and/or districts and the University of Nebraska - Lincoln.
- Recent studies: Internalizing and externalizing problems in youth involved in bullying; developmental issues in bullying; international study of bullying; cognitive factors associated with bullying; alternative intervention to in-school suspension for bullying behavior; using data-based decision-making to change the school climate.



## Definition of Bullying (Swearer, 2001):

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- Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself. Usually, bullying happens over and over.
  - Punching, shoving and other acts that hurt people physically
  - Spreading bad rumors about people
  - Keeping certain people out of a "group"
  - Teasing people in a mean way
  - Getting certain people to "gang up" on others



# Bully/Victim Continuum

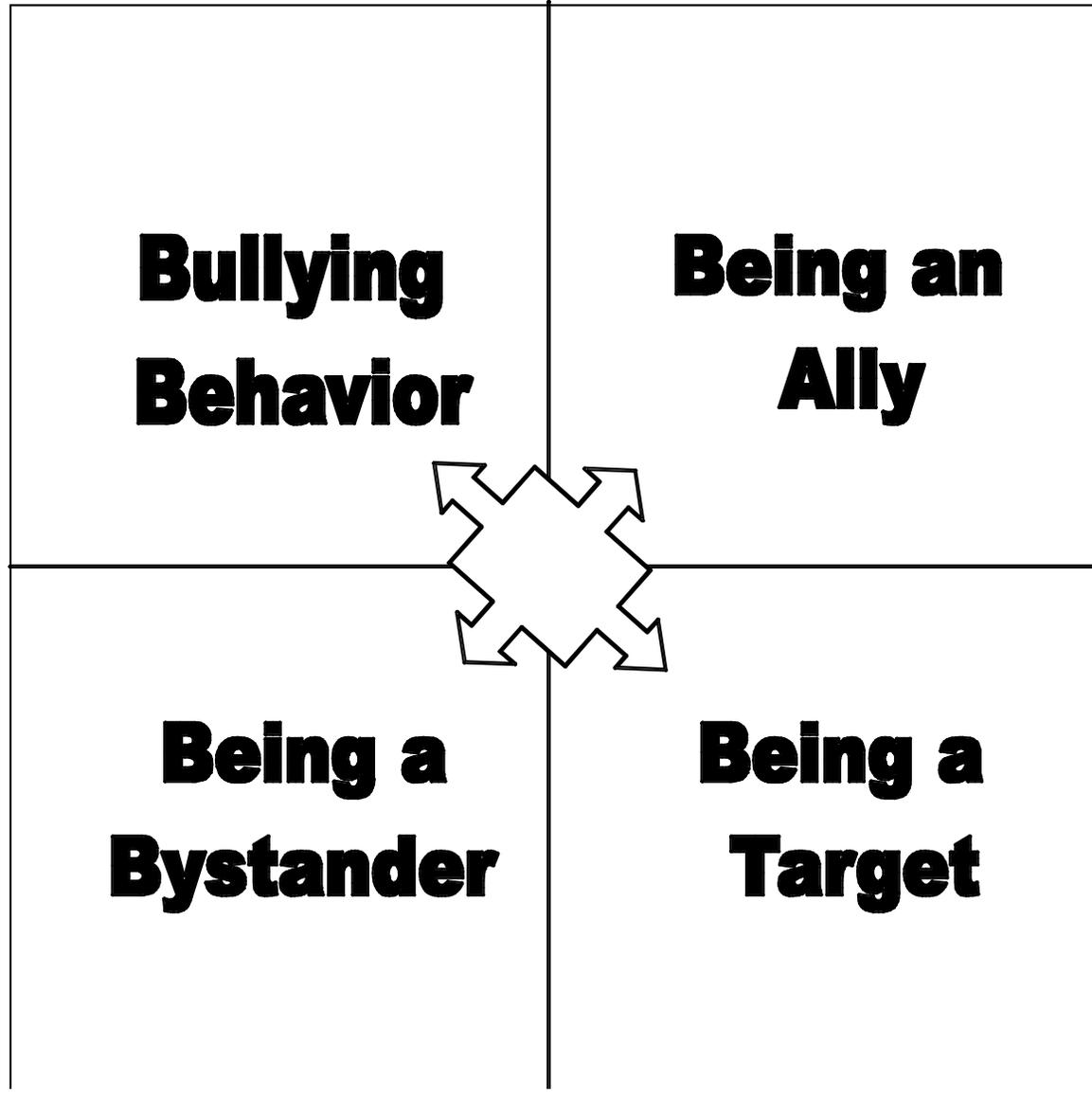
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- Bully - reports bullying others
- Victim - reports being bullied by others
- Bully-victim - reports bullying others & being bullied
- Bystander - reports observing others being bullied
- No Status/Not involved - does not report any involvement with bullying

