



I am safe.ca

Safer Schools – Safer Communities

May 8th 2008



A Book for Kids about Bullying Egghead -- How long would you stand by?

Will is an odd kid obsessed with bugs and lousy at gym: the perfect target for Shane, the Grade 9 bully. Katie has been Will's friend since elementary school, but can she defend him in high school? Devan has been part of Shane's gang until he realizes that it's not so funny anymore.

Told in alternating point of view, *Egghead* explores bullying from the bystanders' and victim's eyes. Where is the line and what happens when it's crossed?

Caroline is an Ottawa teacher and writer and we have read the book and recommend it! We don't know Caroline nor are we in the business of advertising. We do know that it covers all of the basis relating to bullying and that it is written in a style that students aged 12 and under will enjoy.

Published by Red Deer Press and available for about \$12 through at www.chapters.ca
For more information or to receive a free Educator's Guide please contact www.carolinepignat.com

Site Recommendation

WiredSafety.org

WiredSafety.org is the largest and oldest online safety, education, and help group in the world. Originating in 1995 as a group of volunteers rating websites, it now provides one-to-one help, extensive information, and education to cyberspace users of all ages on a myriad of Internet and interactive technology safety issues.

These services are offered through a worldwide organization comprised entirely of volunteers who administer specialized websites and programs. WiredSafety.org volunteers range in age from 18 to 80 and run the gamut from TV personalities, teachers, law enforcement officers, PhD's, writers and librarians to stay-at-home moms, retired persons, and students.

WiredSafety.org's founder and Executive Director, cyberlawyer Parry Aftab, is also an unpaid volunteer. With the exception of its TeenAngels, outreach, law enforcement training and speaking programs, all work and help is provided online and free of charge.

WiredSafety.org's work falls into four major areas:

- **Assistance** for online victims of cybercrime and harassment
- **Advice, Training and Help** for law enforcement worldwide on preventing, spotting and investigating cybercrimes
- **Education** for children, parents, communities, law enforcement, and educators
- **Information and Awareness** on all aspects of online safety, privacy, responsible use and security.

Researchers J. B. Kupersmidt and C. J. Patterson report that boys with low self esteem who were not accepted by their peers are at greatest risk for bullying; and girls who are unpopular with their friends and were aggressive were most likely to bully.

Child Development, Vol. 68, No. 4 (Aug., 1997), pp. 665-675 (article consists of 11 pages)



Chelidze Kesaria, age 6.

Source: The Charter for Human Responsibility

Just a thought

...And so a diverse group of interested students is gathered and they form a school "bullying awareness committee." The facilitator then leads a student discussion on bullying and harassment.

The students quickly respond by sharing their thoughts – they speak of bullying and harassment as being rampant and harmful in their school. They also recognize that their school has a number of very positive attributes. This is not a session designed to be negative.

With ease, the students are able to identify where and when bullying occurs and describe the various forms and the consequences. When informed that their help is desired and essential in addressing bullying and culture in their school, they become energized.

What comes next?

Social form of bullying linked to depression, anxiety in adults (US)

In a study of 210 college students, University of Florida researchers discovered a link between what psychologists call relational victimization in adolescence and depression and anxiety in early adulthood, according to findings published online this month in the journal *Psychology in the Schools*. Rather than threatening a child with physical violence, these bullies target a child's social status and relationships by shunning them, excluding them from social activities or spreading rumors, said Allison Dempsey, a doctoral student in the UF College of Education and the study's lead author.

"Even though people are outside of high school, the memories of these experiences continue to be associated with depression and social anxiety," said Dempsey, who graduated from Columbine High School in Colorado one year before the 1999 school shooting there and now studies school prevention programs. "It was interesting to see these relationships still continue to exist even though they are in early adulthood now and in a completely different setting. "I'm hoping this study will help shed light on the fact that this is a real problem and continues to be a real problem after students leave school."

