

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

STARTING FROM THE ROOTS – BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR  
PARENTS

A graduate project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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School Psychology

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## ABSTRACT

### STARTING FROM THE ROOTS – BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAM FOR PARENTS

By

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This project presents five workshops for parents of school age children. Parents are the most important teachers in their children's lives and have a large influence on the type of individuals that they will grow up to be. This program provides information about the consequences of bullying and how to prevent it. Parents will be able to acquire new knowledge on the topic of bullying, as well as reinforcing topics that they may already have little information about, through five workshops. The five topics that will be discussed during the workshop are Bullying, Raising Strong Children, Cyberbullying, High School Dropouts, and Suicide Prevention. The literature review consists of research about these topics and a guide on how to enforce the program properly.

## Chapter One: Introduction

### **Introduction**

For generations bullying has been a problem that has affected millions of children and adolescent all around the world. As time has passed and people have become more educated, bullying has been addressed more in schools. School districts have adopted of bullying prevention programs and some schools have zero policy tolerance.

The key to raise mentally healthy children is to keep them aware of the harm of bullying, and most importantly to talk and listen carefully to what they have to share. Bullying has been an issue in the school system for many years. One thing that parents need to keep in mind is that their kids might be bullied and they will try to hide it from them.

Parents need to understand the harm that bullying brings with it. To have a better understanding of bullying the following definition was adapted and will be used throughout the project:

*Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose (stopbullying.com).*

Although there are many definitions for bullying, the above definition sums up the important facts to understand bullying.

## **Problem**

Bullying has become more complex in the past two decades due to the fact that technology has increased and it is at the hands of almost every child in the modern world. From a young age, children have access to the internet and cellular phones that make it easier for children to communicate with other children. Although technology has its own benefits, it also has a down side. Children might intentionally, or not, use their phone or internet to send messages to other children that could be very harmful. It used to be that bullying happens mostly within the school setting and it was also addressed within the schools. Today bullying is happening at all time and everywhere. Children could be in the safety of their homes and still be in danger. In fact, 15 to 20 percent of today's children are bullied (Baldry, 2003).

These children are being affected and for some of them, they are scarred for life, for others they might become future bullies, and unfortunately for others, it will be too late to address the harm. Suicide resulting from bullying has been on the rise for children, especially for adolescents that have been bullied and could not ask or find help.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this project is to create informative workshops to help parents understand what bullying is and what the signs of bullying are. In addition, these workshops addressed crucial information that a parent needs to know in order to identify if their child is a bully. These workshops helped parents be educated on the topic and be prepared to help their children in case they find themselves in a bullying situation.

Moreover, these workshops provided information about how to raise strong children, cyberbullying, high school dropouts and suicide prevention.

### **Description of Project**

*Starting from the Roots* is comprised of five workshops directed toward parents. These workshops are divided in order to build on each other. In order for the full benefit of the program, the parents should attend all of the workshops. The target population is the parents of school age children. The younger their children are the better it is. However, if the parents have never attended any mental health education workshops, it is recommended for them to attend this program even if their children are in high school. In addition, all parents of all socio-economic statuses are encouraged to attend this program. However, parents of low socio-economic status benefited more from this program because these parents are the ones who are working for longer hours in order to be able to keep shelter and put food on the table, thus they are not very involved in their children's lives and might miss the signs of mental health issues.

Since bullying has been around children in schools for generations and generations, this program focuses on educating the parents. The first workshop addresses bullying. It focuses on research, statistics, victims signs, and most importantly, it defines and explains what is bullying and what is not. Most of the information is a refresher for the majority of people; however, it is important to start with the basic information and to know that the audience has a clear picture of the issue. The workshop identifies the role of the victims, the bullies, and the bystanders and gives a clear picture of what needs to be done in case a child is being bullied. Moreover, it talks about the importance of talking to children, gives examples of questions to ask, and prepares the parents to deal with

difficult situations. The workshop serves as a reference for the succeeding workshops and gives a foundation for parenting school age children.

Raising children to be strong from an early age helps children in so many ways. The second workshop of *Starting from the Roots* teaches parents how to talk to their children, and how to teach their children to stand up for themselves and others when they find themselves in difficult situations. This workshop addresses behaviors that are commonly seen within our daily lives. Parents are the first example that children have and most of the children see their parents as role models (good or bad), and they act like them. We have all seen a commercial in which children are trying to imitate their parents, or perhaps a child at the mall or at the market acting like their mother or father. The little girl at the grocery shop smelling the fruit before putting it in the basket or the young boy opening the door for a lady both imitate their parents. On the other hand, we have also seen children acting like their parents in a bad way. The little boy yelling at his mother because he saw his father doing that, or the young girl at school gossiping about other girls, which she learned from her mother gossiping about the neighbor. Although these things seem to be very obvious not to do in front of children, some parents do not think about them and the consequences they are creating. *Starting from the Roots* concentrates specifically on educating the parents on issues that are so common that no one is addressing. This program was designed to help parents open their eyes on the day to day activities that their children are seeing and learning from every day.

The third part of the program addresses, cyberbullying which is unfortunately the number one method of bullying in these days. Because many of the pre-teenager and teenagers' parents were not raised in the era of technology, this workshop teaches parents

the dangers of social media. This workshop provides parents with an overview of defining and explaining cyberbullying. It guides the parents to view the internet from the eyes of their children, teaching them to set rules and know what is appropriate, or not, for their children to be doing on line.

The next issue that *Starting from the Roots* addresses is high school dropouts. This workshop was added because most of the high school students who drop out of school have faced some kind of difficulty with mental health. Either because they are bullied, therefore they do not want to attend school any more, or because they are suffering from depression, which leads to not doing well in school, which will then also lead to dropping out of school. Although, high school dropouts have many components to consider as to why a student decides to drop out, throughout the literature review, one can see addressing mental health from a young age could prevent later troubles for our teenagers.

The last session of *Starting from the Roots* educates the parents on prevention of suicidal ideation, thought, act, and completion. Although this topic is not the most exciting or easy topic, it needs to be explained and understood by every person who is in contact with children, especially with teenagers. Parents should know the signs and the consequences of not taking action on a possibly suicidal child. This session gives support and tools to parents to prevent the unthinkable from happening. In addition, it teaches parents to ask and reach for support when they, as parents, cannot handle critical situations. This session helps parents pass over the embarrassment and take actions to help their children.

## **Limitations**

One of the limitations for these workshops is that these workshops are conducted by individuals that are not particularly trained on bullying, cyberbullying, high school dropout, and suicide prevention. There is no control on the presenter and his or her education on this topic. A second limitation for these workshops is that there the workshops are in the English language only. Since most of the school systems have a diverse population and the parents might speak a different language this may be an issue. When an interpreter is used, some of the information might either be lost in the interpretation or might be misinterpreted.

### **Terminology**

**Bullying** – Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose

**Cyberbullying** – Same definition as bullying but cyberbullying happens through the social media, messages, and phone.

**Bully** – The child that is bullying other child/ren. Often times this child has previously been bullied.

**Bully Victim** – The child that is being bullied repeatedly by another child/ren.

**Suicide** – Self-inflicted harm resulting in death.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

### **General Information**

Bullying has been defined as a problem in our schools for many years, however, in today's school life it is talked about more than ever, and most importantly, it is being addressed more in hope to reduce its power (Rigby, 2004). When dealing with bullying, one needs to understand the meaning of it and one needs to have a definition that delineates the behaviors and the extent of which it is occurring. For the purpose of this project, the following definition was adopted from the website: [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov). Retrieved in November 2015.

### **Bullying definition:**

*Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.*

Bullying can take place in different forms and different places. Bullying can be in a physical form; which includes, hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, tripping, and/or damaging property. It should be noted that this list is not limited to what is listed here, other forms of physical bullying could also be included. Moreover, bullying can also be verbal. Name calling, teasing, homophobic or racist remarks, and/or verbal abuse could all be part of verbal bullying. Verbal bullying is also associated with emotional abuse (Carney, & Merrell, 2001). Another type of bullying is social bullying. Social bullying is

when a child excludes another child from a group, spreads rumors, isolates or forces someone to do something that he or she does not want to do. Although humiliation in front of peers is usually associated with younger children, it is also very common to see within college students as well, especially within sororities and fraternities (Carney et al., 2001).

Statistics on bullying have shown that 15 to 20 percent of students were bullied at some point during their educational years (Baldry, 2003). Other studies have shown that 1 in 3 of the school age students are, or have been, involved in some kind of bullying, either they were the bullies or the victims (Hughes, Gaines, & Douglas, 2014). According to the educator's guide to bullying prevention, 160,000 students in the U.S. miss school every day because of their fear of being bullied on school grounds or on their way to or from school (Phillips, Linney, & Pack, 2008). Moreover, studies show that 71% of teachers, aides, and school personnel either ignored or did not know that children under their care were being bullied (Phillips et al., 2008).

Bullying has a negative impact, not only on the child that is being bullied, the victim, but also on the bully. There is evidence that when a child is acting as a bully, the child has or is suffering from some kind of bullying (Baldry, 2003). Children who live in an environment with domestic violence between the parents are more likely to act as bullies and victimize other children. Baldry (2003) found that boys are more likely to victimize others when they were exposed to their father abusing their mother. Considering that these boys were exposed to such violence, these boys feel that they have the right to bully others. In the same study, Baldry (2003) found that when girls are

exposed to domestic violence, they are more likely to act as a bully towards other girls because they need to feel that they have control.

Another study conducted by Venter and Du Plessis (2012) found that students who were the bullies have reported physical or emotional abuse themselves at some point in their lives. The use of bullying has served as a protective factor for these students. Moreover, it is important to handle these situations and provide the appropriate services, not only to the victims, but also to the bullies, because they potentially could be abusers in their adult life. This could also have an impact on future school age generation, because the children copy their parents' behaviors (Venter et al., 2012).

Another issue with bullying prevention programs is that most of the programs target only the school bases. Many educators create programs that target the students' behaviors and teaching empathy towards their peers. Some educators believe that the only way to target the bullying behavior is to teach children to help themselves and others that are in a difficult situation (Warren, 2010). Although helping the children could stop the immediate behavior and could also prevent future behavior, it is not the only answer to target bullying. When parents are educated on the topic and know the signs and the consequences of bullying, either as a victim or as a bully, they will be more ready and informed to help their children do the right thing in difficult situations.

In a study conducted by Gokler (2009), research indicates that students that had been previously exposed to violence tended to have a higher chance of being bullied throughout their school years. In addition, standby students only intervened when violence was present, however, in situations where a lower-profile incident occurred, such as gossiping or spreading rumors, students remained unresponsive. Furthermore,

Gokler (2009) found that when students did intervene, they used problem solving skills to attempt to resolve the issue at hand.

According to a study conducted by Rigby (2004), schools are implementing anti-bullying programs that are targeting some of the behaviors of the bullies and to some extent these programs are able to reduce bullying. However, Rigby's (2004) study showed that no one program has completely eliminated bullying in schools. Most of the programs that are available now address bullying in schools, with specific instruction for teachers and students. According to Yerger and Gehret (2011), bullying could be reduced with more adult supervision within schools, especially during the lunch breaks. In addition, educating the students, teachers, and school staff will also help improve the school climate and environment. Many of the anti-bullying programs address bullying in the schools by educating teachers, school staff, and students, which is very important. However, one should also consider educating the parents because most parents are not educated on the harm that bullying can cause. For example, some proactive parents see bullying as anything that bothers their children, and they often go to the schools to address the issue. Other parents tell their children to deal with their own issues. In some cases, the parent might encourage their son or daughter to defend him/herself, which could result in their child taking a role of a bully.

### **Students at Risk**

Although there is not a specific profile of a student that makes him or her more at risk than other students, certain students are far more bullied than others. For example, homosexual students are bullied more than heterosexual students (Lepley, 2014). This could be because homosexual students are more vulnerable because in certain

communities homosexuality is not accepted. Moreover, most of the time homosexual students are still in a phase of confusion and they may not have discussed this with their parents. They might be afraid of what their future will be like (Waldman, 2012). Usually, the bullies choose their “victims” to be the children that are different. The bullies know that these students are less likely to go and seek help from adults, therefore they are easy targets.

Another issue that needs to be addressed with bullying is that much of our society is built on judgment and un-acceptance towards features that are not considered to be within the norm. For example, children hear their parents refer to gay people as if they were from another planet. Gay individuals are not accepted in certain communities. When parents are engaging in these behaviors, they are teaching their children that it is alright to treat “different” people with no respect. Children learn from their role models (the parents), and they will show the same behavior toward other students within their school community (Waldman, 2012).

In another study led by Reiter and Lapidot-Lefler (2007) examined the relationship between social skills, social adjustment, and bullying between bullies, victims, and victim-bully. A victim-bully is a student who was bullied and then turned out to be a bully him/herself. This study showed that bullies and victim-bullies had significantly higher challenging behavior, such as temper tantrums, while students who were bullied were more likely to have emotional and interpersonal problems (Reiter, 2007).

According to studies conducted by White and Loeber (2008), bullying, aggressive behavior, and special education are substantially correlated. These findings infer that

students that are placed in a special education program typically portray “bad” behavior within the school environment. This inference poses the question as to whether or not schools have been placing children in the special education system as a result of delinquent-like behavior commonly found with bullies. In addition, this also brings to question whether schools and communities are addressing the real problem, rather than finding the easy, yet temporary, solution to the problem. Due to these findings and inferences, educators must continuously inform themselves about this topic and other related issues.

### **Raising Strong Children**

Most of the schools around the world have understood that bullying is a serious issue and needs to be addressed. In fact, schools in the United States of America and other countries in Europe have some kind of anti-bullying programs. These programs are usually directed to teach students what is bullying, what to do if they are being bullied and what to do if they see someone being bullied. In addition, these programs teach students the consequences of bullying and in some cases they teach empathy to children. Moreover, some of these programs have the students take oaths not to be a bully or a bystander (Guimond, Brendgen, Vitaro, Dionne, & Boivin, 2015).

Most bullying programs also target the teachers and the school personnel. Each school district often has their own training for the school staff, where they teach or remind school personnel of their duty to report bullying, to stop bullying when they see it, and to teach their students about bullying (Guimond et al., 2015). However, teachers usually do not have the time to incorporate bullying in their lesson plans and sometimes teachers might feel that taking class time to teach bullying could put the class behind in

their academics. Teachers might be more willing to deal with a situation when it happens rather than taking class time to teach about bullying. Some teachers set up classroom rules that incorporate anti-bullying policies, which to some degree could help the students understand that bullying will not be over-seen (Guimond et al., 2015).