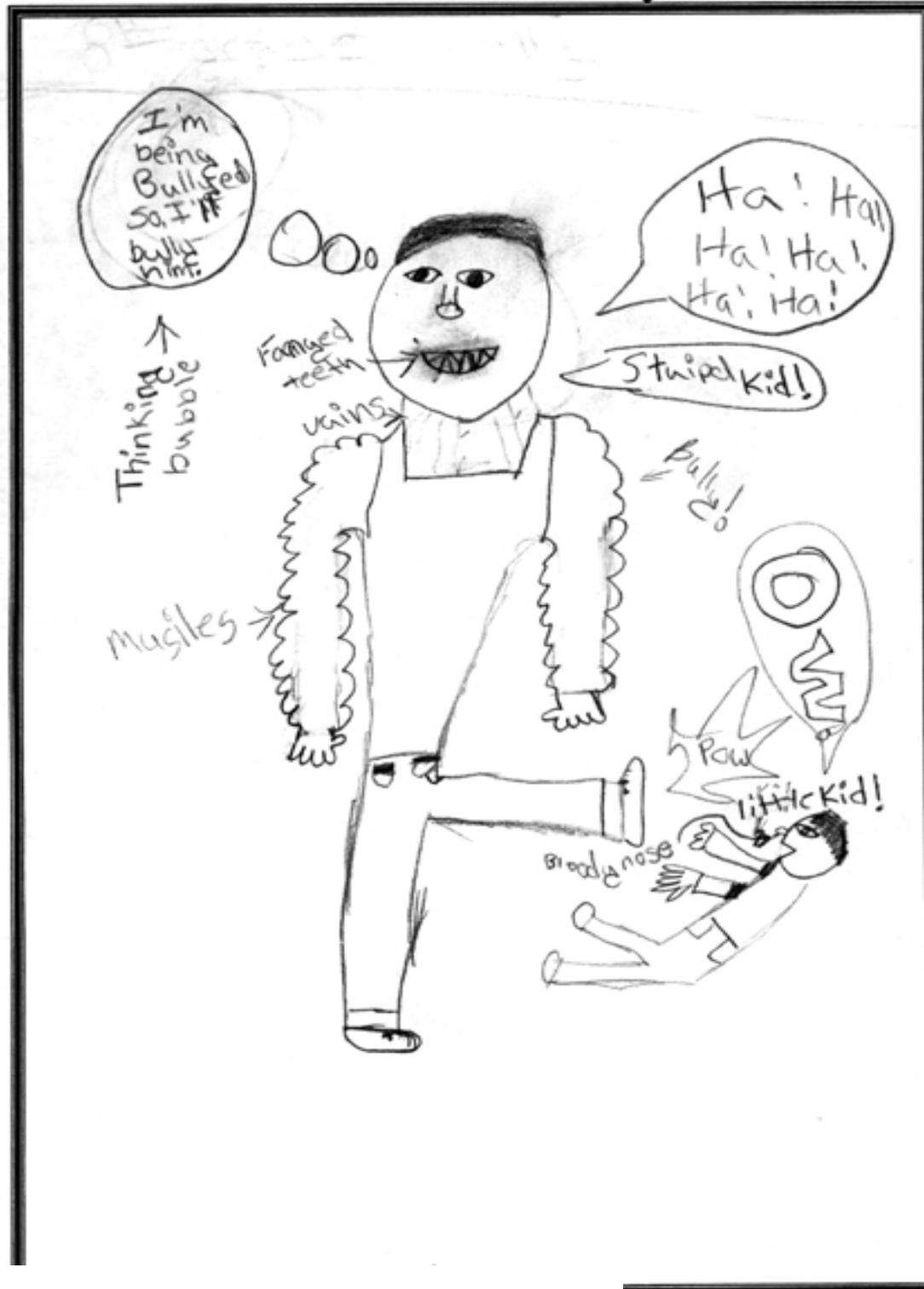


# Let's Get Real

## The 4-Square Relational Model



# Draw A Bully

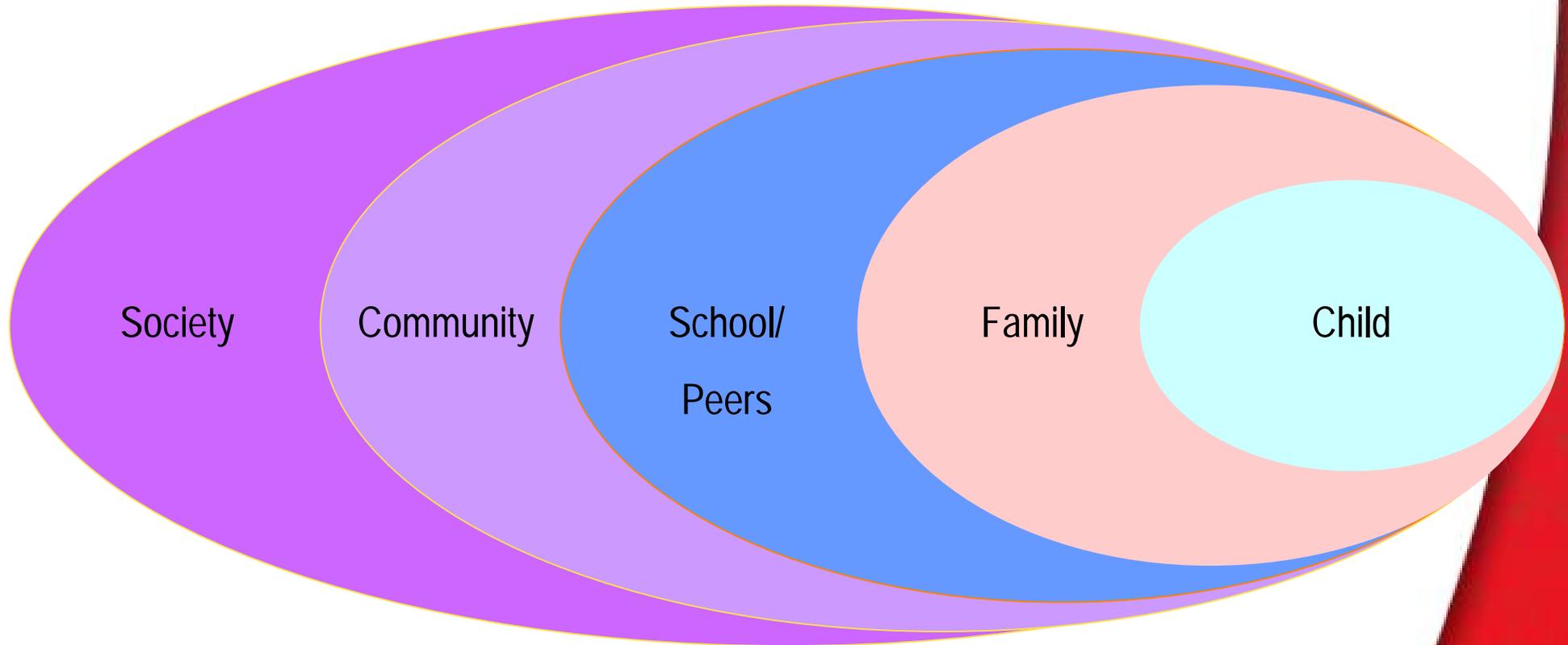


# A Social-Ecological Model of Bullying

(Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Orpinas & Horne, 2006; Swearer &

Espelage, 2004)

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We need to ask the right question:

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“What are the conditions that allow bullying behaviors to occur?”



