

TAKE ACTION TODAY



Bullying is Everyone's Business

The *Take Action Today* blog series features stories of real people—school administrators, health and safety professionals, law enforcement officers, faith leaders—working hard to prevent bullying in their schools and their communities. These inspiring stories highlight prevention efforts across the country, and the resources being used to support these initiatives.

Get inspired to *Take Action Today*.

Contents

- 2 How Mental Health Professionals Can Prevent Bullying
- 4 Business Leaders and Bullying Prevention
- 6 Youth Professionals and Mentors in Bullying Prevention
- 8 Local Parks and Recreation Office Works to Prevent Bullying in Their DC Community
- 10 How Families and Students Can Take the Lead in Creating Safer School Environments
- 12 Mayors Bringing the Community Together to Stop Bullying
- 14 School Nurses Strive to Build Positive School Climates
- 16 How Faith Leaders Can Support Bullying Prevention Efforts in the Community
- 18 Creating Safe School Environments and Building Bridges
- 20 Preventing Bullying from the Very Beginning
- 22 Where Policy Meets Practice in Making Schools Safer

How Mental Health Professionals Can Prevent Bullying

By:

John Kelly, Ph.D., school psychologist, Commack High School
with Erin Reiney, MPH, CHES, Health Resources and Services Administration



Dr. John Kelly is a school psychologist at Commack High School in New York and serves as the chair of the National Association of School Psychologists' government professional relations committee.

In my 27 years as a school psychologist, I have seen an increase in how many students and families are concerned about bullying. I have witnessed first hand the damage it can cause—not only to the children being bullied, but also to those who witness bullying, and even to kids who bully.

Thankfully, I have also seen this issue go beyond what many used to think of as an acceptable “rite of passage,” to one that is seen for what it actually is: an important public health issue that merits community prevention and response.

As a mental health professional, I'm sure you have seen these human costs as well. You have seen how bullying can affect the mental and physical well-being of kids who are targeted and may cause

them to dislike, avoid and even fail or drop out of school. You also know that bullying others can be an early warning sign of trouble that may require the support and intervention of mental health professionals based in or outside of schools. Most importantly, you know that steps can be taken to prevent bullying and reduce these human costs. As mental health professionals, we are in a position to help.

What can you do to prevent bullying?

Because of our training, expertise and our collaborations with others in our schools and communities, we can play unique and critical roles in preventing bullying and helping to lessen its effects. We can:

- Offer counseling and skills training to help kids who bully manage aggression, support and coping strategies for those who have been bullied, and counseling for family members or friends who have been affected by bullying.
- Help school and community leaders assess the amount and nature of bullying in schools and organizations, use local data to inform bullying prevention efforts, and help evaluate progress in reducing bullying over time.
- Identify and help to implement bullying prevention efforts that have evidence of effectiveness and fit the needs of local schools and community groups.
- Train other mental health professionals, educators, community members, families and youth about the nature and prevalence of bullying, its effects and effective prevention and intervention strategies.
- Consult with educators, parents and administrators to develop reasoned policies about bullying that avoid harsh, inflexible discipline strategies, such as zero tolerance policies.

Take the First Step

- Learn more about bullying prevention through the [Training Module](#), User Guide ([Understanding the Roles of Mental Health Professionals in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts](#)) and other resources on [StopBullying.gov](#).
- View the webinar, [Moving from Awareness to Action in Bullying Prevention](#) co-presented by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP).
- Plan a bullying prevention event to inform school- and community-based mental health professionals, parents, youth and other members of your community to share “what works” in bullying prevention and dispel some common myths and misdirections.

As a leader in the mental health community or the subject matter expert in your school, you have opportunities to make a difference in a child’s life every day. These commonsense steps for action and resources will provide you with the tools you need to take action today and help the kids who need it the most.

For more information on mental health problems, visit [MentalHealth.gov](#).

To access the resources referenced in this article:

Visit <http://www.StopBullying.gov>

Visit the StopBullying.gov Training Center and get the The Bullying Prevention Training Module at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/index.html>

View the webinar, *Moving from Awareness to Action in Bullying Prevention* at <https://hrsa.connectsolutions.com/p8v0wbnulnc/>

Download the User Guide *Understanding the Roles of Mental Health Professionals in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts* at http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/hrsa_guide_mental-health-professionals_508.pdf

Visit <http://www.mentalhealth.gov/>

Business Leaders and Bullying Prevention

By:

Alice Cahn, vice president of social responsibility, Cartoon Network
with Erin Reiney, MPH, CHES, Health Resources and Services Administration



Alice Cahn, vice president of social responsibility at Cartoon Network, conceived and manages the award-winning *Stop Bullying: Speak Up* campaign.