What some programs have forgotten to do is to integrate the parents into the educational system. Teaching the parents how to raise strong children that will not bully other children is perhaps the most powerful tool that educators can give to the parents. Parents need to learn the symptoms that bullying may cause such as depression, anxiety, etc., to know if their child is being bullied or is being a bully. Although the new generation of parents are somewhat more informed than past generations because today bullying is a topic that is talked about more openly, many parents are still ignorant about this topic and as a result their children might be bullied without them knowing (Harcourt, Jasperse, & Green, 2014). Many parents are not prepared to deal with a child that is being bullied; therefore they might give the wrong advice to their child or even tell the child not to complain but rather to stand up for him/herself. While it is a good thing to teach children to stand up for themselves, some children do not have the right tools to do so. They might be afraid to talk to the teacher and/or to talk directly to the bully.

It is important to teach the parents about bullying and how they could be fostering their child to become a bully. Most of the time parents are not aware that their behavior is putting their child at risk of becoming a bully. For example, when a parent is gossiping about someone in front of their child, the child could be interpreting this as “it is okay to talk behind people’s backs; my parents do, therefore, I can do the same”. Another example is the use of the word “hate.” At some point, most people have used the word

“hate” even though they did not really mean it. When parents are teaching their young children the morals to live their lives by, a common lesson is to share with others what they have. However, many of the times, parents execute this lesson incorrectly, forcing their child to give their toy to another child rather than allowing the child to make the decision to share all by him/herself. By doing this, the parents are teaching their children that it is okay to forcibly take things that they want. Raising children with this mentality might later result in the children becoming bullies (Harcourt et al., 2014).

Other ways that parents might be promoting bullying behavior is by their discipline practices. If the parents use extreme punishment, embarrass their child, or yells at their child when he or she has done something wrong, then the child is learning from the parent to be a bully. Parents should be taught the consequences of what they do and what their child is learning from them.

Moreover, parents need to be involved in the education of their children, especially if this will help to keep their children safe. Harcourt et al., (2014), described the importance of parents’ involvement in the school programs and the communication between the school and the home. Parents need to be aware of the negative effects of bullying, which could be anywhere from depression to suicide, from dropping grades to dropping out of school. Teaching parents coping strategies for their children will help their child bounce back quickly from a bullying episode. To some degree, parents are the key to helping prevent bullying and protecting their children from bullying (Harcourt et al., 2014).

### **Cyberbullying**

Another issue students are facing bullying behavior on social media. Today children communicate with their peers online more than they communicate in person. Although social media could be a benefit for some students, for others the experience could be damaging. Today, students are exposed to many things online that previous generations did not experience. Therefore, it is becoming more difficult for parents to understand the danger for their children. For example, adolescents are sending inappropriate pictures of him/herself. Before we had the internet and the digital life, it was very rare that someone would take a picture of themselves and send it to someone else. First because that person needed to take the film to develop the picture, and secondly even if this happened, it was very difficult to send or make a copy of that picture and send it out. Today children and adolescents can do this process with only one click (Willard, 2006).

Cyberbullying is defined as: being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material, or engaging in other forms of social cruelty using the Internet or other digital technologies (Willard, 2006). Cyberbullying means using electronic/digital tools like cellphones, tablets, computers, and the internet to hurt someone by: threatening, humiliating, embarrassing, and ruining friendships or reputations. Although these examples are the main ones, other examples could be added to this list. When a person is using the internet to spread any inappropriate words or pictures, it is considered to be cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is different from the “traditional bullying” that is done in person at school because cyberbullying can happen 24 hours a day 7 days a week (any time of day or night). Also, cyberbullying can be done from a physically-distant location (Feinberg &

Robey, 2009). For example, while the parents think that their child is safe in the house doing his or her homework on the internet, that child could be engaging in cyberbullying, either being the bully or being the victim. In addition, cyberbullying differs from “traditional bullying” because the bully doesn’t have to confront his or her target in person. It is easier to be hateful using typed words rather than spoken words face-to-face. Moreover, the bully could be posting or sending messages anonymously, using fake screen names and email addresses, which makes it hard to find out who is really behind that name, and in many cases it can be difficult, and sometimes impossible, to trace the source. Furthermore, parents are not prepared or very educated on this topic to be able to help their children (Feinberg et al., 2009).

Two characteristics that define Cyberbullying are Speed and Spread. Speed is defined as a picture or a comment could be posted in a second and hundreds, if not thousands, of people will see it. Spread is defined as: with one click, a picture could be sent out to the entire school and/or the community. Parents, teachers, and educators have the obligation to teach children the impact that online activities can have on themselves and others. Many students do not realize the large effect cyberbullying has on the victim and on the bully (cyberbullying.org).

Additionally, cyberbullying could be considered more dangerous than “traditional bullying” because the information can be circulated to a very wide audience in very few seconds. Moreover, after the messages are sent, it is extremely difficult to delete inappropriate or harassing messages, texts, and pictures. This is due to the fact that messages are sent around so quickly that one does not have any control of who sees the pictures/messages and how many times these pictures/messages are resent, and to who. In

almost all cases, adolescents are not prepared to deal with these situations and most adults and parents may also be unprepared to respond to the online bullying. It used to be that we said there was a “generation gap” between adults and adolescents, however today it has changed and there is a “digital divide” to highlight the vast differences in the knowledge of technology between youth and adults. Knowing all of this information, one needs to understand that there is a critical need to educate parents and adults about the use of cellphones and social networking sites (Ey, Taddeo, & Spears, 2015).

Cyberbullying can be very powerful with adolescents and children because most of the time they are afraid to tell someone. Children do not tell adults because they worry that the adults will take their phones or computers away; therefore they do not want to be punished for someone else’s mistakes. Moreover, cyberbullying can be very powerful in that facial expressions and body language cannot be seen, leaving the receiver with an unsure idea of how a message is supposed to be interpreted (absence of paralinguistic cues). In addition, the fact that this form of bullying is done throughout cyberspace, the victims may feel that the audience is so vast that it is impossible to escape from it. Because of this, many victims keep to themselves and suffer alone, without sharing their situation with parents, other adults, and/or with friends (Feinberg, 2009).

### **Cyberbullying Warning Signs**

Although it is not easy for a parent or an educator to know if a child under their supervision is being bullied, it is important to know the signs and act like an investigator. When children are bullied they might unexpectedly stop using their device(s) or they might appear nervous or jumpy when using their device(s). In addition, they become emotionally upset during, or after, using the internet or the mobile device and they would

avoid discussions about what they are doing online. Furthermore, children that are either being bullied or are bullying others become unusually secretive, especially when it comes to online activities. In most cases, they will stop using their device as soon as a parent walks in next to them ([www.stopbullying.com](http://www.stopbullying.com), Retrieved in November 2015).

Additionally, they delete the activities on their phone, for example, their messages, any pictures that they send or receive, and anything that they think can make their parents suspect of any wrong doing (Hilt, 2013).

In summary, bullying has been a problem in the lives of children. Bullying can happen anywhere and to anyone. Bullying occurs in person, online, and through phone messages and in some cases, through phone calls. Bullying has become an epidemic for children and it is the obligation of parents and educators to protect them. The key to protect the students is to educate, not only the students and the school staff, but most importantly, the parents that are raising the future generation of this country. It is crucial for parents to know when their child is being bullied. Knowing the warning signs can prevent or stop from creating, or furthering, psychological damage.

### **High School dropouts**

High school dropouts have been a topic of interest for many people throughout many generations. Over the years, people have tried to justify the dropouts in many different ways. Some people believe that it is the fault of the broken educational system. Others blame the parents, while other people attribute the dropout rates to the economy. Literature review will look at an emotional component that might also be responsible for today's high school dropouts. This literature review will focus on bullying and the effect

bullying has on high school dropout and its effect on suicide attempts and suicide completion.

### **Socio-Economic Statues**

Over the past few decades, researchers all over the world have studied high school dropouts in different ways and using different variables. One of these variables is socioeconomic status (SES), which has been the topic for many years. Many researchers have linked education and high school dropouts to low SES. One of the factors is the fact that students from low SES have the need to leave school and find work to help their families economically. In addition, one needs to state that students who come from a low SES attend low performing schools, which is already a disadvantage for these students. In a study conducted by Suh, Suh, and Houston (2007), researchers found that low SES was the most frequent predictor for dropout. Moreover, they found that students from low SES are especially at risk if the student comes from a single mother household. In addition, students from low SES move schools frequently, which put these students in a higher risk than other students who have stability in their household. Suh et al., (2007), also suggested that students that come from a low SES should receive counseling to help them understand the importance of a high school education and to provide them with the extra help that is needed. Furthermore, not only the students receive counseling, but they should also recommend that the parents attend workshops where they will learn the importance and the value of earning a high school diploma. Having the parents on board with the school will make a huge difference in the pupils' life (Suh et al., 2007).

One of the misconceptions that people have on high school dropout rates is that dropout students are not intelligent and they do not do well academically. However, this

is not always the case. Research shows that some students in gifted programs drop out because of other factors, rather than their academic performance. In one particular study conducted by Renzulli, and Park, (2000), a group of gifted students were studied to investigate why gifted students would drop out of high school. They found that there are many factors of why gifted students would drop out. The main reason was having a low socioeconomic – status (SES) family. Low SES puts children at a higher risk than children who have an economic stability. Many children that come from low SES have less support at home and tend to associate themselves with other students whose priority is not school. In addition, gifted students might be looking at methods to help their family cope with their financial issue.

Another issue with children that come from low SES is that these children do not see their future as being successful and do not imagine themselves having a different lifestyle from that of their parents. In addition, Renzulli and Park (2000) reported that parents of gifted children who come from low SES were not upset by the decision of their children to drop out and the parents did not try to talk them out of it or provide them with the help that they needed. On the other hand, when gifted students from a high SES thought of dropping out of high school, their parents reported that they were not happy about their child’s decision and they used all their resources to help their child stay in school and graduate from high school. Moreover, the high SES parents punished their children in the cases of dropping out, while the low SES parents supported their children’s decision and were “happy” that their children were going to work and help with the household expenses. The difference between the SES could make a huge

difference in the outcome of how parents view the future of their children (Renzulli & Park, 2000).

These findings were consistent with another study conducted by Hughes, Gaines and Pryor (2014) who studied school avoidance. They found that low socioeconomic status was also one of factors that resulted in adolescents not wanting to go to school. The students did not feel safe at their school due to the high crime rate in their school, or even because they were being bullied. Another issue is that students who are bullied and avoid attending school will be affected later in life when they have to find a job and be competent and skilled. Students who do not have the appropriate education are the ones that cannot find a well-paying job therefore it will affect their ability to fully contribute to society. By preventing bullying, students will be more willing to attend school which affects the future generation as a whole.

### **Bullying and High School Dropout.**

Researchers have investigated bullying and its relation to high school dropout. It is indicated that students tend to drop out of school because they want to avoid being bullied. Although bullying has been around and documented for many decades, today, children are faced with different types of bullying. It used to be that one could be bullied at school and around the neighborhood; however today a child can be bullied even while he or she is in the safeness of their home. The fact that technology has developed so quickly in the past years has put children at risk of being bullied, regardless of any other factor. Some children who are bullied over social media do not want to go to school because if a picture or a comment was posted on the internet, it is very easily spread around the school community (Cornell, Gregory, Hang & Fan, 2013).

In addition, students who are bullied in school or online start to fall behind in their studies due to the fact that they miss so many days of school. According to Cornell et al., (2013) children in school socialites are more at risk to dropout from high school when they are bullied throughout their high school years. Cornell et al., (2013) surveyed students, teacher and administrators from Virginia Public high schools, and found that students who were bullied were at more risk of dropout. In addition, they also found that school size is another factor for students who dropout. This also indicates that school size and bullying are correlated because schools with a generally larger population have more challenging issues to control and prevent bullying than schools with a smaller population, where students are more reachable by their teachers and the counselors.

Mental health has also been attributed to high school dropouts. Children who receive some kind of counseling and mental health services have less risk of dropping out when compared to children who do not receive any services. In the research conducted by Daniel, Walsh, Goldston, Arnold, Reboussin and Wood (2006), they found that the less counseling services that the students received in high school, the more dropout rates they experienced. In their study, Daniel et al., (2006) examined suicide, dropout rates, and reading problems. Daniel et al., (2006) found that students with learning disabilities are more bullied than students without any disabilities. They also indicate that students are not reporting all the bullying that goes in school and therefore the victims being bullied do not receive the intervention or prevention they need. In their study, Daniel et al., (2006) also indicated that suicide and dropouts are highly associated with each other. Even though they reported that students with learning disability are more likely to commit suicide, one has to keep in mind that there are other factors that contribute to

committing or attempting suicide. Mental health is the most common factor that is found in students who have committed suicide or attempted suicide.

The problems of bullying and high school dropouts happen in all communities around the world. In a study conducted in South Africa by Townsend, Flisher, Chikobvu, Lambard and King, 2008, the relation between bullying and dropout rates was studied. Results revealed that bully - victims were more likely to dropout than students who were not victims of bullying.

Another variable that contributes to high school dropout is gender. Although as reported by the National Center of Education Statistics (NCES) the gap between gender is closing, it is still reported that 54 % of the drop outs are males, and 46 % are females. These numbers have changed over the years, from females having the largest dropout rates to the present, where more males are dropping out. In addition, NCES reports that over the past four decades, high school dropouts have decreased dramatically from 35% of high school students, to today's rates of about 18% of the students, which is still very high (National Center of Education Statistics, 2015).

Other variables that stood out throughout the literature review is gender and bullying. In their study, Townsend et al., (2008) compared high school students with adolescents that have dropped-out of school. They studied the correlation between genders and found that 52% of high school boys were more bullied than boys who had already dropped out of high school. While for the girls, 36% of the high school girls were bullied. This shows that while in the school setting the boys have a higher chance of being bullied. However, when they compared dropout rates of students, according to gender, they found that girls who have been bullied tend to dropout more than boys who

were bullied. These results are consistent with the findings of Hughes et al., (2014) who also found that sophomore girls that are bullied are more likely to avoid going to school, resulting in missing a lot of instruction, which also leads to dropout.