To uncover the relationships between social bullying and loneliness, depression and anxiety, researchers surveyed college undergraduates between the ages of 18 and 25 and asked them to recall their experiences from high school. They were also looking to see if having friends mitigated some of the effects of bullying and if there was any relationship between gender and the severity of psychological symptoms.

One of the authors, Eric Storch said, "About 20 years ago people thought of bullying as very physical...As a result people thought guys did the bullying, and that it wasn't really a big experience for girls. The problem is that isn't actually true. There are different types of aggression. Boys do tend to be more physical, but both sexes engage in relational victimization. We wanted to see if gender affected strength of the relationship between depressive symptoms and victimization."

Researchers found no gender difference in the link between this type of bullying and depression. They also discovered that having friends or other positive social relationships didn't lessen rates of depression and anxiety in adulthood, a finding that surprised them.

For some children, having friends and positive support can help make them more resilient but other children take the words and abuse more to heart and begin to believe what's being said about them. "Behaviorally what starts happening is you avoid interactions and situations that could be quite positive for you." Currently, there are few prevention or intervention programs that focus specifically on relational victimization, in part because it's tougher to pinpoint and stop, Dempsey said. "If a child tries to punch someone or kick someone, there's evidence of that happening," There's a definite aggressor and a definite victim. When it comes to spreading rumors and gossiping, that's a lot more difficult to prove who's doing it.

Dempsey said she hopes this study and others will help other researchers and psychologists design programs that can help stop this form of bullying in schools. "I think many people have the belief that victimization is a normal rite of passage in childhood," Storch said. "While it certainly does happen to most kids, it's not acceptable. And while I think it would be difficult to completely curtail it, by reducing it you're going to help someone a tremendous amount to not have to go to school and be plagued by this environment of being tortured day in and day out.

"This isn't a normative experience and we need to do something about it and recognize that not doing something could affect children who are really rising stars."

Wendy Troop-Gordon, Ph.D., an assistant professor of psychology at North Dakota State University, said understanding how past relational bullying affects people in adulthood is an important step forward for research in this field. "Turning 18 is not a magical age when you leave all of these experiences behind," said Troop-Gordon, who is not affiliated with the study. "People do seem to carry these experiences with them."

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/104987.php>

School Pledge (US)

The James F. Sullivan Middle School in Lowell, MA, recites its school pledge every morning after the Pledge of Allegiance. The pledge was introduced shortly after a teacher died due to injuries sustained while breaking up a student fight on school grounds. The pledge is as follows:

**I shall use my hands for peace, not pain.
I shall use my heart for love, not hate.
I shall use my voice for song, not slurs.
I shall strive each day to grow and learn.
I shall live my life so all will gain.**

Red Cross Student Video winner Announced (Can)

Last fall, the Canadian Red Cross held its first "Stand Up 2 Bullying" Video PSA contest that asked youth to create a 30-second video PSA depicting how bystanders can make a difference in bullying situations.

The winning entry was by Stephen Merrick, Justin Kucharuck and Martin Mor from Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School in St. Catharines Ontario. The PSA shows the power a bystander has in preventing bullying by "standing up".

The video is excellent (as are some of the other runner's up) and serves as an excellent learning tool and indicator of what role students can play.

For more:

<http://www.redcross.ca/article.asp?id=027157&tid=108>

The Broken Toy Project

The Broken Toy Project offers films useful in launching bullying prevention efforts. Its films feature young people talking frankly about bullying and are appropriate for both elementary and secondary school levels.

For more:

http://brokentoyproject_1.tripod.com

Early Neglect Predicts Aggressive Behaviour in Children (US)

Children who are neglected before their second birthday display higher levels of aggressive behavior between ages 4 and 8, according to a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill study, published in the journal of Pediatrics.

Early child neglect may be as important as child abuse for predicting aggressive behavior, researchers say. Neglect accounts for nearly two-thirds of all child maltreatment cases reported in the United States each year, according to the Administration for Children and Families. "The lack of attention devoted to the problem of neglect -- the so-called 'neglect of neglect' -- is a long-standing concern in the child welfare field," said study co-author Jon Hussey, research assistant professor of maternal and child health in the UNC School of Public Health. "Despite being more common than abuse, we know relatively little about the impact of neglect on children."