Understanding what excites and concerns youth is one of the critical ingredients to Cartoon Network's success. That's why we knew we had to act when we learned that nearly 85 percent of our youth audience was concerned about bullying and needed information on how to prevent it.

When we first launched [Stop Bullying: Speak Up](#), we saw a great opportunity to make kids smarter about bullying and to also strengthen our connection with kids and families. Our goal was to develop an awareness campaign designed to provide resources for parents, kids and educators and explain in simple terms, the variety of ways people can take action to resolve the bullying issue and prevent it from happening. But like many things in business, we knew that if we were going to be truly effective in our efforts, we couldn't do it alone.

Whether a corporate executive or entrepreneur, business professionals who serve youth or families can play an instrumental role in bullying prevention. They offer a unique set of skills, networks and leadership abilities that can be critical to improving the well-being of their community.

What can you do to prevent bullying?

Business leaders who are interested in bullying prevention understand that the health and well-being of their patrons is directly related to the health and well-being of their company. We can:

- Leverage existing networks, partnerships and collaborations. Our partners have been essential to *Stop Bullying: Speak Up*'s success. For example, we invite Health Resources and

Services Administration’s bullying prevention leads to provide reviews of our new campaign materials, which connects us with the latest research from leading experts in the field. We didn’t need to position ourselves as bullying experts—only share our expertise about how to reach kids. Working toward these shared goals with partners also helped develop new relationships and business opportunities.

- Raise awareness about bullying and its effects to educate parents, teachers, elected officials and professionals, as well as mentors who serve youth. Your efforts will positively impact your community while also spreading your brand to new audiences.
- Support the adoption of comprehensive bullying prevention programs in schools and youth-serving organizations. Business leaders already partner with schools on workforce issues to offer advice on the content of education so students will be job-ready after graduation. With our expertise in assessing risks and promoting worker safety, we can also help guide a process of planning safe and healthy environments for youth to learn, both in school and community settings.

Take the First Step

- Learn more about bullying prevention through the [Training Module](#), User Guide ([Understanding the Roles of Business Professionals in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts](#)), and other resources on [StopBullying.gov](#).
- Plan a bullying prevention event to inform business professionals, parents, youth and other members of your community to share “what works” in bullying prevention and dispel some common myths and misdirections.
- Assist in the creation of a community coalition to assess the prevalence of bullying; and then design, fund and measure the effectiveness of bullying prevention strategies to safeguard all youth.

The results of our efforts are clear—*Stop Bullying: Speak Up* has benefitted youth and our Cartoon Network youth brand. Our PSAs reach more than 900,000 kids every week with real-life stories of bullying and expert advice on its prevention, more than 3 million kids have seen the bullying documentaries, and an average of 100,000 visitors go to [StopBullyingSpeakUp.com](#) each month. To date, more than 485,000 people have taken our pledge to stop bullying.

To access the resources referenced in this article:

Visit <http://www.StopBullying.gov>

Visit the Cartoon Network’s [Stop Bullying: Speak Up](#) initiative at [StopBullyingSpeakUp.com](#)