Peer victimization and bullying have been neglected in the past years. Although schools and educators have been talking about the issue, it seems that not enough is being done to help children that are being bullied and victimized in our society. Bullying has been proven to be a predictor for high school dropouts in many studies. Cornell et al., (2013) have studied bullying and its prediction to high school dropouts, and confirmed the correlation between these two variables. They found that preventing bullying will increase the graduation rates. Cornell et al., (2013) also found that bullying might be a factor of school avoidance and school disengaging. These findings were also consistent with the findings of Hughes et al., (2014) in their study “Staying Away From School: Adolescents who Miss School Due to Feeling Unsafe”. Hughes et al., (2014) found that students who are being bullied and feel unsafe tend to avoid school and drop out from high school.

In summary, the literature review reveals that high school drop outs are due to many factors. One significant predictor in almost all the studies is socioeconomic status, which has multiple factors. Some of these factors were: the lack of stability, the need to assist their family economically, and the lack of parents’ involvements in the students’ decision. Another predictor that was presented in the review was that bullying is one of the biggest problems that lead students to dropping out and in some cases, it might also lead to suicide. In addition, the lack of mental health services is also contributing to students dropping out of high school. Moreover, studies have shown that children with

learning disabilities are at a higher risk of dropping out than children with no disabilities because children with disabilities not only have the disadvantage of having a disability, but are also being bullied. Today, there are enough studies to say with confidence that something needs to be done regarding high school dropouts.

It is important to understand the factors that are associated with high school dropouts in order to help these students and create prevention programs. High school students of today are the future of this country and there is an obligation to do to improve this situation.

Another factor that might be influencing students to dropout is the fact that many students are being bullied, creating a healthy environment will help these students to put their focus in finishing high school and possibly to continue to higher education. Some students that are bullied join gang groups to feel protected, while others use alcohol and drugs to forget about their problems.

### **Bullying and Characteristics of Suicide**

Over the past two decades, suicide resulting from bullying has increased (CDC, 2012). More teenagers have found themselves in situation where they might have thought that they had no way out. One of these teenagers is Amanda Todd. As reported by the examiner.com on October, 13 2012, Amanda was a typical teenager; she enjoyed meeting with her friends and meeting new people through social media. However, Amanda's life had a turn in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, she met someone online and he convinced her to take naked pictures of herself and to send them to him. Later the same person asked her to video chat with him and to perform acts while naked. When Amanda refused, he threatened to send her naked pictures to her friends.

Amanda's pictures were sent to her school friends and acquaintances. She began to receive text messages and phone calls from different people. She was bullied at school and all over her social media. Amanda started to drink alcohol and do drugs. She was trying to hide her feelings. She changed schools in hope of getting away from her bullies, but on social media the bullying continued. Amanda attempted suicide one time before she committed suicide. She left behind a 'you-tube' video, where she described her pain and her emotional state. However, this was discovered too late, Amanda was already gone (Examiner, 2012).

Like Amanda's story there are many more. Bullying has been contributing to teen suicide and it has been on the raise (CDC, 2014). In order to understand what is happening within teenage mind that drives them to commit suicide, one needs to understand what the signs of suicide are and the different levels of suicide.

Suicide is a complex issue that many children and adolescents have been facing for a long time. In order to understand suicide as a topic, one needs to comprehend the different categories. There are five categories that define suicide; these are Suicidal Thoughts, Suicidal Intent, Suicidal Gestures, Suicidal Attempts, and Complete Suicide. According to the Center of Disease Control (CDC), suicidal thoughts are very common among youths between the ages of ten to twenty - four years. In a study conducted by CDC, it was reported that as many as 24.9% of females and 13.7% of males in a particular high school have seriously considered suicide within the last year (Center of Disease Control, 2015).

Suicidal Intent means that the child or adolescent have a specific plan and the motivation to commit suicide. Suicidal Gestures, also known as Para – Suicidal Behavior,

are the non-Lethal self – harming actions for example, cutting- mostly used by girls (Kerig, & Wenar, 2006). Professionals and parents are to consider these gestures as a red flag. Most of the time, the youth is using these gestures as a cry for help. The next category is Suicide Attempts. This is when the youth has intent and goes on with it. Fortunately, suicide attempts do not succeed. These youths need immediate attention and intervention. These attempts differ by lethality. Low lethality is using slow methods which makes discovery possible, for example, the use of drugs at home. High lethality is the use of a potential method such as a gun. The last category is Complete Suicide. Although every category is extremely serious, complete suicide is the most devastating one. Complete suicide is a significant problem among adolescents and it has increased over the past two decades (Kerig et al., 2006).

In the U.S.A., suicide is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death between the ages of fifteen and nineteen and the 4<sup>th</sup> between the age of ten and fourteen (Center of Disease Control, 2015). The ratio of complete suicide between the age of fifteen and nineteen among gender is 1: 4.4, being males, the most (Poland & Lieberman, 2002). The most common methods used by youths are: firearms – used by both genders, hanging – mostly males, and drug use – mostly females. According to Kerig et al., (2006) males age 15- 19 complete suicide six times as often as females. The suggested reason is that males in general use more deadly methods (guns, hanging); however, females attempt suicide three times more often than males. According to World Health Organization, more males commit suicide in the U.S., Canada, West Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, while the ratio in the Asian counties is nearly equal (Kerig et al., 2006)

### **Ethnic Diversity and Cross Cultural Differences**

As stated by CDC (2012), youths have several factors that might put them at risk for suicide. Some of these factors are: history of previous suicide attempts, family history of suicide, depression or other mental illness, alcohol and substance abuse, stressful life events such as bullying or loss of status, access to lethal methods, exposure to suicidal behavior and incarceration. Although these factors are to be considered while working with children and youths, it does not mean that every child or adolescent with these factors will commit suicide, it only suggests that these youths are at more risk than others who do not have any of these factors (CDC, 2012). Youths that do not have a supportive family structure are at more risk than those who have a good family support. For example children that experience bullying and especially cyberbullying are more at risk than children never experienced any kind of bullying (CDC, 2012). Moreover, children whose parents are more educated on bullying and cyberbullying are less likely to be engaged in suicidal behavior, and if they do engage in this behavior, they are more likely to receive help than children of parents who are uneducated on the topic. Another example, is that children who are being bullied become depressed, which could also lead to suicide. Parents that are aware of these situations are more likely to provide mental health such as counseling to their children than parents who are not aware that their child is being bullied (Ey, Taddeo, and Spears, 2015).

According to Kerig et al., (2006) 90% of the adolescents who have completed or attempted suicide have a diagnosable psychopathology. Major depression is the most common disorder in both genders, while mood disorder is more common in females. Aggression and impulsivity is also seen in youths with suicide ideation. Other disorders are seen in youths with suicidal behaviors for example, 70% of the suicidal youths have

childhood conduct disorder (CCD) and others demonstrate antisocial behavior symptoms (Kerig et al., 2006). Poland et al., (2002) have indicated that comorbidity between disorders such as major depression disorder, anxiety disorder, and conduct disorder puts the child or adolescent at a higher risk. Other disorders that co-occur with suicide are borderline personality disorder, schizophrenia, and eating disorders (Kerig et al., 2006). Also, there are two major contributions to suicide ideation; youths that feel hopelessness and have poor problem solving skills, these contributions are usually combined with depression and the fact of being bullied (Ey, Taddeo, and Spears, 2015).

### **Warning Signs**

Many of the youths make threats before attempting or committing suicide. Sometimes these threats are direct like – “I want to die”, other times the threats are indirect such as – “the world would be better without me”. Some adolescents use jokes or school assignments to make a threat. Others are using the social media to make their statements. Like Amanda Todd, many adolescents are creating videos and posting them online before they commit suicide. These threats should be taken seriously by everyone, especially by the parents. Although these threats might indicate that the child is acting out, a parent who is educated on this topic should know that when a child is posting or saying these comments, that child is asking for help (Ansary, Elias, Greene, and Green, 2015).

Sudden change in behavior or mood is also a warning sign for suicide behavior and bullying. For example, an indicator would be if an adolescent used to be outgoing and friendly and now the same adolescent is passing most of the time in his or her bedroom alone and whenever his or her friends call, he/ she does not want to talk to them

(Poland et al., 2002). Also, bullying is another sign to look for when dealing with children or adolescents. When bullying is combined with depression it can lead to suicide (Hilt, 2013).

Previous attempts are also signs of future attempts. Many of the adolescents who attempt suicide experience a negative outcome, and they engage in dangerous behavior. Fifteen percent of youths who had previously attempted suicide will eventually kill themselves (Poland et al., 2002).

Final arrangements are indicators of suicide behavior. For example, an adolescent might give away her possessions like jewelry. However, this behavior is not seen in younger children since they have not fully developed their cognitive skills (Poland et al., 2002). As it has already been discussed, suicide is almost always associated with depression and many times it is also associated with bullying. Children who are bullied have the combined thought of helplessness and hopelessness which in many cases results in committing suicide (Poland et al., 2002).

### **Preventions**

In order to prevent suicide, the teachers, parents, guardians and other people in children's lives must be educated about the problem. For some people, it is hard to even think about suicide, others, depending on the culture, do not want their children to learn about suicide in fear that if their child learns about it, they might try it. However, it is very important to make people aware of the suicide problem and the symptoms to look for in a child or adolescent (Poland et al., 2002).

Most importantly is to have School-level organization and use of resources. This means that the school has good communication between the teachers, administration, and

parents, there is a team base approach, and that the procedures and protocols are clear for everyone (Stein, Kataoka, Hamilton, Schultz, & Ryan, 2010).

However, teaching youth about suicide might not be very effective, therefore other solutions might have a better approach. (Kerig et al., 2006).

In summary suicide is deriving from diverse issues that have been effecting youths all over the world. It is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death among adolescents and the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause among children ages 10 – 14. It is essential that parents of children and adolescents are aware of the issues and the symptoms of bullying that could result in suicidal behavior. Parents and teachers should undergo training to learn more about the subject and be able to identify and refer the child/ adolescent to the appropriate person or agency. Preventions programs are becoming more available around the U.S, and more training is being offered throughout school districts for educators and parents.

### **Synthesis of Literature Review**

Overall review of the research indicates that students who have been bullied can be affected for the rest of their life. Bullying has been associated with many issues such as high school drop-out, depression, becoming a bully, and suicide.

Cyberbullying was found to be very powerful because students do not realize the damage they are causing to the other person, especially because they are not in direct contact with their victim. Students miss on the body language and other cue which makes bullying easier. Teaching students and school employees about the effects of bullying is not enough. Parents need to be educated and informed about all of the harms that bullying brings with it. Many parents were not raised with the technology that their children are

using, therefore, they do not know the full potential of harm that their children are exposed to.

Suicide has also been correlated to bullying. Unfortunately, many young people could not find a way out of their misery and commit suicide. Most of the parents of young adolescents that committed suicide regret the fact that they missed the cues that their children were being bullied. Parents are usually the last people to find out that their children are being bullied, or being the bullies themselves. Teaching the parents to be aware of the signs of bullying and to ask the right questions could help prevent bullying. *Starting from the Roots* is a program that teaches parents the basics of bullying. It teaches parents ways that they can deal with their children to provide them with help and how to report bullying within the school system. Research suggests that in order to have a complete bullying prevention program in the school system, the parents should be part of the team. Communication between the children, the parents and the school is crucial for the well-being of the children. Parents have the first hand in teaching their children what is right and wrong. Parents need to know the signs of bullying in order to be able to help their children stand up for themselves. Moreover, bullying can harm children for their life. Children who are bullied often do not know what they have to do; however children of parents who have knowledge, are often less likely to be bullied for a long time. These children know that they can go to their parents and talk about what is happening to them. Furthermore, when parents are educated on this topic, their children are less likely to be engaging in suicidal behavior because the parents will identify the signs and they will provide their children with the necessary help.

## Chapter Three: Program Development

### **Introduction**

This graduate program, *Starting from the Roots*, consists of five sessions, each in which a different workshop will take place. The topics discussed in each workshop are Bullying, Raising Strong Children, Cyberbullying, High School Dropouts, and Suicide Prevention, respectively.

The literature review was written in this order to keep the workshops organized and to make access to the information as easy as possible. Due to the workshops being presented within a live audience structure, the presenters must be extremely informed on the topics that they will be discussing. However, as it has been seen in the past, many parents may have unusual questions that might not come directly to mind for the presenters, so the organization of the research is crucial to keep the workshops running efficiently.

In this chapter, the development of the workshops will be discussed. Ideas and people who made an influence in creating this program will be revealed. Moreover, qualifications of presenters and targeted audience will also be discussed in order to make this program, *Starting from the Roots*, successfully delivered.

### **Ideas**

While planning for this master's project, the initial idea was to create a program that addresses mental health issues. In the beginning, the idea was to create a bullying program that was to be used in the schools and was going to be directed to the students. The first impression was that the program will train the teachers to teach and implement a

school wide bullying awareness and prevention program. However, as the research started and information was being gathered about bullying awareness and prevention program, it was found that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of programs that people have created on bullying. Some of these programs are known throughout the education system, such as the famous Olweus program and the Safe School Ambassadors, while others that were created had less success. Soon it was realized that the school system does not need another bullying program to be implemented within the school. After all, it is mandated for all schools in the U.S.A to have some a bullying prevention program and most of the districts, for example Los Angeles Unified School District, have created their own programs (ed.gov).

### **Considerations**

As more consideration for the program topics, it was realized that the children played a smaller role in fixing the problem when compared to the larger role that the cooperation between the parents and the school had. A different route needed to take place for this project; this is when it was decided that the target population was going to be the parents, who are the first teachers for our students. As this journey started, researching topics that parents might be interested in was the biggest challenge. These workshops needed to be something that the parents would look forward to, and at the same time they needed to be as informative as possible. Incorporating education on bullying and mental health in the program was very important; however this was not enough for the program to be effective and complete.

### **Leading Topics**

It was decided that bullying and cyberbullying were going to be my leading topics. Throughout the research and literature review, it was found that high school dropouts were partially linked to bullying, thus another workshop topic was added about high school dropouts. In addition, throughout the research it was realized that suicide played a major role within the topic of bullying and cyberbullying, leading to the creation of the workshop session discussing the prevention of suicide and how it is related to the other topics. This program is intended to be a well-rounded, educational program, in which parents would receive information that would help with the prevention of the tragedies that may occur as consequences of misinformed communities.