More than 1,300 children from four cities and one Southern state are participating in the longitudinal study. All were known to have been maltreated or were at risk of maltreatment. They were monitored from birth through age 8. A child was considered neglected if his parents or caregivers did not provide adequate supervision or failed to meet the child's minimum physical needs for food, clothing and shelter. Abuse was defined as either sexual or physical. Aggression - - arguing, cruelty to others, destruction of property, disobedience, threatening people and fighting or physically attacking others -- was based on perceptions of the child's primary caregiver, who was interviewed when the child was aged 4, 6 and 8.

"This isn't the first time we've seen evidence suggesting that in some circumstances, neglect can be as harmful to children as abuse," said Hussey, who published a study in Pediatrics in 2006, linking neglect to teenage violence, depression and drug use. "Understanding the consequences of early childhood neglect will help us plan programs and other interventions to benefit these children throughout their lives."

Source: **Science Daily**

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/04/080407074531.htm>



It started in my childhood!

The "Choking Game", Psychological Distress & Bullying (Can)

Ontario's youth are experiencing a different kind of high -- approximately seven percent (an estimated 79,000 students in grades 7 to 12) report participating in a thrill-seeking activity called the "choking game", which involves self-asphyxiation or having been choked by someone else on purpose. The 2007 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS) revealed these new data, as well as indicators and trends on the psychological health of Ontario's youth, in the Mental Health and Well-Being Report published by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH).

Other new topics in the 2007 OSDUHS showed that approximately three percent (or 35,000 students) reported a suicide attempt in the past year. About one in ten students rate their mental health as poor, with females more likely to do so than males. About nine percent of students may have a video gaming problem (indicated by symptoms such as loss of control, withdrawal, and disruption to family or school), with males significantly more likely than females to indicate this problem (16 percent versus 3 percent).

As Dr. Jürgen Rehm, senior scientist at CAMH and study spokesperson, explains, "We included questions on the choking game and video gaming to reflect the ever changing behavioural patterns of young Ontarians. Overall, the results are not alarming, but indicate that Ontario youth

overall show a relatively high degree of distress and potentially self-harming behavior."

Dr. David Wolfe, director of CAMH's Centre for Prevention Science notes that adolescents have always had a fascination with altered states. "Activities such as the choking game are not new, but it is important that parents are aware of these behaviours and are prepared to speak with their children about the dangers of these and other risky activities."

This year's report also shows a stable but high rate of elevated psychological distress, with 31 percent of students reporting symptoms of depression, anxiety or social dysfunction. In addition, about 21 percent of students visited a mental health professional a least once during the past year. This is a significant increase from 2005, when only 12 percent of students reported visits.

"This is an encouraging sign," commented Dr. Rehm, "as it shows, that psychological and mental health problems are less stigmatized, and students and their families become increasingly aware that professional services can help overcome these problems."

Bullying continues to be a problem with Ontario youth, with stable but elevated rates of approximately 30 percent of students reporting being bullied at school since September. The most prevalent form of being bullied is verbal attacks (23 percent), while four percent are bullied physically, and three percent are usually victims of theft or vandalism.

The report points to the key role parents and teachers play in the development of adolescents. "Bullying continues to be a problem in our schools and can have significant effects on the mental health and well-being of adolescents," says Dr. Wolfe. "It is crucial that schools find ways to address these forms of abuse and violence, so that students feel safe. Young people need to know that the lines of communication are open and they can speak to school administrators and parents about their problems. And similarly, parents need to be open and honest with kids and arm them with the necessary tools to make healthy decisions."

Science Daily

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/05/080501092738.htm>

During a workshop for young adults with developmental delays, a large heavy-set young man, Lester, said very sadly and earnestly, "But, Irene, I AM fat and ugly! What good words can I say to myself about THAT?"