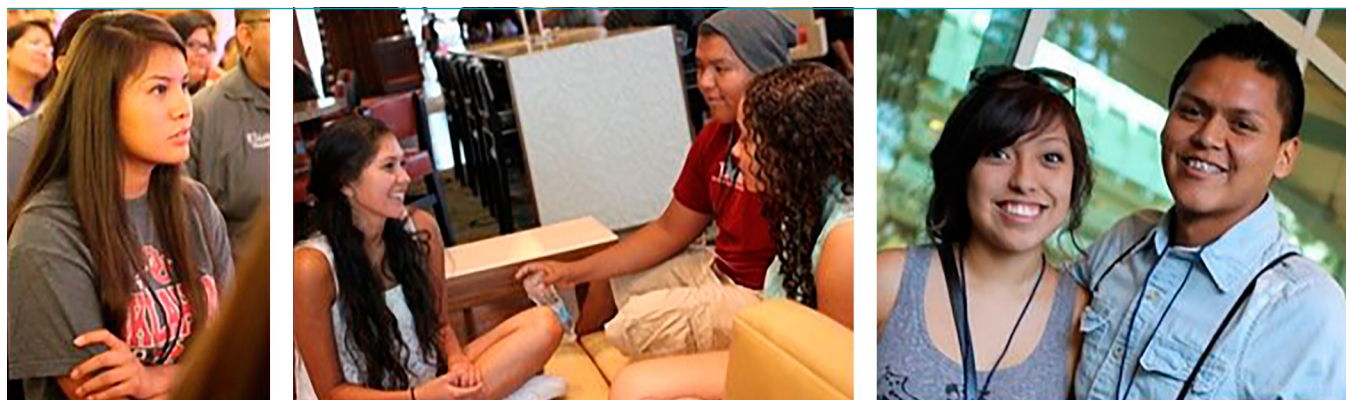
Visit the StopBullying.gov Training Center and get the The Bullying Prevention Training Module at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/index.html>

Download the User Guide *Understanding the Roles of Business Professionals in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts* at http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/hrsa_guide_business-professionals_508v2.pdf

Youth Professionals and Mentors in Bullying Prevention

By:

Russell Corker, UNITY Youth Councils coordinator, youth leader and Western Region representative with Erin Reiney, MPH, CHES, Health Resources and Services Administration



The United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) organization was an early partner in federal efforts to stop bullying. For the past 37 years, our goal has been to foster the spiritual, mental, physical and social development of American Indian and Alaska Native youth and to help build a strong, unified and self-reliant Native America through greater youth involvement. Since 2002, we have been working with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to help educate American Indian youth on bullying prevention and provide them with the tools to be more than a bystander.

We've seen the need for prevention efforts evolve over the past several years, specifically in relation to the mascot issue, as many schools and sports teams may accept native names that are actually considered offensive. Our Youth Councils

recognized that bullying was a problem, and with a few pointers from UNITY and in partnership with HRSA, they were able to educate their peers on bullying prevention and why seemingly innocuous labels, such as "Savages," "Warhawks," or "Redskins," can be offensive to American Indians.

What you can do to prevent bullying?

- Demonstrate compassion and always model respect. At UNITY, we're able to attract youth because of our ability to build trusting relationships.
- Provide training and clear guidelines on bullying prevention. Volunteers must agree to follow UNITY's code of ethics and receive training to strengthen their skills in listening to youth,

learning about their concerns, and supporting them to take action.

- Make time to talk about bullying. We work with youth who have experienced bullying and provide resources and training for youth leaders to become advocates in their community.

Most importantly, empower youth. Tyler Owens, president of the Akimel O’odham/Pee-Posh Youth Council and victim of bullying, shared her story:

“I am the lucky one to have such a supportive community that believes in listening to what the youth have to say ... My involvement with the Gila River Indian Community’s youth council for four years now has given me a chance to speak out about bullying and advocate for other youth in situations similar to my own.”

In February 2014, Tyler presented at the UNITY Mid-Year Conference using skits and games to educate elementary students about bullying. She used the StopBullying.gov training center and free webisodes to instruct young children on ways to help those who bully, those who are bullied, and those who witness bullying. Tyler’s council has been invited to speak at high schools and to groups throughout the local community.

Take the First Step

- Learn more about bullying prevention through the [Training Module](#), User Guide ([Understanding the Roles of Youth Professionals and Youth Mentors in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts](#)), and other resources on [StopBullying.gov](#).
- Make your place safe before taking the bully-free message to other locations where bullying may be tolerated. Out-of-school programs and afterschool settings can also implement comprehensive policies and strategies for bullying prevention that have been shown to be effective in schools.
- Look to form partnerships with schools and other youth-serving organizations, launch an awareness campaign and form an alliance—involving kids, parents, schools, faith communities, businesses and community leaders—to assess and work together in preventing bullying.

From my work with the UNITY Youth Councils, I believe the best thing youth-serving adults and mentors can offer youth is the opportunity to learn about themselves, their abilities and connections to the world around them. It’s exciting to see youth understand the power that they have to affect positive change—especially when it comes to bullying prevention.