### **Development of the Project**

To begin constructing the program, information was gathered about these topics, in addition to new information that may be necessary to include within the workshops. The research started at the very core by defining every topic and making sure that each workshop would easily be able to make these definitions understood. In order to give credibility to the presentations that will be available at the workshops, a variety of statistics were found throughout the research that was done for the literature review. This research included information retrieved from books, websites, peer review articles, dissertations, and independent studies. Most of the articles were found on the California State University online library. In addition, information about programs that school districts are implementing was reviewed to have a view of what actions are already being taken.

To expand the research and the information that will be provided, the author consulted with professors at California State University, Northridge, who guided her with

the information that is necessary to keep this program organized and fluent. In addition, an interview with a parenting director that works at Roy Romer Middle School was conducted. This director has had experience working with parents for over twenty years and has worked with a variety of socio-economic status families. In the interview, it was asked what was most valuable to include in the program for it to result in the greatest success possible. She informed the author that although all of the topics are important, the most crucial part of the program was to establish that raising children to have strong characters and to be able to defend themselves and others in a constructive manner is what will make the utmost difference in how bullying is perceived and handled. It is very difficult for a parent to accept that their child is responsible for bullying others, and this denial is the largest obstacle in resolving the problem.

As a graduate student in school psychology, the author has been exposed to many courses that have allowed her to build upon this topic. The most influential courses consisted of topics relating to mental health issues. These courses provided her with a foundation on how she can instigate and proceed with this program. Additionally, as she started her field work as a school psychologist, she was able to see how bullying and the sequence of events that followed started at a young age. Working in elementary schools, she realized that the issues that come with mental health begin early in life and must be taken care of as soon as possible. As seen in elementary schools, bullying programs are not as effective when only taught to the children because at that young age they are unable to comprehend the consequences of their actions. Therefore, to implement effective programs, the parents must be informed and taught first about the effects of

bullying so that this information may be instituted early in the children's lives within their homes.

### **Challenging**

The most challenging aspect of creating the *Starting from the Roots* program was being able to reach out to families, specifically parents, of all socio-economic statuses. The author needed to generate workshops that were easily taught and comprehended so that there would not be any further confusion, which was difficult to consider and to imagine all the different possible people that will be attending the workshops. Additionally, she had to take into account that the natural reaction for a parent is to be in denial that their child is a possible bully and construct the workshops in a way that will not be found offensive. She needed to make sure that the parents would be comfortable throughout the workshops so that they may be influenced to apply what was taught through the workshops in their daily lives and with their children.

### **Target Population**

This program is structured in a way that will not only benefit the parents by providing them with new information, but also ultimately benefit the children throughout their lives. The parents will be able to confidently walk away from the program with new knowledge and with different ways to handle and approach situations concerning mental health and bullying. In addition, due to the parents' involvement with the program, the children will also become more educated on the topic and will have constant enforcers within their homes, leading to a safer environment within the school, as well.

### **Qualification of Presenters**

This program may be implemented by anyone that has acquired a minimum of a bachelor's degree in either education or psychology. This requirement is to ensure that the extensive information discussed throughout the program is properly instructed and explained. In addition, each presenter must fully inform themselves about each topic by studying the program and reading the literature review. This will guarantee that the program will be coherent, well communicated, and the presenters will be prepared to answer any questions the audience might have.

## **Conclusion**

Parents being the most influential models throughout children's lives, it is necessary to have informed parents raising the future generation to be healthy individuals. The objective of these workshops is to broaden the horizons of information that is accessible by parents about these topics. By doing this, the expected results are to strengthen the overall knowledge that is present within society, so that today's children will grow into aspiring adults that will thrive in a community. This program provides opportunities for families to learn how to mend relationships and to enforce healthier lifestyles that will lead to greater success. Though this program might not be able to aid everyone's needs, the benefits that will consequently be seen are far greater in worth than having to settle to live in a society that is possibly detrimental. This hindrance in society may be seen in the lack of education on the topic that is found in the generation raising our children today. *Starting from the Roots* is a program that will not only increase the mental health of our children, but also increase the level of understanding of the severity of the consequences that result from mental health issues.

## Chapter Four: Program Evaluation

### **Introduction to Evaluation**

*Starting from the Roots* workshops were conducted at Roy Romer Middle School within the Los Angeles Unified District (LAUSD). The population that attended the workshops was mostly from a minority group. In fact the, 99% of the attendees were of a Latino heritage. During the first meeting the attendees filled out the “Pre-workshops survey” (see appendix A for an example of the survey). In order to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of each workshop, all attendees completed a “workshop survey” at the end of each workshop. See appendix B for an example of the workshops survey. On the last workshop the participants completed a “Post-workshops survey” see appendix C for a sample of the survey.

### **Creating the Surveys**

The pre and post surveys were created in order to evaluate the program’s effectiveness and the parent’s learning. The pre-survey asked question on each of the topics that are included in *Starting from the Roots*. In addition, questions about internet access, owning a phone, and how many children are present in the house hold were asked. The pre-survey consisted of seven questions, three rating questions from 1 to 5 with five being the best, and six questions with answers ‘Yes, No, and Not sure’. These questions helped with understanding the audience and to make the workshops useful and informational for them.

The post survey was based on the information that was presented throughout the workshops. The post survey consisted of seven questions, three rating questions from 1 to

5 with five being the best, and four questions with answers 'Yes, No, and Not sure'. The post survey had a free comment section where the attendees wrote their opinion on the workshop, on how the workshops were presented, and suggestions for improvements.

The post workshop survey was adapted from Dr. Laija- Rodriguez's field work class. These surveys helped the presenter to evaluate the way the workshops were presented. If the presenter was presenting the information clearly for the audience to understand, to see if the information was relevant to the parents, and to see if any improvements could be made to deliver the best information. Moreover these surveys served as guidelines for the presenter to know the attendees best way of learning.

### **Evaluating the Data Collected**

In order to evaluate the data collected, Microsoft excel was used. The data was divided by category and the mean and the standard deviation were found. In addition, the comments on the pre and post surveys were read and sorted by workshop and then the comments were divided in three categories. The first one was for positive comments, the second category was for negative comments, and the third one was for improving.

### **Results**

The pre survey revealed that twenty seven parents attended the first workshop. The average child per household was 2.45 and from these children an average of 1.35 have a cell phone. On a scale of one to five, with five being the most, parents reported an average of 2.9 with a standard deviation of 1.08, on knowledge about bullying. On knowledge about cyberbullying, parents reported to know an average of 2.3 with a standard deviation of 1.19. Five parents reported that they do not talk to their children

about bullying and sixteen parents reported that they do not talk to their children about suicide. Three parents reported that bullying can affect high school dropout and nine parents out of twenty seven reported that their child was bullied at some point during their life.

The post survey demonstrated that twenty one parents attended the last workshop of the *Starting from the Roots* workshops. On their knowledge about bullying, the attendees reported an average of 4.16 with a standard deviation of 0.5. Meaning that on average the attendees increased their bullying knowledge (1.26 increase in average). The attending parents reported that their knowledge about cyberbullying increased from an average of 2.3 to an average of 4.6. All attending parents reported that after the workshops they were talking to their children about the harm of bullying and its consequences (suicide, high school dropout etc...). Eleven of the parents that attended wrote positive comments, and five parents wrote comments to improve the workshop, these comments are as follows:

1. Thank you for the wonderful workshop; I will use the information to educate my children. (positive)
2. The information you presented was helpful and interesting. (Positive)
3. From the director of the parents' center at Roy Romer middle school: All the information was very helpful. Parents were very attentive and interested on the topics. We want you to come back! (Positive).
4. Overall, great. Would have help if the information was presented in Spanish. (Improvement)

5. It would have been helpful if the information was divided into more sessions.

Some of us are not used to sit through two hours of class. (Improvement)

At the end of each workshop data was collected on the information and on the presenter. For the first work shop, Preventing Bullying, twelve parents completed the survey. It should be noted that the first workshop took longer time than it was anticipated; therefore some parents left before the workshop was done and did not have the opportunity to complete the survey. Eleven parents reported “Strongly Agree” on all 11 questions. One parent reported “Agree on questions 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9,10, and 11 (see appendix B) and “Strongly Agree” on questions 1, 2, and 6 (see appendix B).

On the second workshop, Raising Strong Children, twenty three parents attended. Seventeen of them reported “Strongly Agree” on all 11 questions, while six parents reported between the “Agree on questions 3, 4, 5 and Strongly Agree on questions 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9 10, and 11 (see appendix B)”. All the comments reported were positive.

On the third workshop, Cyberbullying, twenty one parents attended. All the comments were positive and most of the parents rated the workshop really well. Seventeen parents rated all questions “Strongly Agree” and four parents rated between “Agree on questions 3, 4, 5 and Strongly Agree on questions 1, 2, 6, 9 10, and 11 (see appendix B)”. On the fourth (High School dropout) and fifth workshop, Twenty one parents attended for both workshops. All parents but one rated “Strongly Agree” on all questions on the survey. The one parent rated between “Agree and Strongly Agree”.

## **Recommendations**

Through a discussion with the director of the parents' center at Roy Romer middle school, recommended that the workshops be divided in more session due to the fact parents had to leave early for their jobs. In addition, she suggested that by dividing the workshop will allow more time for parents to share their stories and ask questions. Lastly, she recommended to have activities or scenarios for the parents to work in small groups. The director also suggested to always keep in mind the attendees and their needs, in order to have successful participation.

### **Discussion**

*Starting from the Roots* is an effective program as seen from the comments and the rating of the participants. The attendees participated in the discussion and shared personal stories that were a valuable addition to the program. The evaluation is useful for future presenters to make the appropriate accommodations according to their audience. Moreover, this evaluation and each feedback from the participants helped with the development of the proceeding workshop.

### **Conclusion**

*Starting from the Roots* was designed with the parents and children in mind. As per this evaluation, *Starting for the Roots* could be considered an effective bullying program for parent education. Moreover, this evaluation will help with designing of future workshops, planning for more time, and to adapt for diverse populations. The recommendations from the director were useful and should be taken into consideration, and future presenters should use the information to create a better outcome for their target

population. In addition, this evaluation gave an insight of how the information was presented and how it was received and perceived.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

*Staring from the Roots* was created to aid parents to understand the topic of bullying and how to educate themselves and their children about the effects of bullying. Although on the surface this topic may seem easy to implement, there are many aspects that need to be included for the program to be successful. For many generations, there have been several programs created about this topic. However, this program takes a different approach to the issue at hand and with proper implementation this program showed great results.

The most significant purpose for the creation of this program is the prevention of bullying. This goal will hopefully be accomplished by informing parents of school age children about bullying and its consequences. The large influence that parents have on the behavioral patterns seen in children is the major reason that parents must be properly informed about bullying. The literature review revealed that bullying directly influences to other issues, such as high school dropouts and suicide. In addition, due to advancing technology, cyberbullying has become the “trend” for bullying and this program informs parents about how to prevent this form of bullying from further expanding. Furthermore, this program educates parents to be aware of the signs of bullying so that they will recognize them and act immediately.

This program consists of five workshops that are directed to parents. The workshops are Bullying, Raising Strong Children, Cyberbullying, High School Dropouts, and Suicide Prevention. Each workshop takes place on a different day. Each taking approximately two hours to conduct. The program is spread out so that more parents will

be able to attend all of the workshops and the maximum number of parents will become educated on this topic.

This program is designed so that it may be implemented in any community-type setting in which parents can attend. The person that will implement the program must be properly educated on all of the topics and must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in education or psychology. The program involves cooperation between the implementer and the audience, consisting of questions and answers, as well as collaborative discussions.

Future presenters who would like to utilize this program should take into consideration the targeted audience and the diverse populations in which they may be working with. In addition, time management must also be taken into consideration, while also discussing all of the topics outlined in the literature review. Since seen in the evaluation that time was a limitation, it is suggested that future implementations will dedicate at least three hours for each workshop. Due to the possibility that this may be an issue for some parents, it is also recommended that each workshop is further divided into small sessions to be able to include as much participation from the audience as possible.

Designing this program provided a learning experience that portrayed the challenges of being a graduate student. The author's vision for this program was to help parents of all socio-economic status to be able to understand all of the topics, while also reaching out to a large audience by making it easily accessible. Furthermore, as the evaluation of the program began, it was seen that parents wanted to be informed through the enthusiasm that they brought with them to the workshops. Throughout the implementation of this program, it was seen that audiences of lower socio-economic

status did not usually have the resources available to them to be properly informed on the topics of bullying. *Staring from the Roots* is a program that can implement in school to reach all parents. The questions being asked by the parents helped to form the structure of the program for further presentations. In addition, it was also learned that as more workshops are given, the experience of each workshop provides insight on the types of audiences and how to be able to properly inform every group of parents.

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Appendix A

Pre-workshops Survey

Pre-Workshop Parent survey (Date)

Please circle one

A. How many children in your household

1      2      3      4      more

B. How much do you know about bullying?

1      2      3      4      5

C. How much do you know about cyberbullying?

1      2      3      4      5

D. Do you talk to your child about bullying?

Yes                      No

E. Do you talk to your child about suicide?

Yes                      No

F. Do you think bullying affect high school dropout?

Yes                      No                      Not sure

G. Have your child ever been bullied?

Yes                      No                      Not sure

H. Does your child have a phone?

Yes                      No

I. Does your child have access to internet at home?

Yes                      No

Appendix B

Workshops Survey

Title of workshop:

Presenter:

Date:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The topic presented was clear and well organized.				
2. The presenter(s) were knowledgeable of the topic.				
3. The topic was relevant to me and my family.				
4. The presentation was useful and applicable.				
5. The presenter(s) provided research-based information.				
6. The presenter(s) spoke clearly, was (were) easily heard, and maintained appropriate speech rate.				
7. The presenter(s) used visuals that were appealing and informative.				
8. The presenter(s) maintained eye contact with the audience.				
9. The presentation was appropriately paced.				
10. The presentation included helpful resources.				
11. Overall quality of the presentation.				