# LiveScience article: "Bullying hits parents too."

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- No, but going in swinging usually stops this BS in its tracks.
- This is both stupid and exploitable. I hate to say it but we need bullying in society. It's what separates the weak from the strong, and motivates people to rise above. If you can't rise above, then you're the runt of the litter and you kill yourself. Society has just become stronger with one less weakling
- Violence tends to solve bullying. I'd rather my kids threw someone who was bullying them into a beating, rather than have it come back to screw them later in life by lowering their self esteem.
- People might as well know up front that I'll go straight to jail about my kids. Some brat wants to bully my kid, I'll show him/her what a REAL bully looks like.
- When my son was growing up I told him I'd better not ever catch him bullying another and at the same, I'd better not ever catch him being used as a bunching bag



# [http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/42721657/ns/health-kids\\_and\\_parenting/](http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/42721657/ns/health-kids_and_parenting/)

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- I rather my son got in trouble with school authority for standing up for himself than just stood there and took crap from other kids!
- When all else fails in the "civilized" setting, sometimes we have to go back to old fashioned methods of sending a message the bully will surely understand.
- It's liberals like yourself that allow bullies to continue as you and your kind are soft on handing out consequences to the bullies
- Only way to stop this kind of behavior is to make it so its not fun anymore for the evil sheep that do the bullying. Hurt them. Hard and fast and bad...and if you are too weak to do it by yourself then get the help of other kids who have been victimized...catch the bully alone...and make it so its no fun any more.
- If a fist wont work....grab a weapon.....they have to be stopped...period...face it...we don't need these animals....





When you are in deep trouble,  
say nothing, and try to look inconspicuous.

# Why Address Bullying in Schools ?

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- Bullying may be part of a larger pattern of antisocial behavior-- one out of four male bullies at age 8 had a criminal conviction by age 30 (Olweus, 1993)
- Bullying was a factor in 2/3 of the 37 school shootings reviewed by the U.S. Secret Service (i.e., shooters reported being chronically victimized).
- Victims and bully-victims are more depressed and have lower self-esteem than non-victimized youth (Olweus, 1993; Swearer et al., 2001)



# The Costs of Bullying

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- Bullying is a social problem that negatively impacts 3 out of 4 students during their school years.
- Bullying is a mental health problem - the psychological consequences for students involved in bullying is severe-depression, suicide, antisocial behavior.
- Bullying helps create feelings of helplessness, anger, and frustration.
- Adults often do not know how to effectively respond.
- Bullying is expensive - dropout, suicide, litigation.





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In Memory of Jessica  
Kassandra Haffer

October 2, 1989-  
November 23, 2003

[www.jessicahaffer.com](http://www.jessicahaffer.com)