To access the resources referenced in this article:

Visit <http://www.StopBullying.gov>

Visit the StopBullying.gov Training Center and get the The Bullying Prevention Training Module at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/index.html>

Download the User Guide *Understanding the Roles of Youth Professionals and Youth Mentors in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts* at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/blog/2014/05/01/take-action-today-youth-professionals-and-mentors-bullying-prevention>

Local and Recreation Office Works to Prevent Bullying in Their DC Community

By:

Natasha Herring, D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation

with Erin Reiney, MPH, CHES, Health Resources and Services Administration



Natasha Herring, a manager with D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), recently got involved with [StopBullying.gov](https://www.stopbullying.gov) when she identified a unique need to address bullying in her local parks and facilities. The post below reflects her story on how D.C. Parks and Recreation is taking action to prevent bullying.

It's pool time at the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). Thousands of kids are dropping in to cool off and enjoy the company of staff and friends at aquatic centers in their neighborhoods.

DPR leaders, coaches, staff and volunteers organize activities designed to be positive and enriching experiences for our children. They form close relationships with kids, from teaching them how to swim to guiding their progress for years on sports leagues and park outings. Many become mentors—big brothers and big sisters—to area children. Kids know that our staff and volunteers are willing to listen and understand their fears and limitations, and will encourage them to meet every challenge. We play a vital role in the lives of many.

While our staff and volunteers know the hazards of their program environments, and are well-versed in promoting safe play and good sportsmanship, they may not always recognize bullying.

In the past few years, we noticed a rise in “incidents”—arguments and fights between kids at our recreational facilities, such as DPR’s aquatic centers. We conducted focus groups in a variety of neighborhood centers to assess possible causes and remedies, and learned that many of the incidents were not accidental, but involved bullying by youth who wanted to harm or intimidate others. We realized immediately that we had to take action so that all staff, volunteers and children felt safe from bullying in our facilities.

What we are doing to prevent bullying?

As a first step, we knew we had to create an overarching policy that prohibits bullying among youth, and one that every DPR facility and program could tailor to meet their unique circumstances.

We turned to StopBullying.gov and attended a recent Institute of Medicine two-day workshop on bullying prevention that was commissioned by the Health Resources and Services Administration to inform the process. We came away with much more than we imagined; learning the science behind the issue makes you aware of the many physiological, psychological and social factors in a child's life that increase the likelihood of bullying and magnify its effects. Besides creating safe environments free of bullying, we can assist in community-wide approaches, possibly by instructing and mentoring kids in positive ways to interact with their peers.

Of course a "no bullying" rule by itself will not solve the problem. It will take time and a commitment of resources to equip staff with the knowledge and skills needed to detect and prevent it. We are just beginning to identify issues inherent to parks and recreation programs that could assist or hinder these prevention efforts. To mention a few:

- Bullying risks may be higher in recreation programs where there are large groups of children with wide age ranges.

- Forming close, trusting relationships between the staff, volunteers and children can be challenging in an environment where people participate at different rates.
- Recreational settings give children a chance to learn a skill together which can have a positive socializing effect and help form new friendships, even for kids who tend to be socially isolated.
- High school seniors coming to neighborhood centers could provide structured activities to instruct young children about bullying, its effects and how to be allies to someone who is bullied.

What first step can you take?

Visit the [Stopbullying.gov Training Center](http://www.stopbullying.gov) and the resources listed in the parks and recreation User Guide ([*Understanding the Roles of Recreation Leaders in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts*](#)) to learn more about bullying prevention.

It's our job as recreation leaders to make sure kids feel safe. This policy and additional training will help ensure that each and every child that participates in a DPR activity will hold only fond memories of the fun things they did over the summer.

Now, let's all go to the pool!

To access the resources referenced in this article:

Visit <http://www.StopBullying.gov>

Visit the StopBullying.gov Training Center and get the The Bullying Prevention Training Module at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/index.html>

Download the User Guide [*Understanding the Roles of Recreation Leaders in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts*](#) at http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/hrsa_guide_recreation-leaders_508v2.pdf

How Families and Students Can Take the Lead in Creating Safer School Environments

By:

Mary Pat King, director of programs and partnerships, National Parent Teacher Association, with Erin Reiney, MPH, CHES, Health Resources and Services Administration



Mary Pat King is the director of programs and partnerships at the National Parent Teacher Association. In this role, Mary Pat has helped develop new strategies for engaging parents and students as leaders in efforts to improve school climate, and as a result, prevent bullying in communities nationwide.