"Lester, when you look at the moon," I said, "It is sometimes a skinny moon, and sometimes a half moon, and sometimes a full round moon - but no matter what shape it is, all moons are beautiful. You could throw away the words 'fat and ugly' and say to yourself, 'I'm round like the full moon!'"

So we practiced, with my saying, "You are fat and ugly!" so that Lester could throw these words into the trash and say proudly, "I'm round and beautiful like the full moon!"

Then, for the first time that a student has asked me this question in all my years of teaching, Lester turned to me and asked, "So, Irene, what mean words do YOU say to yourself that you'd like to practice throwing away?"

Startled, I said, "Well, I don't like my squeaky voice! But what good words could I say to myself about THAT?"

Lester smiled, patted my arm, and explained kindly, "Irene, your voice says things that make people happy." At his insistence, I practiced physically throwing away the words, "I hate my squeaky voice!" and telling myself out loud, "My voice says things that make people happy!"

And do you know what? Just as I am always reminding my students, physically practicing what to do and saying the words you need to remember out loud really does help -- because I haven't felt bad about my squeaky voice since!

Source: Chris Jenkins, Insafe

<http://www.saferinternet.org/ww/en/pub/insafe/news/articles/0308/note2b.htm>

"When I am asked about bullies, my feeling is that the capacity to bully is present in everyone. The difference between the impulse to bully and bullying is enormous; just as having murderous thoughts is light years away from pulling a trigger. It is the instinct to bully that needs to be understood in all its varieties.

Marie Strebler

The Institute for Employment Studies



"You can make my body go to school but my soul will be outside running through sprinklers."

Think you are old?

Each year the staff at Beloit College in Wisconsin puts together a list to try to give the faculty a sense of the mindset of that year's incoming freshmen. Here is the latest list:

- Today's children have never owned a record player.
- They have never feared a nuclear war.
- They don't have a clue how to use a typewriter.
- They are too young to remember the space shuttle blowing up.
- Tiananmen Square means nothing to them.
- Bottle caps have always been screw off and plastic.
- Atari predates them, as do vinyl albums. The expression you sound like a broken record means nothing to them.

Source:

<http://www.funny2.com/old.htm>

Quotations we Like

Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.

Rainer Maria Rilke

Hatred deforms the hater more than the hated.
St. Augustine

Research indicates that creating a supportive school climate is the most important step in preventing harassment. A school can have policies and procedures, but these alone will not prevent harassment.

Statement endorsed by the National School Boards Association

I've always said, not every bully is a sexual harasser, but every sexual harasser is a bully.

Sylvia Cedilla

We will never greatly improve students' moral development in schools without taking on the complex task of developing adults' maturity and ethical capacities."

Rick Weissbourd

Don't hold your parents up to contempt. After all, you are their children, and it is just possible that you may take after them.

Evelyn Waugh



About us

In 2002 we coordinated Canada's first national conference on bullying and went on to present yet another in 2005 and again in 2007. All three conferences were "sold out" and the rated as huge successes.

We also write and promote productions such as 'You're Not the Boss of Me', a play about bullying which has been featured in various parts of Canada; and we were the driving force in the development of the Ottawa Anti Bullying Coalition (OABC).

Our work includes:

Distributing this free monthly e-mail newsletter to over 3,000 subscribers around the world

Organizing seminars, training courses and conferences

Providing professionals with comprehensive tool kits

Distributing copies of our three acclaimed anti-bullying scripts for children and youth

Promotion of best practices, school ethos and character education resources

Our youth built and maintained website www.iamSAFE.ca

You can contact us at:

info@iamSAFE.ca

The "IAMS SAFE" electronically published newsletter focusing on news and resource information relating to bullying, safer schools and safer communities is produced in Ottawa by Kids-Can, a not for profit organization offering a variety of training and awareness programs for educators and students.

Our newsletter efforts are voluntary and carried out primarily by youth!