# Phoebe Smith

15 years old, South Hadley High School,  
South Hadley, Massachusetts





# Tyler Long

17 years old, Murray County High School,  
Chatsworth, Georgia





# Jon Carmichael

13 years old, Loflin Middle School, Joshua,  
Texas





# Eric Mohat

17 years old, Mentor High School, Mentor, Ohio

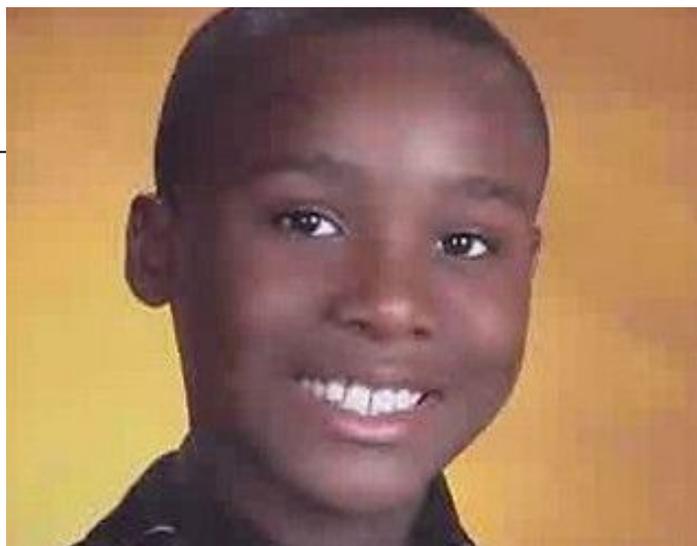




# Jaheem Herrera

11 years old, Dunaire Elementary School, Stone  
Mountain, Georgia





# Carl Walker Hoover

11 years old, New Leadership Charter School,  
Springfield, Massachusetts





# Iain Steele

15 years old, Lyons Township High School, La  
Grange, Illinois





# Jessie Logan

18 years old, Sycamore High School,  
Cincinnati, Ohio





# Hunter Layland

15 years old, Cleburne High School, Cleburne,  
Texas



## Draw A Bully



# Link between Bullying and Mental Health

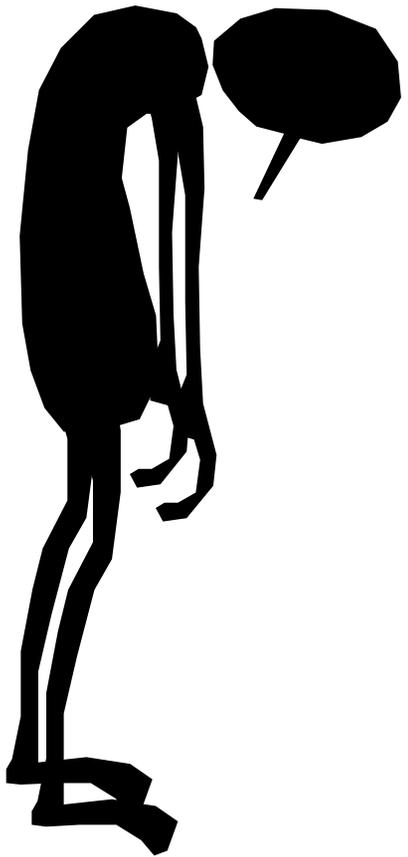
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- Remember the definition of bullying:
  - Intentional, mean behavior
  - Imbalance of power
  - Repetition
- The prognosis for individuals who are bullied: hopelessness, frustration, depression, anxiety
- The prognosis for individual who bully: anger, depression, social anxiety
- The prognosis for bully-victims: the worst; yet these are the kids that we're "missing" in terms of accurate identification and referral to treatment



# Involvement in bullying is linked to depression and anxiety

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Students involved in bullying and victimization are more likely to experience depression and anxiety. Recognize and refer students for treatment of depression and anxiety.

(Swearer, Grills, Haye, & Cary, 2004)





# Therapeutic Intervention

- Understand the connection between bullying and mental health issues
- Develop a strong community referral system
- Utilize school counselors and school psychologists
- Assess and treat depression and anxiety—linked to bullying/victimization
- Bullying Intervention Program (BIP; Swearer & Givens, 2006)





# Effective Treatment for Depression and Anxiety in Bullies, Victims, and Bully-Victims

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- ACTION: A Workbook for Overcoming Depression (Stark et al, 1996)
- Keeping Your Cool: The Anger Management Workbook (Nelson & Finch, 1996)
- Coping Cat (Kendall, Kane, Howard, & Siqueland, 1990)
- Cognitive-Behavioral Group Treatment for Adolescents with Social Anxiety (Albano, Marten, Holt, Heimberg, & Barlow, 1995)
- Referrals to counselors/psychologists/psychiatrists.



# Bullying and Social Anxiety

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- Participants included 78 students (52 males and 26 females, 65% Caucasian) in grades 4 through 8, ranging from 9 to 14 years of age. All participants completed the Target Bullying Intervention Program (T-BIP; Swearer & Givens, 2006), an individual three-hour cognitive-behavioral intervention that consists of assessment, psychoeducation, and feedback. Parents of students who were identified by school staff as being perpetrators of bullying had the option of allowing their children to complete the T-BIP as an alternative to in-school suspension.