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Appendix C

Post Workshop Parent survey (Date)

Post Workshops Parent survey (Date)

Please circle one

J. How much do you know about bullying?

1      2      3      4      5

K. How much do you know about cyberbullying?

1      2      3      4      5

L. Do you talk to your child about bullying?

Yes                      No

M. Do you talk to your child about suicide?

Yes                      No

N. Do you think bullying affects high school dropout?

Yes                      No                      Not sure

O. Did you enjoy the sessions?

Yes                      No                      Not too much

P. How effective were the sessions?

1      2      3      4      5

Q. Comments

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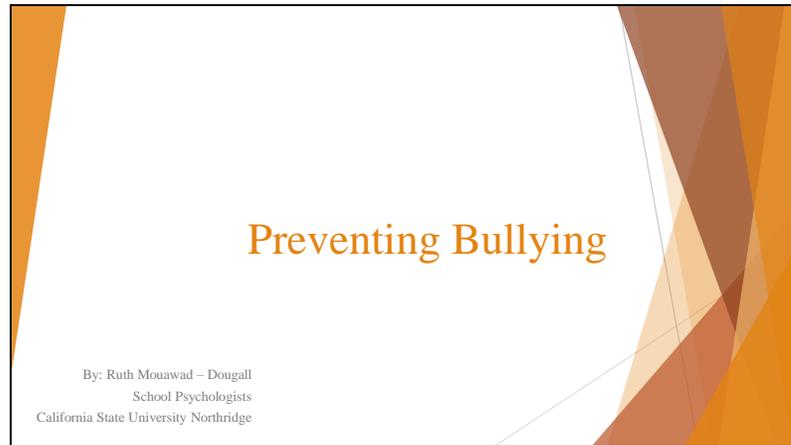
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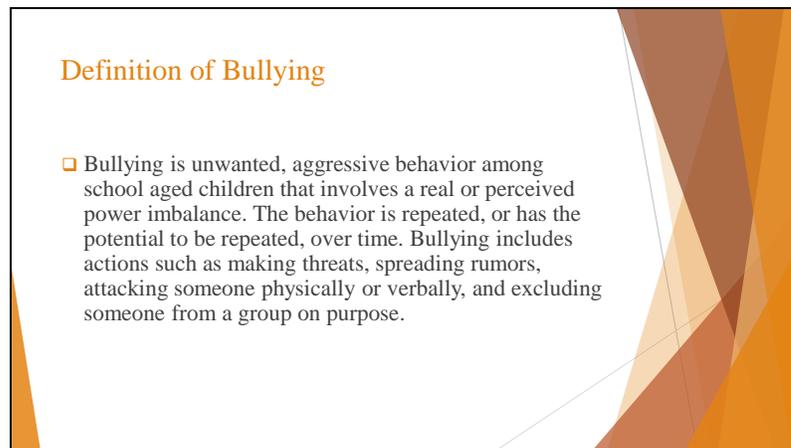
## Appendix D

### “Starting from the Roots” Workshop 1

Slide 1



Slide 2



Slide 3

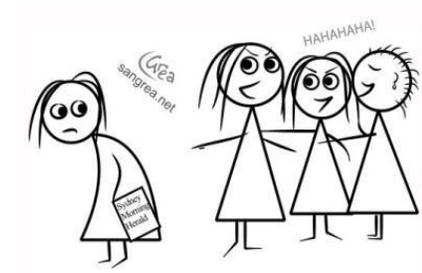
### What is bullying?

- Any aggressive behavior
- Any unwanted behavior
- Repeated behavior
- Spreading rumors
- Threatening behavior
- Attacking someone physically or emotionally
- Excluding others from the group



Slide 4

### Example



She is soooo *immature!* She doesn't even read *Dolly!*

Slide 5

### Example



YOU'RE UGLY  
YOU'RE DUMB  
YOU ARE N'T TALENTED  
YOU'RE A LONER  
YOU'RE BORING  
YOU'RE A FAILURE  
YOU CRY TOO MUCH  
YOU AREN'T FUNNY  
YOU'RE WEAK  
YOU SUCK  
YOU'RE A BORNANT

OK

Slide 6



Slide 7

**Types of Bullying**

- ▶ Physical
  - ▶ Hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, tripping, or damaging property
- ▶ Verbal
  - ▶ Insults, name-calling, teasing, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse
- ▶ Social
  - ▶ Spreading rumors
  - ▶ Isolation
  - ▶ Social exclusion
  - ▶ Forcing people to do things they don't want to do

Slide 8

**Types of Bullying**

- ▶ Covert or hidden bullying
  - ▶ Often harder to recognize and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back
  - ▶ Designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation
  - ▶ Includes
    - ▶ Lying or spreading rumors
    - ▶ Negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks
    - ▶ Playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
    - ▶ Mimicking unkindly
    - ▶ Encouraging others to socially exclude someone

Slide 9

### Facts About Bullying

- ❑ 15 to 20% of students are bullied at some point during their education years
- ❑ 1 in 3 students is involved in some kind bullying, either as a bully or a victim
- ❑ 160,000 students in the USA miss school everyday because of the fear of being bullied
- ❑ 71% of teacher and aides either ignored or did not know that children under their care were being bullied

Slide 10

### Impact of Bullying

- ❑ Bullying can:
  - ❑ leave long lasting psychological scars
  - ❑ be physically painful
  - ❑ lead to anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem
  - ❑ lead to suicidal thoughts

Slide 11

### More Impact of Bullying

- ❑ Bullying can:
  - ❑ lead to low grades
  - ❑ lead to school refusal
  - ❑ impede student learning
  - ❑ make the school unsafe
  - ❑ affect students who are watching someone being bullied (Bystanders)

Slide 12

### Where does bullying occur?

- ❑ Anywhere
- ❑ In schools
- ❑ At home
- ❑ In the streets
- ❑ Online
- ❑ By messages through other people
- ❑ By text messages

Slide 13

### Roles in Bullying

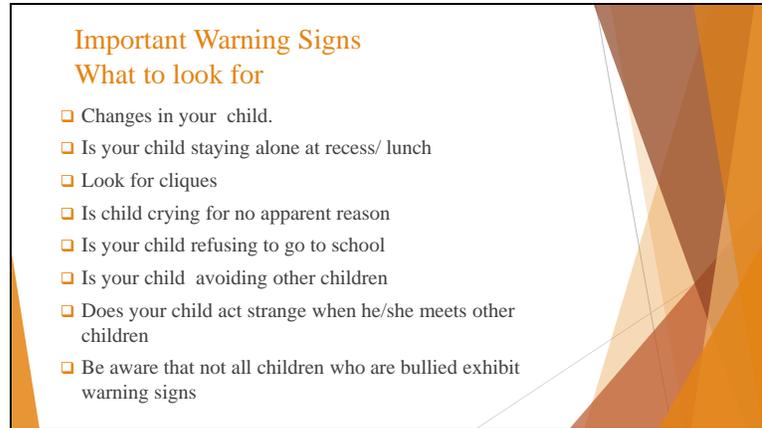
- ▶ There are many roles that kids can play.
- ▶ Kids can bully others
- ▶ They can be bullied
- ▶ They may witness bullying (bystanders)
- ▶ When kids are involved in bullying, they often play more than one role.
- ▶ It is important to understand the multiple roles kids play in order to effectively prevent and respond to bullying.

Slide 14

### Who might be bullied?

- ❑ Anyone
- ❑ Students of all background
- ❑ Children who stand out of the group are more at risk
- ❑ Children who do not have a lot of friends/ support are more at risk
- ❑ Children who have a disability are more at risk
- ❑ Children who have the best clothes or who do not have the nicest clothes are at risk
- ❑ Children who have .....
- ❑ There are too many factors to list them all

Slide 15

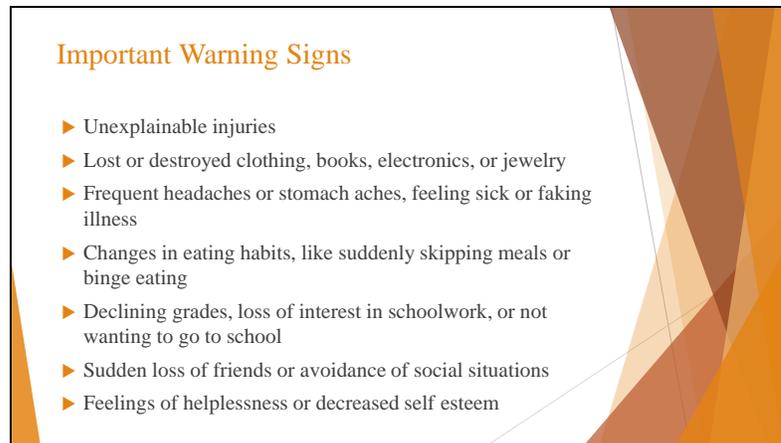


### Important Warning Signs

#### What to look for

- ❑ Changes in your child.
- ❑ Is your child staying alone at recess/ lunch
- ❑ Look for cliques
- ❑ Is child crying for no apparent reason
- ❑ Is your child refusing to go to school
- ❑ Is your child avoiding other children
- ❑ Does your child act strange when he/she meets other children
- ❑ Be aware that not all children who are bullied exhibit warning signs

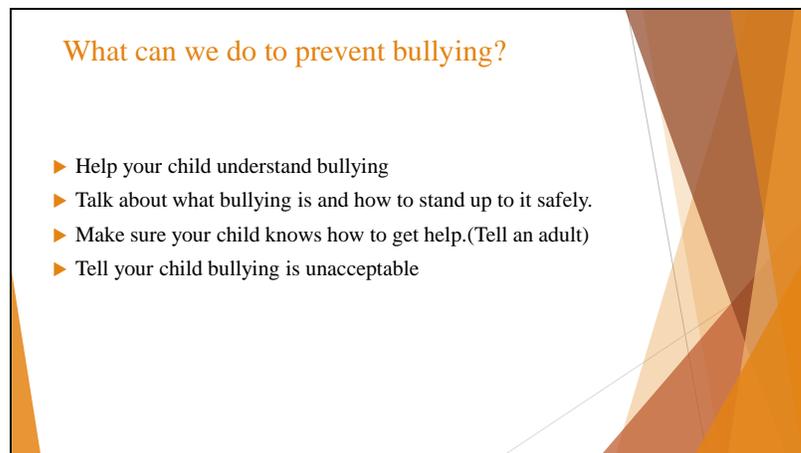
Slide 16



### Important Warning Signs

- ▶ Unexplainable injuries
- ▶ Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry
- ▶ Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- ▶ Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating
- ▶ Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- ▶ Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- ▶ Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem

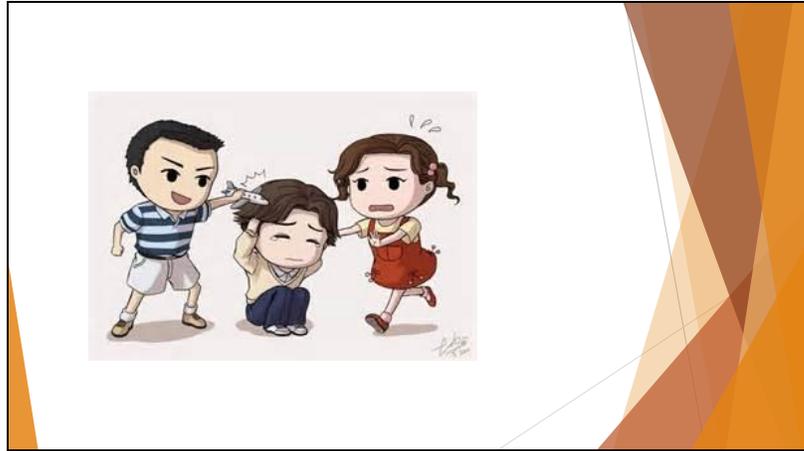
Slide 17



### What can we do to prevent bullying?

- ▶ Help your child understand bullying
- ▶ Talk about what bullying is and how to stand up to it safely.
- ▶ Make sure your child knows how to get help.(Tell an adult)
- ▶ Tell your child bullying is unacceptable

Slide 18



Slide 19

### What can we do to prevent bullying?

- ▶ Keep the line of communication open.
- ▶ Check in with your child often.
- ▶ Listen to them.
- ▶ Know their friends, ask about school, and understand their concerns.
- ▶ Encourage kids to do what they love. Special activities, interests, and hobbies can boost confidence, help kids make friends, and protect them from bullying behavior.
- ▶ Model how to treat others with kindness and respect.

Slide 20

### Talk to your child

An illustration of a family of four sitting together on a bench. A woman is on the left, a young boy is in the middle, and a man is on the right. They are all looking towards each other, suggesting a conversation. The illustration is set within a white circular frame against a red background.

Slide 21

### What can we do to prevent bullying?

- ▶ Take bullying seriously. Many kids are embarrassed to say they have been bullied.
- ▶ Teach kids to solve problems without using violence (like walking away or talking it out) and praise them when they do.
- ▶ Encourage children to seek help and report bullying incidents to someone they feel safe with at school: teachers, counselors, principals, any adults
- ▶ Give children positive feedback when they behave well to help build their self-esteem.
- ▶ If you see bullying, stop it right away, even if your child is the one doing the bullying.

Slide 22

### How to help your children

- ▶ Start by
  - ▶ Understanding “ what is Bullying”
  - ▶ And what is not bullying
  - ▶ Know the warning signs
  - ▶ Know how to talk to your child
  - ▶ Give your child time to explain (Listen to your child)
  - ▶ Give support and understanding

Slide 23

### Example of questions?

- ▶ What was one good thing that happened today? Any bad things?
- ▶ What is lunch time like at your school? Who do you sit with? What do you talk about?
- ▶ What is it like to ride the school bus?
- ▶ What are you good at? What would do you like best about yourself?

## Slide 24

### Example of questions?

- ▶ What does “bullying” mean to you?
- ▶ Describe what kids who bully are like.
- ▶ Why do you think people bully?
- ▶ Who are the adults you trust most when it comes to things like bullying?
- ▶ What do you think we (parents) can do to help stop bullying?

## Slide 25

### Teaching children to stand up for themselves and others

- ▶ Have you or your friends left other kids out on purpose?
- ▶ Do you think that was bullying? Why or why not?
- ▶ What do you usually do when you see bullying going on?
- ▶ Do you ever see kids at your school being bullied by other kids? How does it make you feel?
- ▶ Have you ever tried to help someone who is being bullied? What happened? What would you do if it happens again?

## Slide 26

### Teach children to:

- ▶ Speak up. Stand Up.