The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is committed to ensuring all children can learn in a safe school environment that is free of bullying. Research indicates that the most effective bullying prevention efforts build a culture of caring and respect throughout the school community, rather than focusing attention only on children who bully and those who are bullied. That's why over the past several years, we've worked with [StopBullying.gov](https://www.stopbullying.gov) and other partners in our [Connect for Respect](#) (C4R) initiative, which aims to help local PTAs take the initiative to build positive school climates full of healthy relationships.

Strong family-school partnerships translate into healthier school environments and better student outcomes. Families know that bullying isn't an

isolated problem, and they're eager to find ways to work with youth and educators in bullying prevention efforts.

We recently ramped up our C4R initiative to ensure we were effectively mobilizing parents and students as leaders in creating healthy school climates where children can thrive. Our new "Connect for Respect Guide for PTA Leaders" and "Connect for Respect Guide for Student Leaders" outline five-step approaches and helpful tips for improving the overall school climate and preventing bullying. This includes:

- **Building a team.** Invite students, teachers, community members and parents to work together in improving school climate.

- **Assessing the current school climate.** Use the [StopBullying.gov Landscape Assessment](http://www.stopbullying.gov/landscape-assessment) to develop benchmarks, gain a better understanding of the perspective of students, families, teachers and other school personnel, and chart progress over time.
- **Engaging the school community.** Bring student and school leaders together for a discussion and brainstorm on ways to improve peer environments for students. Present the findings from your assessment, as well as share the latest research and best practices from the [StopBullying.gov Training Center](http://www.stopbullying.gov/training-center). Our C4R digital toolkit at PTA.org/C4R also includes ideas for organizing your event.
- **Developing an action plan.** Create a plan that educates and empowers families, students and the broader community about ways to create more positive school climates full of healthy peer relationships.
- **Empowering students, families and the community.** Sustain your efforts over time by continuing the dialogue with students, families and the community so that all commit to a shared responsibility for a positive school climate and healthy peer relationships.

Parents and teachers play an important role in mentoring students to make positive changes to their school and other peer environments that result in a more supportive student experience for all. Using our revamped Connect for Respect Guides, along with the research, materials and resources from the [StopBullying.gov Training Center](http://www.stopbullying.gov/training-center), parents and teachers can have a profound impact on students, schools and the broader community.

Take the First Step

- Visit the [StopBullying.gov Training Center](http://www.stopbullying.gov/training-center) and the resources listed in the User Guide for parents and caregivers ([Understanding the Roles of Parents and Caregivers in Community-wide Bullying Prevention Efforts](http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/hrsa_guide_parents-and-caregivers_508v2.pdf)).
- Visit PTA's newly released C4R tools at PTA.org/C4R for more information on how to take action, plan an event and create safe and welcoming school climates.

To access the resources referenced in this article:

Visit <http://www.StopBullying.gov>

Visit the StopBullying.gov Training Center and get the The Bullying Prevention Training Module at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/index.html>

Download the User Guide *Understanding the Roles of Parents and Caregivers in Community-wide Bullying Prevention Efforts* at http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/hrsa_guide_parents-and-caregivers_508v2.pdf

Visit The National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) *Connect for Respect* (C4R) initiative at <http://www.pta.org/C4R>

Mayors Bringing the Community Together to Stop Bullying

By:

Tom Cochran, CEO and executive director, U.S. Conference of Mayors and Lee Hirsch, The BULLY Project with Erin Reiney, MPH, CHES, Health Resources and Services Administration



Tom Cochran is the CEO and executive director of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Cochran serves as chief administrative officer, where he oversees the day-to-day activities of the Conference that provides mayors with leadership and management tools to succeed.

Lee Hirsch is an award-winning filmmaker and director of the film *Bully*. In connection with the film, *The BULLY Project* provides important tools on bullying prevention to advocates, students, parents and educators.

October is National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month and in more than 200 cities across the country, communities and their leaders are coming together to take action against bullying.

In the 2011 school year, 28 percent of kids between the ages of 12 and 18 were bullied at school. Understanding that bullying is a serious issue facing more than 1 in 4 children nationwide, the U.S. Conference of Mayors recently pledged its commitment to eradicate bullying and its harmful effects.