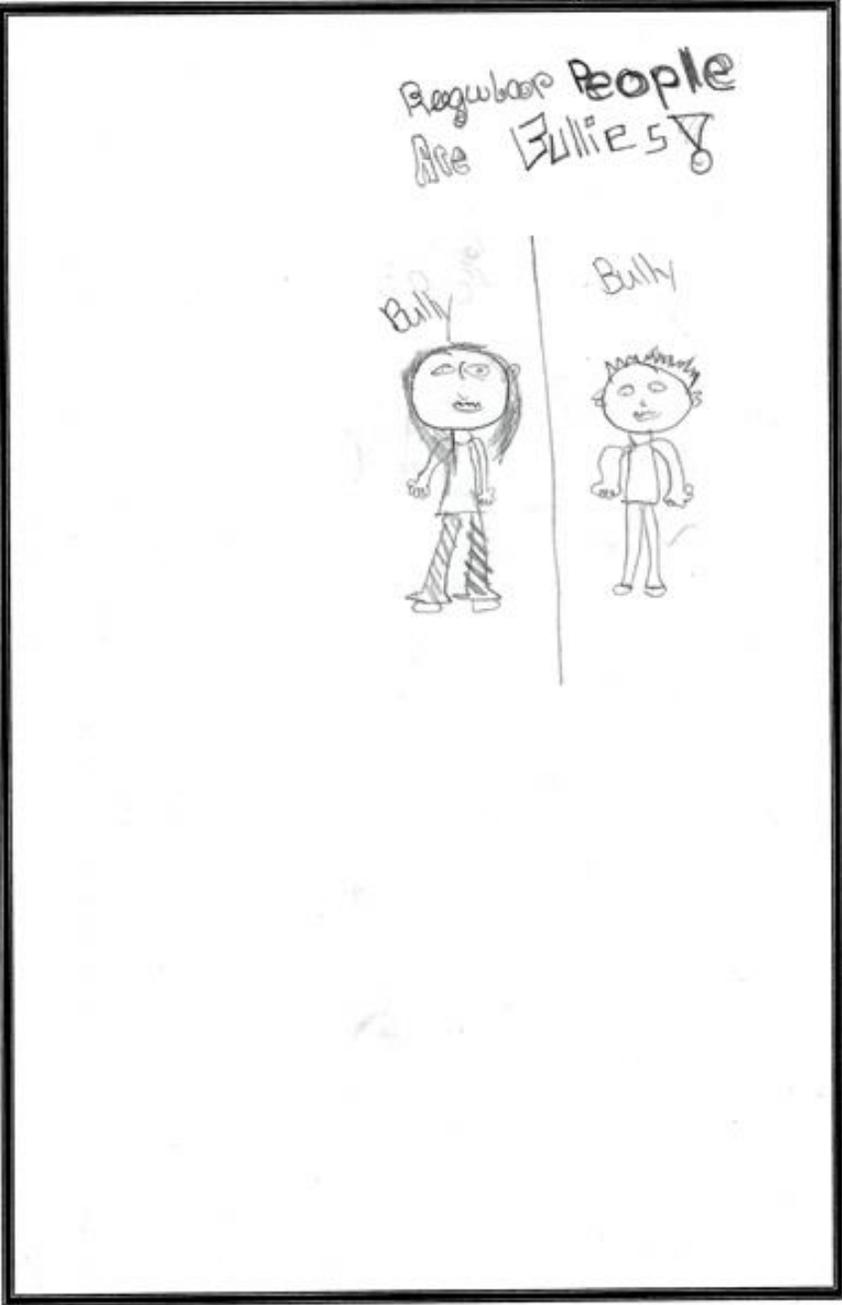
# Bullying and Social Anxiety

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- Measures completed by the participants in this study included The Bully Survey-Student Version (BYS; Swearer, 2001) and The Multidimensional Anxiety Scale for Children (MASC; March, 1997).
- ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the relationship between bully-victim status (bully, victim, and bully-victim) and social anxiety. The results indicated a significant difference among the three bully/victim groups. Bully-victims were more socially anxious ( $M=13.47$ ,  $SD=6.74$ ) than bullies ( $M=6.65$ ,  $SD=5.23$ ;  $F=9.05$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Victims ( $M=8.75$ ,  $SD=5.82$ ) did not differ significantly from either the bully group or the bully-victim group.