- ▶ It takes just one person to start a movement
- ▶ Together we can make a difference
- ▶ Teach children: If you see bullying you can say “ Stop don’t bother him”
- ▶ Teach them to : redirect the situation by saying “let’s go! The teacher’ coming

Slide 27

**Teach children to:**

- ▶ Don't Join in: teach children if they see someone being bullied, don't join in. if the bully wants your help. say no, and walk away.
- ▶ Tell an adult: teach children not to be a by stander and watch someone being hurt. Find an adult and explain the situation
- ▶ Stop the rumors: end the gossip by not spreading the word
- ▶ Be a friend: teach them to help the person who was bullied by invite that person to join for lunch. Encourage the person being bullied to talk to an adult

Slide 28

**Teaching Children to Report Bullying**

- ▶ In many cases children are scared to tell an adult because they do not want to be seen as the "tattle tale"
- ▶ Teacher your child that there is a difference between telling on someone and reporting bullying.
- ▶ Assure them that they will never get in trouble by reporting bullying to an adult
- ▶ Assure your child that the adult will not mention their name (privacy)
- ▶ Assure your child that by reporting he or she is help themselves and others

Slide 29

**What to do if your child is being bullied in school**

▶ Contact :

- ▶ The teacher/s
- ▶ The school psychologist or school counselor
- ▶ The school principal
- ▶ The school superintendent
- ▶ State Department

Slide 30

### Link between Bullying and Mental Health

- ▶ Remember the definition of bullying:
  - ▶ Intentional, mean behavior – Imbalance of power – Repetition
  - The prognosis for individuals who are bullied: □
  - ▶ The prognosis for individuals who are bullied: hopelessness, frustration, depression, anxiety □
  - ▶ The prognosis for individuals 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

Slide 31

### Resources

- ▶ [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)
- ▶ [www.stopcyberbullying.org](http://www.stopcyberbullying.org)
- ▶ [www.teenangels.org](http://www.teenangels.org)
- ▶ [www.onguardonline.gov](http://www.onguardonline.gov)
- ▶ [www.fbi.gov](http://www.fbi.gov)
- ▶ [www.netismartzkids.org](http://www.netismartzkids.org)
- ▶ [www.commonensemedia.org](http://www.commonensemedia.org)
- ▶ [www.youthcrisisline.org](http://www.youthcrisisline.org)
- ▶ [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)
- ▶ California Youth Crisis Hotline (800) 843-5200

Slide 32

### A Social-Ecological Model of Bullying

The diagram illustrates a social-ecological model of bullying using four concentric circles. From the innermost to the outermost, the levels are: Child, Family, School & Peers, and Community/Society & Culture. Each level is contained within a larger circle, representing the nested nature of these social environments.

Slide 33

### Best Practice to Prevent Bullying

- ▶ Parent Training
- ▶ Non- Punitive disciplinary methods
- ▶ Home-School Communication
- ▶ The use of real life events stories to teach children
- ▶ Positive peer and sibling relationships

Slide 34

# Questions?



Make  
A  
Difference  
Stop  
Bullying

Appendix E

“Starting from the Roots” Workshop 2

Slide 1



Slide 2



### Slide 3

#### Definition of bullying

- ❑ Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

### Slide 4

#### Facts About Bullying

- ❑ 15 to 20% of students are bullied at some point during their education years
- ❑ 1 in 3 students is involved in some kind bullying, either as a bully or a victim
- ❑ 160,000 students in the USA miss school everyday because of the fear of being bullied
- ❑ 71% of teacher and aides either ignored or did not know that children under their care were being bullied

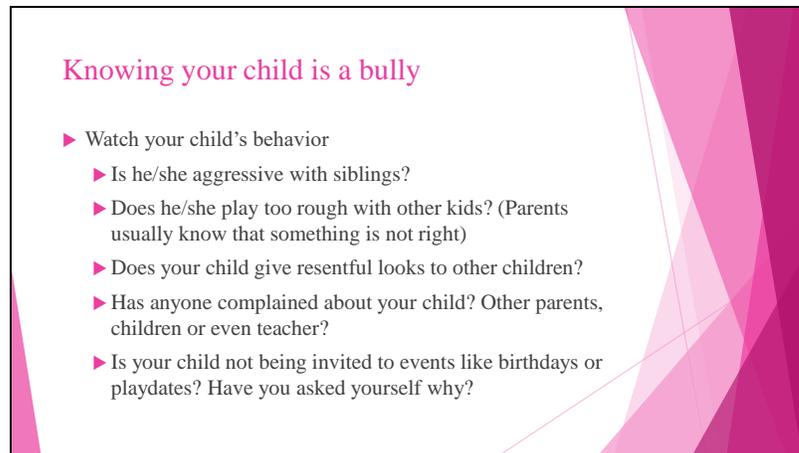
### Slide 5



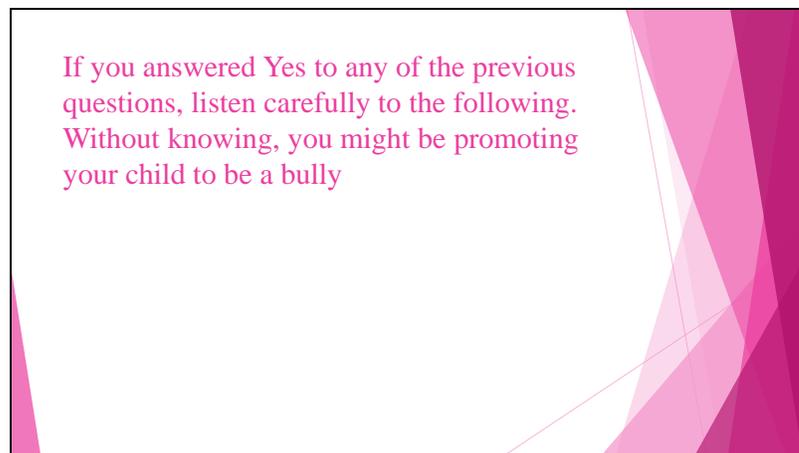
Slide 6



Slide 7



Slide 8



Slide 9



Slide 10

### Gossiping

- ▶ Gossiping about other people in front of your child. Kids hear everything and will learn and copy the parents' behavior
- ▶ Praising your child, laugh with, when he/she mimic someone
- ▶ Your child is cute when she/he is young and act out (rolls eyes) and you laugh at the gestures
- ▶ Best Practice
  - ▶ Do not gossip in front of your kids
  - ▶ Do not act like you are the boss and everything has to happen as you want
  - ▶ Do not laugh at situations that you know might be promoting your child to act like you

Slide 11

### Being too busy to show you care

- ▶ When was the last time you told you partner or loved ones that you love them in front of your children?
- ▶ This promotes love and care
- ▶ When was the last time you hugged your children, kissed them good bye before school and/or tucked them in bed?
- ▶ Showing that you care and model it by showing your child examples of caring and loving will help him or her become caring and loving (remember children copy their parents all the time).

Slide 12

### The use of the word “hate”

- ▶ I hate my job
- ▶ I hate my hair
- ▶ I hate life
- ▶ I hate that I don't have money
- ▶ I hate that person
- ▶ I hate .....
- ▶ The more we use the word “hate”, the more it is implanted in our children's brain

Slide 13

### Treating children like kids not Adults

- ▶ Adults tend to put a lot of pressure on kids
- ▶ Kids do not need to know adults' problem
- ▶ Kids do not need to know about your stressors
  - ▶ Family illnesses
  - ▶ Financial burdens
  - ▶ Divorce/ fighting
  - ▶ Family problems
- ▶ All of the above creates stress for children which promotes bullying. How? Children need to release their stress and they will find a “weaker” child to boss around and get his/her anger out.

Slide 14

### Teaching children to share with others

- ▶ We need to pay attention to how we are teaching our children to share
- ▶ When we force children to do something like: share a toy with friends or siblings or share TV time with the rest of the family.
  - ▶ We are teaching them to use force to get what they want!
- ▶ Best practice is to ask them to share the toy when they have finished playing with it.
- ▶ Best practice is to ask the child when their TV program will be over, and give them that particular time to give chance to others to watch what they want.
- ▶ Something to keep in mind: Although we all want our children to share, how much modeling are we giving them? As adults do we really share our stuff with others? Cars, phones, things.....

Slide 15

**What not to do when discipline/correct a child that is being a bully**

- ▶ Don't yell
- ▶ Don't use extreme punishment
- ▶ Don't embarrass your child in front of adults and other children
- ▶ Don't punish your child the same way your child is bullying other children

Slide 16

**Things that should be done to discipline your child**

- ▶ Always remember that children have a number of reasons to engage in these behaviors
  - ▶ Peer pressure
  - ▶ Been a victim in the past
  - ▶ Control impulses
  - ▶ Managing anger
- ▶ No matter the reason, bullying needs to be addressed in the right way
- ▶ Determine the root of the cause – knowing why is important to be able to stop it
- ▶ Remind your child that bullying is a choice- have your child recognize and accept responsibility

Slide 17

**Things that should be done to discipline your child cont...**

- ▶ After you find out WHAT is happening and WHY, it is time to:
  - ▶ Develop Logical consequences
    - ▶ These consequences should be directly linked to the WHAT
    - ▶ Example, if your child is using some kind of status to bullying someone (is popular and has a lot of friends) than the consequence should be losing time with those particular friends, and maybe spending supervised time with the victim.
    - ▶ Example, if your child is using his/her phone to bully someone, than the linked consequence would be losing his/her phone for a period of time and will have the phone back only with a "promise" of not misusing his/her phone again.
- ▶ If the bullying happened at school, support the school plan
- ▶ Talk to your child about the consequence of bullying for them and for others. Implanting empathy might be the solution

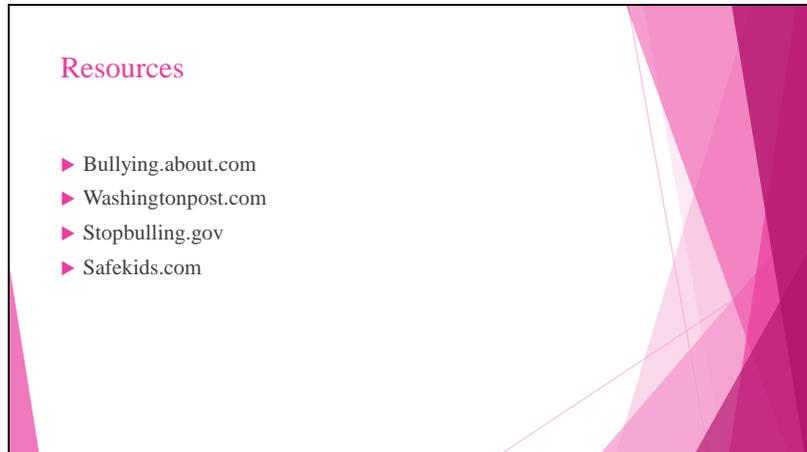
Slide 18



Slide 19



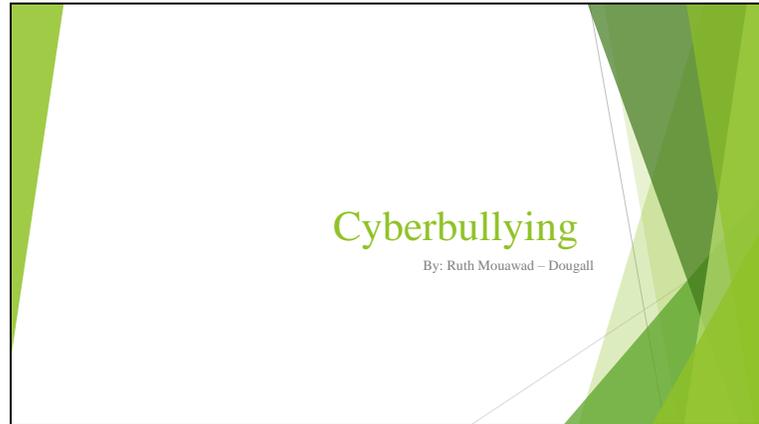
Slide 20



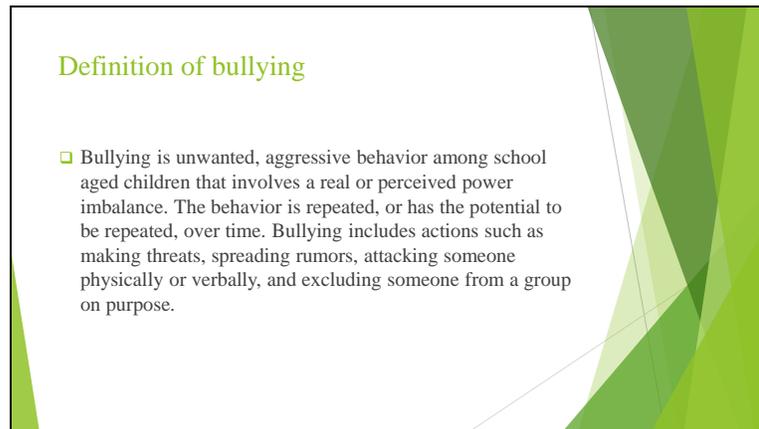
## Appendix F

### “Starting from the Roots” Workshop 3

Slide 1



Slide 2



### Slide 3

#### What is Cyberbullying?

- ▶ “Cyberbullying is being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material, or engaging in other forms of social cruelty using the Internet or other digital technologies.
- ▶ Cyberbullying means using electronic/digital tools like cell phones and the Internet to hurt someone
- ▶ By: threatening,
- ▶ humiliating
- ▶ embarrassing,
- ▶ ruining friendships or reputation.

### Slide 4

#### Cyber-bullying

- ▶ Bullying that takes place using electronic technology
  - ▶ Includes cell phones, computers, and tablets
  - ▶ Includes social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites
  - ▶ Examples:
    - ▶ Mean text messages and emails
    - ▶ Rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites
    - ▶ Embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles
- ▶ It is anything that gets posted online and is deliberately intended to hurt, harass, or upset someone else.

### Slide 5

#### Why Cyber-bullying is Different

- ▶ Can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (any time of day or night)
- ▶ Cyberbullying can be done from a physically-distant location
  - ▶ The bully doesn't have to confront his or her target in person
- ▶ It is easier to be hateful using typed words rather than spoken words face-to-face.
- ▶ Cyberbullying messages and images can be posted anonymously (using fake screen names and email addresses)
- ▶ It can be difficult and sometimes impossible to trace the source.