This year, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has joined forces with The BULLY Project for the [Mayors Campaign to End Bullying](#), which aims to address the problem of bullying in our nation's schools. During the month of October, well over 200 mayors in nearly all 50 states will host events that bring together key stakeholders and community members to educate, inform and inspire lasting bullying prevention efforts. In activating a concerned and committed group of individuals, these mayors are proactively creating safe environments and welcoming school climates for our nation's students and families.

Sparking a community-based discussion on bullying and how it can be addressed at the local level is an important first step for any leader interested in making a difference. Mayors and other elected officials who bring a unique blend of influence, capacity building and resources can play a critical role in getting these efforts off the ground.

For example, in Lansing, Michigan, Mayor Virg Bernero worked with the district superintendent's office to plan an event that would start a long-term conversation and community-based effort. They are inviting members of education, business, civic and faith groups to the table for a proactive dialogue on how to bring bullying prevention plans directly into schools and community settings moving forward.

In Mooresville, North Carolina, Mayor Miles Atkins is issuing a formal proclamation of support for bullying prevention and has begun working with local school systems and community organizations to create a unified strategy to combat bullying. By working in partnership with these groups, Mayor Atkins can apply his unique role and influence to help connect

the dots between independent efforts. This results in a bigger impact for Mooresville's children and families.

Take Action Today

Local leaders interested in taking action can find critical resources to train each other and their community on the research and best practices in bullying prevention through the [StopBullying.gov Training Center](http://www.stopbullying.gov) and the corresponding [User Guide for elected officials](#). StopBullying.gov also provides information on the current [state policy landscape](#) — an important resource for all elected officials. The BULLY Project also provides [important tools](#) for advocates, students, parents and educators.

From Michigan to North Carolina and in cities nationwide, bullying prevention is a community-based interest and effort. By prioritizing it as such, elected officials nationwide are advancing the idea that everyone has a unique role to play. Learn more about the *Mayors Campaign to End Bullying* to see if your city is participating at www.usmayors.org/bullyproject.

To access the resources referenced in this article:

Visit <http://www.StopBullying.gov>

Visit the StopBullying.gov Training Center and get the The Bullying Prevention Training Module at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/index.html>

Download the User Guide *Understanding the Roles of Elected Officials in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts* at http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/hrsa_guide_elected-officials_508v2.pdf

Read about the Mayors Campaign to End Bullying at http://www.usmayors.org/bullyproject/bully_onesheet_final.pdf

Look up your state's bullying prevention laws at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/laws/>

Visit the Bully Project for more tools and resources at http://www.thebullyproject.com/tools_and_resources

Visit <http://www.usmayors.org/bullyproject/> to find out if your state is participating in the Mayors Campaign to End Bullying

School Nurses Strive to Build Positive School Climates

By:

Carolyn Duff, president, National Association of School Nurses
with Erin Reiney, MPH, CHES, Health Resources and Services Administration



Carolyn Duff is the president of the National Association of School Nurses, an organization committed to optimizing student health and learning by advancing the practice of school nursing.

Sue and Peggy work within miles of each other at W.B. Simpson Elementary School and Polytech High School, just outside of Dover, Delaware. As school nurses, they are leaders in school health and are charged with responding to the ever-evolving physical and mental health needs of students.

Today, much like their approximately 61,000 peers across the country, Sue and Peggy work with school teams promoting overall student health, well-being and a positive school climate that is safe and conducive to learning.

For Sue and Peggy, a series of student self-harm incidents within the community led to a paradigm

shift in student and staff interactions, as well as response to bullying and other related challenges facing students in their schools.

The school knew it had to take action. First, they surveyed students and colleagues about bullying and other threats to well-being to set a benchmark for action. Then, they worked to develop an interdisciplinary support team of staff (including the school nurse, school resource officer, school social worker, teachers and principal) who met regularly and were committed to working with students and each other to identify at-risk students and to intervene before negative and aggressive behaviors escalated. Meanwhile, student-led efforts have

helped encourage students who are bullied to seek help and empowered bystanders to step in when a helping hand is needed.

[Delaware's state policies](#) reflect a sincere commitment to school safety. Under Delaware law, all public schools have teams (which include administrators, staff, parents, students and after-school staff) to develop and monitor bullying prevention efforts. The results are evident in the robust programming and critical training for students and staff — the effects of which are felt year-long.

When asked how school nurses can help create an environment that is safe and welcoming for all students, both Sue and Peggy agreed on the importance of building trusting relationships and keeping the lines of communication open — not only with students — but with school staff, volunteers, families and community members.