**Draw A Bully**



# Video Resources

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## "Bully Dance" video

Bullfrog Films

Box 149

Oley, PA 19547

(610) 779-8226

Web: [www.bullfrogfilms.com](http://www.bullfrogfilms.com)



# Video and training resource

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- “Let’s Get Real” video and curriculum guide
- [www.groundspark.org](http://www.groundspark.org)
- Running Time: 35 minutes  
Format: VHS and DVD - Special features include director's interview, clips from other RFAP films, chapter-by-chapter version of the film corresponding to the curriculum guide.

A PROGRAM OF **GROUNDSPARK**



# Video Resource: Stories of Us-- Bullying

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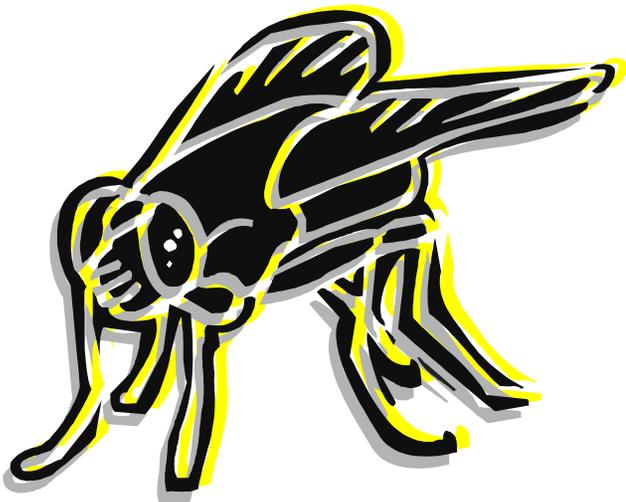
- [www.storiesofus.com](http://www.storiesofus.com)
- *Stories of Us* is a unique series of education resources for primary and secondary students. Students collaborate in brainstorming the subjects, develop the scripts and perform all key roles. Every word of dialogue is their own, and every detail approved by the students. The *Stories of Us* videos are compelling as they draw upon the collective experience of the students, holding a mirror to their reality with such authenticity that some students watching them are convinced they are real.
- U.S. filming occurred in fall 2007 in Illinois and Nebraska.



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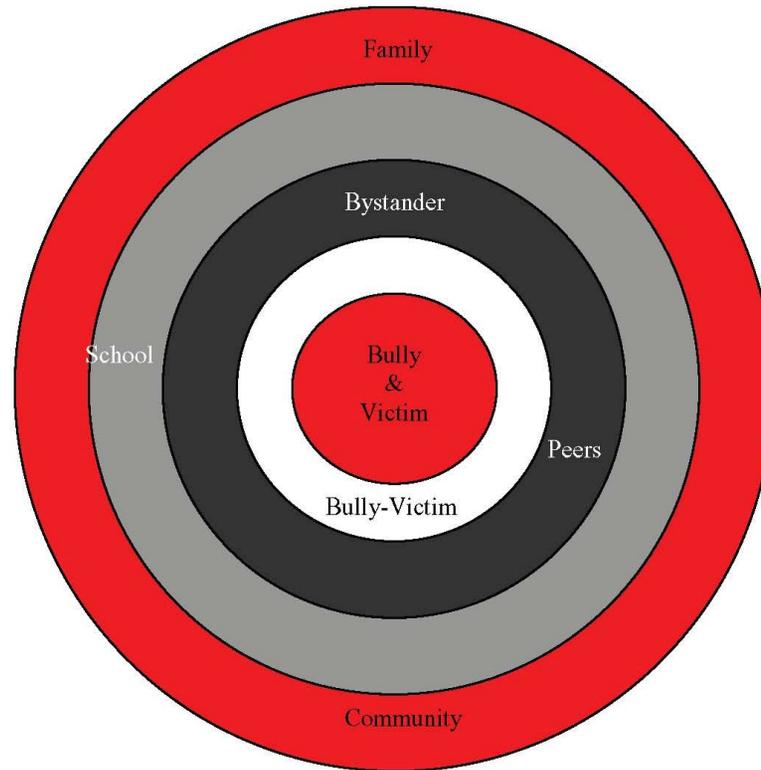
If you think you're too small to  
make a difference, try sleeping in  
a room with a mosquito.

--African Proverb



# Target Bullying Survey and Intervention System: Ecologically-Based Prevention and Intervention

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