## Slide 6

### Why Cyber-bullying is Different

- ▶ The information can be circulated to a very wide audience.
  - ▶ People in the school, in the community, and around the world can find out about the incident or get involved.
- ▶ Deleting inappropriate or harassing messages, texts, and pictures is extremely difficult after they have been posted or sent.
- ▶ Adults may be unprepared to respond to the online bullying.

## Slide 7

### 2 Characteristics that define cyberbullying

- ▶ Speed – a picture or a comment could be posted on a second and hundreds if not thousands of people will see it.
- ▶ Spread - with one click a picture could be sent out to the entire school and or community.
- ▶ Important that we discuss these issues with our students
- ▶ Many students do not realize the large effect cyberbullying has on the victim and on the bully

## Slide 8

### Teaching the Adults

- ▶ We used to say there was a “generation gap” between adults and adolescents.
- ▶ Now we talk about the “digital divide” to highlight the vast differences in the types, and knowledge of technology between youth and adults.
- ▶ Critical need to educate parents and adults about the use of cell phones and social networking sites.

## Slide 9

### What makes cyberbullying detrimental?

- ▶ We may not know who did it (it can be anonymous), and that's scary.
- ▶ It could even be a friend.
- ▶ People say things in texts or online that they would NEVER say in person: online disinhibition effect

## Slide 10

### Why cyberbullying is so power!

- ▶ We can't see their faces or body language, so it might be "just kidding," but we can't tell (absence of paralinguistic cues).
- ▶ So many people can see the content So many people can see the content (vast audience).
- ▶ It can happen at any time, any place (24/7). Victims don't think they can escape.
- ▶ Kids don't tell adults, because they worry that they will take their phones or computers away.
- ▶ So they suffer alone.

## Slide 11

### Teaching students to "THINK BEFORE THEY HIT SEND"

- ▶ Easy access to technology encourages cyberbullying.
- ▶ However, much of what is labeled cyberbullying is miscommunication.
- ▶ High profile (athletes, student leaders) individuals are targeted often, as are LGBTQ, other students who are perceived as "different."
- ▶ The ability to avoid perceived consequences of actions (e.g., break-ups) is appealing.
- ▶ Jealousy and revenge fuel cyberbullying.

Slide 12

### Cyber-bullying Warning Signs

- ▶ Child unexpectedly stops using their device(s)
- ▶ Appears nervous or jumpy when using their device(s)
- ▶ Becomes emotionally upset during or after using the internet or the mobile device
- ▶ Avoids discussions about what they are doing online
- ▶ Becomes unusually secretive, especially when it comes to online activities

Slide 13

### Cyber-bullying and how to help your children

- ▶ Help children understand that technology use and access is a privilege and not a right
- ▶ Educate children about appropriate online behaviors
- ▶ Monitor child's activities while online
- ▶ Encourage the child not to respond to cyber-bullying
- ▶ Block the bully
- ▶ Keep copies of threatening messages, pictures, and texts just in case you need to make a report

Slide 14

### Megan Meier



## Slide 15

### Megan's unfortunate Story

- ▶ A mother as instigator
- ▶ This Missouri teenager became despondent after 'Josh Evans,' a boy she met via MySpace, abruptly and viciously turned on her accusing her of promiscuity and saying the world would be better without her.
- ▶ However, the adult behind the 'Josh' ruse was Lori Drew, whose daughter had been friends with Megan. Lori created the phony MySpace profile in a bid to smoke out negative comments about her child by Megan. Megan died by hanging

## Slide 16

### Phoebe Prince



## Slide 17

### Phoebe Prince unfortunate Story

- ▶ Nine Massachusetts teenagers were charged in the "unrelenting bullying" of 15 year-old Phoebe.
- ▶ Phoebe Prince, a recent Irish immigrant, hanged herself after nearly 3 months of torment by students via Mean girls text message, and through the social networking site, Facebook.
- ▶ Phoebe, a freshman, was reportedly harassed by older girls who resented her dating an older football player.
- ▶ Phoebe also struggled with depression and had been seeing a therapist.

## Slide 18

### Who is more victimized?

- ▶ Although, both boys and girls could be victims of cyberbullying girls are more likely to have been cyberbullied (lifetime).
- ▶ Also girls have experienced more threats carried out at school than boys.

## Slide 19

### Frequency of cyberbullying in teens Study

- ▶ Cell phones are the most popular technology utilized by adolescents--almost 83%.
- ▶ A large proportion of adolescents use Facebook, and Twitter is gaining in popularity.
- ▶ In a study conducted by Wang et al.,:
  - ▶ 17% of students said they have experienced cyberbullying
  - ▶ 5% admitted being perpetrators.
  - ▶ 13.7% Mean or hurtful comments and rumors
  - ▶ 12.9% spread online were among the most common.

## Slide 20

### Study cont..

- ▶ Cyberbullying is not affected by number of friends.
- ▶ Higher SES protects against physical aggression but actually increases the risk of cyberbullying

## Slide 21

### Recommendation for Teachers on how to Talk to their Students

- ▶ Don't do or say anything online you wouldn't in person.
- ▶ Only post things you are okay with people seeing and knowing.
- ▶ Remember, it's not just about you. If you post information or photos about your friends or family, you may also be putting them at risk.
- ▶ Never give your passwords to anyone other than your parent or guardian.
- ▶ Trust your instincts! If you think something is wrong or are feeling threatened, tell someone who can help you.

## Slide 22

### More Recommendations

- ▶ Don't send an embarrassing picture or information to your closest friend, no matter how sure you are that he or she would never share it.
- ▶ Give them examples of what could happen if they send out inappropriate pictures.
- ▶ Pictures and text in computers never go away; they will be available for future boyfriends/girlfriends, college/job applications, etc.

## Slide 23

### More Recommendations

- ▶ Don't respond to harassing, abusive or inappropriate comments. It won't make the person stop and it could get you in trouble or put you in danger.
- ▶ Use the privacy preferences to keep your page as private as you can.
- ▶ If you are in or coming out of a dangerous relationship, don't use any form of technology to contact your abuser. It can be dangerous and may be used against you in the future.
- ▶ Save or keep a record of all harassing or abusive messages, posts, and comments in case you decide to tell the police or get a protective order.

Slide 24

### Guide lines for parents

- ▶ Do not allow your children unsupervised access to computers
- ▶ Set up parental controls on computers and TVs to block mature content
- ▶ Monitor your child's text messages
- ▶ If your child has a Facebook account, talk openly about being friends, and more importantly, be able to log on as your child
- ▶ Communicate openly and non-judgmentally with your child about his or her use of technology
- ▶ If your child is acting secretive, (i.e., quickly shutting the computer down when you walk in the room), you need to set limits about computer use

Slide 25

## Questions?



Slide 26

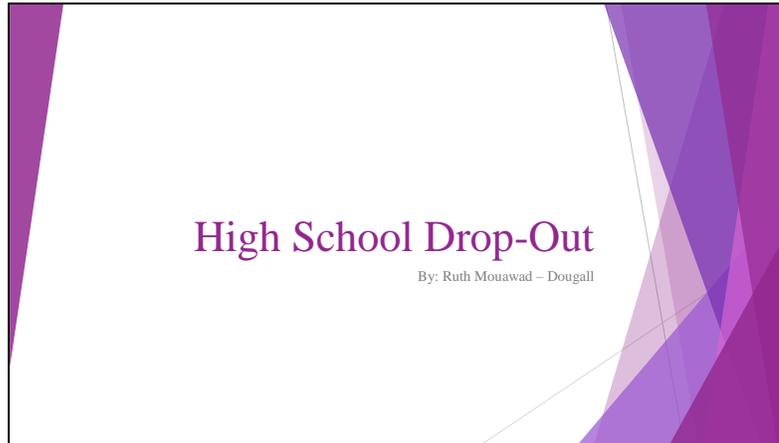
### Resources

- [www.educationworld.com](http://www.educationworld.com)
- [www.examiner.com](http://www.examiner.com)
- [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com)
- [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)
- [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)
- [www.cyberbullying.org](http://www.cyberbullying.org)
- [www.casponline.org](http://www.casponline.org)

## Appendix G

### “Starting from the Roots” Workshop 4

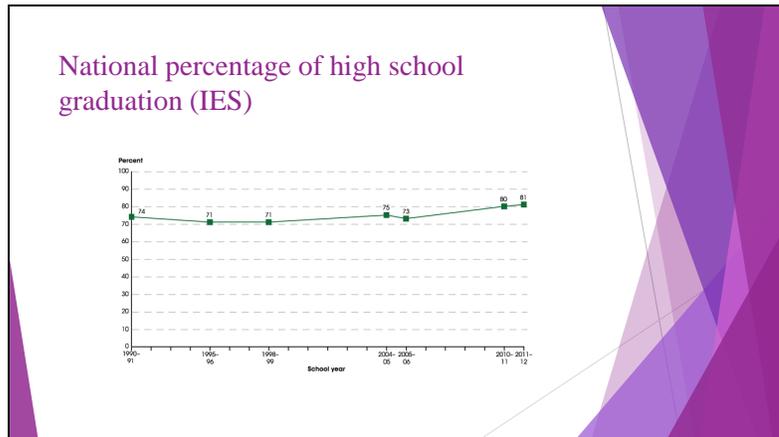
Slide 1



High School Drop-Out

By: Ruth Mouawad – Dougall

Slide 2



### Slide 3

**Understanding the reality**

- ▶ From 100 students, only 81 student will get a high school diploma
- ▶ 19 students from the 100 will dropout at some point during high school
- ▶ Who wants their child to be one of the 19 students who will dropout?
  - ▶ NO one
- ▶ Who wants their child to be one of the 81 students who will earn a high school diploma and has the possibility to continue for a higher education
  - ▶ Every parent wants the best for their child

### Slide 4

**11 Facts About High School Dropout Rates**

- ▶ Every year, over 1.2 million students drop out of high school in the United States alone. That's a student every 26 seconds – or 7,000 a day.
- ▶ About 25% of high school freshmen fail to graduate from high school on time.
- ▶ The U.S., which had some of the highest graduation rates of any developed country, now ranks 22<sup>nd</sup> out of 27 developed countries.
- ▶ The dropout rate has fallen 3% from 1990 to 2010 (12.1% to 7.4%).
- ▶ The percentage of graduating Latino students has significantly increased. In 2010, 71.4% received their diploma vs. 61.4% in 2006. However, Asian-American and white students are still far more likely to graduate than Latino & African-American students.

### Slide 5

**11 Facts About High School Dropout Rates**

- ▶ A high school dropout will earn \$200,000 less than a high school graduate over his lifetime. And almost a million dollars less than a college graduate.
- ▶ In 2010, 38 states had higher graduation rates. Vermont had the highest rate, with 91.4% graduating. And Nevada had the lowest with 57.8% of students graduating.
- ▶ Almost 2,000 high schools across the U.S. graduate less than 60% of their students.
- ▶ These “dropout factories” account for over 50% of the students who leave school every year.
- ▶ 1 in 6 students attend a dropout factory. 1 in 3 minority students (32%) attend a dropout factory, compared to 8% of white students.
- ▶ In the U.S., high school dropouts commit about 75% of crimes.

Slide 6

### Statistics Based on Race of High School Dropouts (as of 2012)

- ▶ 5% of white students drop out of high school
- ▶ 9% of black students drop out of high school
- ▶ 13% of Hispanic students drop out of high school
- ▶ 3% of Asian students drop out of high school
- ▶ 9% of Pacific Islander students drop out of high school
- ▶ 13% of American Indian/ Alaska Native students drop out of high school
- ▶ 6% of two or more race students drop out of high school

Slide 7

### Why do Adolescents Dropout of High School?

- ▶ Many issues
- ▶ Socio Economic States
- ▶ Bullying
- ▶ Mental health
- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Pregnancy
- ▶ Help at home

Slide 8

### Reasons for High School Dropout

- ▶ Lack of parent engagement
- ▶ Poor academic performance
- ▶ Work/Family economic needs
- ▶ Lack of a supportive adult
- ▶ Disconnect between school academics and work
- ▶ Not enough individualized attention
- ▶ Low student engagement
- ▶ And many more.....

## Slide 9

### Socio-Economic Status

- ▶ Lack of stability, the need for economic help within the family
- ▶ Lack of parents' involvements in the students' decision.
- ▶ SES is the most frequent predictor for dropouts.
- ▶ Many children that come from low SES have less support at home and tend to associate themselves with other students whose priorities do not include school.

## Slide 10

### Socio-Economic Status con't...

- ▶ Dropping out does not indicate that a child is unintelligent, but rather in many instances children that are gifted drop out of school as well.
- ▶ Contrary to families coming for a high SES, parents of the low SES gifted student dropouts are not upset by their children's decision.
- ▶ The SES of a family affects the way the parents view their children's future to be.
- ▶ Parents of students with low SES should be encouraged to take workshops that will aid them to show support for their children, to prevent them from dropping out.

## Slide 11

### Bullying and High School Dropout

- ▶ Bullying is one of the biggest problems that leads students to dropping out
- ▶ It is indicated that students tend to drop out of high school because they want to avoid being bullied.
- ▶ Students that are bullied in school or online start to fall behind in their studies, due to the many missed days of school.
- ▶ Many students feel ashamed to confront someone about a bullying issue, and will usually allow the bullying to go on.
- ▶ In some cases bullying might also lead to suicide.

Slide 12

### Health Services, Bullying, and High School Dropout

- ▶ Lack of mental health services
- ▶ The parents' stigma about mental health
- ▶ Some cultures do not accept mental health
- ▶ Some children that are physically bullied, are afraid to go to school
- ▶ These children might also need medical attention
- ▶ Many times the parents are unaware of their injuries

Slide 13

### High School Drop-Out and Diversity

- ▶ Although everyone is at risk, some are more than others
- ▶ Anyone that is perceived different from the "general" population could be at a greater risk than others
- ▶ Students with learning disabilities are more bullied than students without disabilities
- ▶ Students with special needs
- ▶ Students from a minority ethnic background

Slide 14

### Cyberbullying and High School Drop-Out

- ▶ As technology expands, bullying has more accessible through social media and the internet.
- ▶ Many children begin to avoid going to school if they are being cyberbullied so that they do not have to encounter their bullies.
- ▶ Pictures and comments spread quickly through a school community and may also create an environment in which students do not want to be in, leading them to avoid going to school.