There is important work to be done to ensure that all school nurses are properly trained and equipped to respond appropriately to bullying when it happens and to participate on school teams to prevent bullying so that students can thrive. That is why National Association of School Nurses recently partnered with the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to host an in-depth [webinar](#) on how to move from awareness to action in bullying prevention. Both organizations also strive to make critical resources available to the broader school nursing community, including a [handy User Guide for Health & Safety Professionals](#) from StopBullying.gov, as well as a [School Violence policy brief](#) and round up of [best practices](#) from the National Association of School Nurses.

Bullying is a persistent public health concern that has a significant impact in our schools and communities. School nurses are often the first line of defense and a safety net for students who are feeling unsafe or uncomfortable.

To access the resources referenced in this article:

Visit <http://www.StopBullying.gov>

Visit the StopBullying.gov Training Center and get the The Bullying Prevention Training Module at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/index.html>

View the webinar, [Moving from Awareness to Action in Bullying Prevention](#) at <https://hrsa.connectsolutions.com/p8v0wbnulnc/>

Download the User Guide *Understanding the Roles of Health and Safety Professionals in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts* at http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/hrsa_guide_health-and-safety-professionals_508v2.pdf

Look up your state's bullying prevention laws at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/laws/>

Download the position statement *School Violence, Role of the School Nurse in Prevention* at <http://www.nasn.org/Portals/0/positions/2013psviolence.pdf>

Visit the National Association of School Nurses (NASN) at <http://www.nasn.org/ToolsResources/MentalHealth>

How Faith Leaders Can Support Bullying Prevention Efforts in the Community

By:

Rajdeep Singh, director of law and policy, the Sikh Coalition
with Erin Reiney, MPH, CHES, Health Resources and Services Administration



Rajdeep Singh serves as the director of law and policy for the Sikh Coalition where he focuses on developing and promoting policy solutions for civil rights issues.

As a Sikh American working to end school bullying in the post-9/11 environment, I believe the key to success is building partnerships with communities outside our own.

The Sikh Coalition was formed in response to the 9/11 attacks. As Sikhs mourned the loss of innocent lives that day, we encountered bigotry because of our appearance.

Observant Sikhs are distinguished by turbans and uncut hair. Our turban is a reminder to lead an ethical life, and our hair is considered a natural part of the body and left uncut out of respect for nature. The core teaching of the Sikh religion is that all human beings are equal in dignity and divinity. Ironically, as images of the 9/11 attacks were played repeatedly on television, so too were images of the masterminds—bearded men wearing turbans. A new stereotype was born.

This stereotype has infected our schools. According to [Sikh Coalition surveys](#) conducted between 2007 and 2014, up to 67 percent of turbaned Sikh American children in some cities have experienced

bullying because of their religion. Many are called “terrorist” and “Osama.”

Other communities also face post-9/11 backlash. A 2013 [survey of Muslim students](#) in California found that half experienced bullying because of their religion. Organizations representing [Arab Americans](#) and [South Asian Americans](#) have also published concerns about bullying.

Shared Challenges, New Opportunities

In response to these challenges, the Sikh Coalition has worked with targeted communities to increase public awareness about post-9/11 bullying. We have also partnered with the [Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund](#) to monitor implementation of anti-bullying laws in New York City. Our youth leadership group—the [Junior Sikh Coalition](#)—is building the grassroots capacity of young people to advocate for safer schools.

As we work to strengthen these important partnerships, it is critically important to expand our circle of friends. One easy place to start is the LGBT community.

According to a recent report by the [Gay Lesbian & Straight Education Network](#) (GLSEN), 85 percent of LGBT youth have been verbally harassed at school. The experiences of LGBT youth who experience bullying are similar to those in the Arab, Muslim, Sikh and South Asian communities.

Shared challenges create new opportunities. In this spirit, communities that experience bias because of their ethnicity or religion should strengthen partnerships with organizations like GLSEN to end bullying.

For example, the Sikh Coalition is a proud member of the [National Safe Schools Partnership](#), a coalition of more than 100 diverse organizations led by GLSEN and united against bullying. By pooling resources, sharing ideas and petitioning our elected representatives together, our communities can make a stronger case to lawmakers for policy reform.