## Slide 15

### Alcohol, Drugs, and Gangs contributes to High School Drop-Out

- ▶ Affiliated with gang members
  - ▶ Students who are affiliated with gangs are promised that the gangs will take care of them
  - ▶ This results in not caring about their future in the school setting
  - ▶ The gang influence is huge
  - ▶ Children follow what, and who, they think will help them
  - ▶ In many cases, children become involved with drug use and drug dealing
  - ▶ Drug involvement could lead to incarceration
  - ▶ In some cases it could lead to death
  - ▶ They become involved with Alcohol

## Slide 16

### Drugs and Alcohol

- ▶ Use of alcohol and drugs
  - ▶ Impede the ability to function normally
  - ▶ Impede concentration
  - ▶ Impede the ability to remember and retain information
  - ▶ Impede the ability to get up in the morning on time for school
- ▶ The results will be that the student falls behind in their credits, which will result in dropping out of school
- ▶ These students need support, not only in their education, but also in dealing with their substance abuse.

## Slide 17

### Warning Signs

- ▶ Low grades
- ▶ Not wanting to go to school
- ▶ Staying out late
- ▶ Secretive about their friends
- ▶ Secretive about their where abouts
- ▶ Sleeping too much or too little
- ▶ Smell of alcohol
- ▶ Looking miserable
- ▶ Reports from school
- ▶ Some one told you to open your eyes (An other parent, teacher, or, your child's friend)

Slide 18

### What is the life time cost of not having a High School Diploma

- ▶ Educate the children that this is their future
- ▶ On average, a person that does not have a high school diploma make about \$200,000 less in a life that than a person with a high school diploma
- ▶ Jobs without a high school diploma – are limited and most of the time are heavy duty jobs
- ▶ Most jobs that do not require a school diploma are paid minimum wage
- ▶ Give them examples of people you know that are struggling to make it ever month
- ▶ Children that are educated on the consequences of dropping out have a better chance to graduate than those who were not educated

Slide 19

### What can we do

- ▶ Community has an obligation to create a better environment for these students
  - ▶ Talking to our children about the importance of education
  - ▶ Keeping the children off the streets
    - ▶ Joining school clubs
    - ▶ Joining sports
    - ▶ Library
    - ▶ Knowing where and with who they are
    - ▶ Knowing their friends and their family

Slide 20

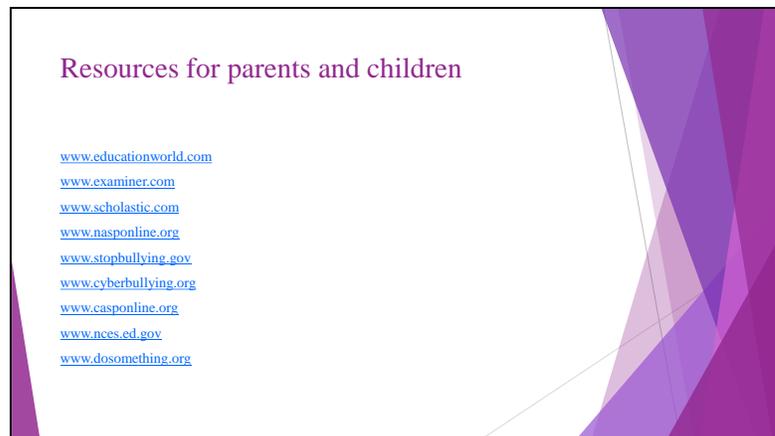
### Things we can do

- ▶ Teaching children the consequences of high school drop-out
- ▶ Educate children
- ▶ Create a safe learning environment
- ▶ Family engagement in your child's school and education
- ▶ Early Childhood Education
- ▶ Early Literacy Development
- ▶ Reward your child for doing well
- ▶ Raise the Academic Bar
- ▶ Pay Attention to Warning Signs

Slide 21

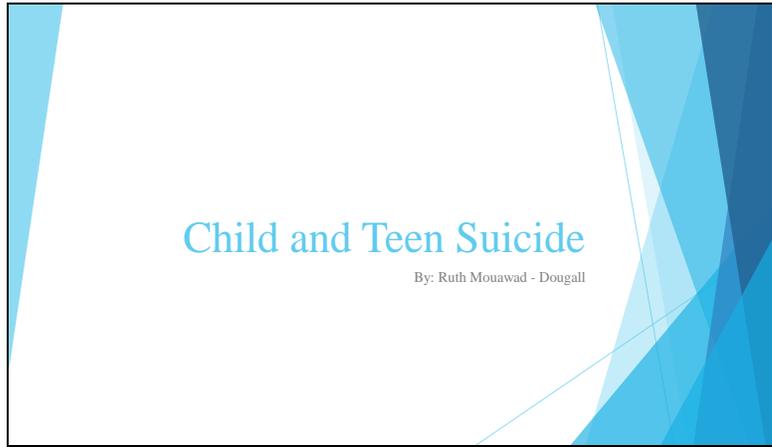


Slide 22



Appendix H  
“Starting from the Roots” Workshop 5

Slide 1



Slide 2



### Slide 3

#### Amanda Todd Story

- ▶ On September 7, 2012, Amanda Posted a video on youtube
- ▶ She explained how her bullying started on social media
- ▶ She sent a picture of her breast to a guy
- ▶ He later sent the picture to everyone at her school
- ▶ Kids started to call her names

### Slide 4

#### Amanda's story cont...

- ▶ Amanda Started to take drugs and alcohol to deal with her emotional pain
- ▶ Amanda changed school but the bullying did not stop
- ▶ The social media cannot be erased

### Slide 5

#### Amanda's story cont...

- ▶ The pictures were still circulating and Amanda's bullies were still out there
- ▶ Amanda was cutting herself
- ▶ Amanda attempted suicide
- ▶ She went to the hospital with overdose

## Slide 6

### Amanda's story cont...

- ▶ Amanda suicide attempt and youtube video were a cry for help
- ▶ Amanda felt that the only way out of being bullied was to end her life
- ▶ On October 10, 2012 Amanda died
- ▶ Unfortunately Amanda got the attention she needed after her death

## Slide 7

### Education is Prevention

- ▶ Knowing the signs of suicide is important for parents to be able to help their children
- ▶ Before suicide is committed, most of the adolescences show signs
- ▶ Informed parents will be able to see the signs and provide help for their child

## Slide 8

### Suicide Definitions and Prevalence

- ▶ Five Categories:
  - Suicidal Thoughts
  - Suicidal Intent
  - Suicidal Gestures
  - Suicidal Attempts
  - Complete Suicide

## Slide 9

### Suicidal Thoughts

- ▶ Was once considered uncommon for children
- ▶ Nowadays, it is very common
- ▶ According to Center of Disease Control,(CDC) 2012:
  - Out of 11,631 high school students
  - 24.9% of females and 13.7% of male “seriously considered” suicide within the last year.

## Slide 10

### Suicidal Intent

- ▶ Not just a thought
- ▶ A specific plan and the motivation to carry it out
- ▶ According to CDC:
  - 18.3% of females and 10.9% of males high school student reported they had made a specific plan

## Slide 11

### Suicidal Gestures

- ▶ Aka Para-suicidal Behavior
- ▶ Non-Lethal Self- Harming Actions  
example:  
Cutting
- ▶ Considered as a Red Flag
- ▶ A cry for help
- ▶ Represent “ practice runs” or try outs

Slide 12

### Suicide Attempts

- ▶ Differ by lethality
- ▶ Low lethality: using slow method which makes discovery possible
  - Example: ingestion of drugs at home
- ▶ High lethality: use of a potentially deadly method
  - Example: Gun

Slide 13

### Completed Suicide

- ▶ Significant problem among adolescents
- ▶ U.S.A – The 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death between ages 15 – 19
- ▶ U.S.A – THE 4<sup>TH</sup> leading cause of death between aged 10 – 14
- ▶ In the last 2 decades, suicide increased among young population
- ▶ Adolescents are most at risk

Slide 14

### Completed Suicide cont....

- ▶ Children 10 years or younger do not usually have access to high lethal means –resulting in more attempts than Complete Suicide
- ▶ Firearms – used by males and females
- ▶ Hanging – mostly used by males
- ▶ Drug ingestion – mostly used by females

## Slide 15

### Gender Differences

- ▶ Females more likely to attempt suicide
- ▶ Males more likely to succeed
- ▶ Females attempt suicide 3 times more often than males
- ▶ Males age 15–19 complete suicide 6 times as often as females
- ▶ Reason: males use more deadly methods than females

## Slide 16

### Etiology

- ▶ 90% of adolescents who completed or attempted suicide have a diagnosable psychopathology
- ▶ Depression is the most common one
- ▶ More girls than boys meet the criteria for a mood disorder
- ▶ Aggression and Impulsivity are also seen in suicide ideation

## Slide 17

### Other Psychopathologies/ Cognitive Factors

- ▶ Suicide co-occurs with :
  - substance abuse
  - anxiety
  - borderline personality
  - schizophrenia
  - eating disorders
- ▶ 2 major contributions to suicide are:
  - Hopelessness and Poor problem- solving skills (when combined with depression)

## Slide 18

### Family Context

- ▶ Adolescents most at risk have:
  - parents suffering from depression
  - parents with substance abuse
  - poor parent-child relation
  - lack of support
  - family violence
  - abuse
  - exposed to suicide by family or peers

## Slide 19

### Cultural Context

- ▶ SES (socioeconomic status ) - associated with suicide
- ▶ Poverty – greater risk for suicidal thoughts, attempts and completions
- ▶ Sexual orientation – high risk (when combined with other factors such as depression)
- ▶ Gay, lesbian and bisexual – attribute suicidality to: lack of acceptance, rejection, verbal harassment , and violent assaults

## Slide 20

### Influences

- ▶ Media :
  1. over simplify, explanation is misleading
  2. repetitive and inflated media coverage
  3. reporting suicide as a problem solving strategy
  4. glorification , suggestion the act is honorable
  5. Excessive praise

Slide 21

### Suicide Linked to Bullying

- ▶ Both bullying and Cyberbullying have been linked to suicide
- ▶ Children and teen who are bullied at a young age are at higher risk of engaging in suicidal behavior
- ▶

Slide 22

### Identify At-Risk Children and Teen Warning Signs

- ▶ Tells a friend or family member
- ▶ Make comments on wanting to die
- ▶ Cutting or depression
- ▶ Behavior changed
- ▶ Bullied

Slide 23

### Warning Signs

- have a plan
- gives away his or her personal stuff
- writes good bye letters (social media)
- previous suicide attempt

Slide 24

### Immediate Intervention What Should Parents Do

- ▶ Crisis intervention :
- ▶ Restrict access to means such as:
  - guns
  - pills
- ▶ Decrease isolation:
  - having family and friends members around all time
  - giving medicine to reduce agitation and depression (only by physician prescription)

Slide 25

### Immediate Intervention What Should Parents Do

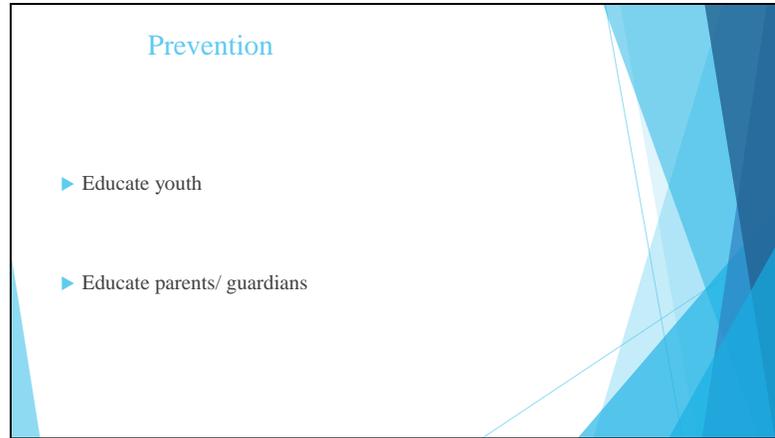
- ▶ Get help right away
- ▶ Contact the child physician
- ▶ Contact local law enforcement
- ▶ Take child to the hospital for an immediate evaluation
- ▶ Never keep the child unattended

Slide 26

### Follow Up Intervention

- ▶ Cognitive – behavioral - supported by evidence base empirical studies
  - Focus on altering pathogenic ways of thinking such as: catastrophizing
- ▶ Family therapy also supported by empirical studies
  - Focus on increasing family communication and support

Slide 27



Prevention

- ▶ Educate youth
- ▶ Educate parents/ guardians

This slide features a white background with a blue geometric pattern on the right side. The title 'Prevention' is at the top left. Below it are two bullet points, each preceded by a blue right-pointing triangle.

Slide 28

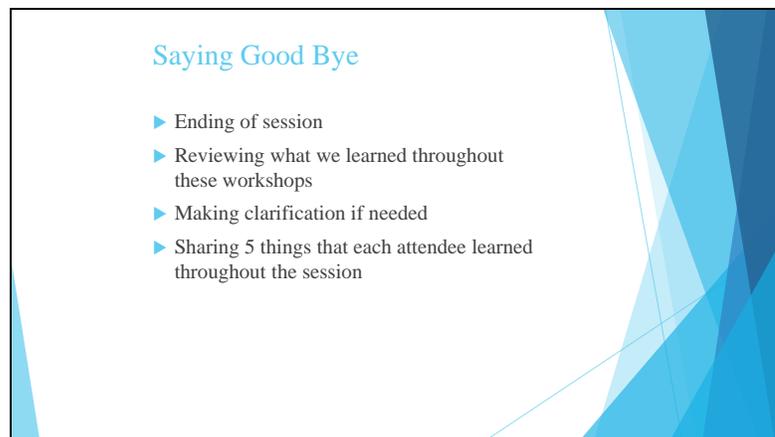


Prevention

# Education Is The KEY

This slide features a white background with a blue geometric pattern on the right side. The title 'Prevention' is at the top left. In the center, the words 'Education' and 'Is The KEY' are stacked vertically in a large, black, serif font.

Slide 29



Saying Good Bye

- ▶ Ending of session
- ▶ Reviewing what we learned throughout these workshops
- ▶ Making clarification if needed
- ▶ Sharing 5 things that each attendee learned throughout the session

This slide features a white background with a blue geometric pattern on the right side. The title 'Saying Good Bye' is at the top left. Below it are four bullet points, each preceded by a blue right-pointing triangle.