We have to stand up for each other. This is a core principle of many religious traditions, including my own. It does not matter whether someone

is Arab or lesbian; gay or Muslim; bisexual or Sikh; transgender or South Asian. All people deserve respect, and that is why we should treat all children as our own in our nation's campaign against bullying.

Take the First Step

We know there's no universal approach to bullying prevention and response, but the [StopBullying.gov Training Center](#) is a helpful place to start for individuals and organizations interested in developing a bullying prevention effort in their community. There, stakeholders can find research-based materials, including a [User Guide that is specific to the role faith leaders play](#) in prevention and response. [Additional information](#) on the partnership-building strategies that have assisted the Sikh Coalition, and many others, in building a coordinated, global response to bullying is available on the Working in the Community page.

The Sikh Coalition also provides [resources for adults and youth](#), emphasizing safe, but effective ways to address bullying in schools and shedding light on bullying as a civil rights issue. Consider using these resources as a starting point for your work.

To access the resources referenced in this article:

Visit <http://www.StopBullying.gov>

Visit the StopBullying.gov Training Center and get the The Bullying Prevention Training Module at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/index.html>

Download the User Guide *Understanding the Roles of Faith Leaders in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts* at http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/hrsa_guide_faith-leaders_508v2.pdf

Read about community partnership building at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/in-the-community/index.html>

Visit the Sikh Coalition at <http://www.sikhcoalition.org/endschoolbullying>

Find out about the Junior Sikh Coalition at <http://blogs.wsj.com/metropolis/2013/04/10/for-sikh-teens-a-coalition-devoted-to-safety-and-advocacy>

Find out about the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund at http://aaldef.org/2013_NYC_bullying_report.pdf

Read about the experiences of Sikh-American students at <http://www.sikhcoalition.org/documents/pdf/go-home-terrorist.pdf>

Read about the experiences of Muslim-American students at <http://ca.cair.com/downloads/GrowingInFaith.pdf>

Read about the experiences of South Asian students at <http://saalt.electricembers.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/In-the-Face-of-Xenophobia.pdf>

Read the ADC Legal Advocacy and Policy Review at http://adc.org/fileadmin/ADC/Pdfs/2010_ADC_Legal_Report.pdf

Find out about the National Safe Schools Partnership at <http://www.glsen.org/policy/federal/national-safe-schools-partnership>

Find out about the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network at <http://www.glsen.org/article/2013-national-school-climate-survey>

Creating Safe School Environments and Building Bridges

By:

Mo Canady, executive director, the National Association of School Resource Officers
with Erin Reiney, MPH, CHES, Health Resources and Services Administration



There are more than 14,000 school resource officers (SROs) serving in elementary, middle and high schools across the United States. As sworn law enforcement officers, they serve as a security presence on school grounds, but also as educators, informal counselors and role models to the students they work hard to protect. As a former police officer and SRO with 25 years of experience, Mo Canady's job has been to keep students safe and ensure schools are positive places for learning. On any given day, Mo, and SROs everywhere, could encounter anything from fights, theft and truancy to verbal and physical abuse. Intense trainings coupled with the background knowledge acquired from seeing these students every day makes SROs key responders in many difficult school situations.

The job of law enforcement officers can be challenging, especially when working with young people. I saw it myself as an SRO. My goal every day was to bridge the gap between youth and law enforcement. This is at the core of community policing strategies—to build relationships, earn trust and serve as a resource to youth in need. Each day and every day. Oftentimes this involves addressing bullying that has taken place and working to prevent it in the first place. SROs

witness activity on a daily basis that they need to evaluate. Is the activity criminal behavior, such as harassment or assault? Are students joking around? Is intervention necessary?

Because laws vary from state to state, officers need to not only recognize if the behavior is criminal, but also know how to manage an incident to achieve the best outcomes for everyone involved.

SROs have three critical roles: (1) Law Enforcement (which includes promotion of school safety, crisis management and addressing criminal behavior), (2) Education and (3) Informal Counseling.

Each year, National Association of School Resource Officers provides training to more than 2,000 SRO's on how to fulfill and balance these roles. We educate SROs on how to manage adolescent emotional issues and behavior, effective communications, working with troubled families, as well as the role and power of social media and how they can use it to create a safer environment. Bullying can happen to any kid, at any time. And our officers are trained to recognize not only high-risk students, who may be bullied, but also to understand and reach out to the kids who are engaging in the bullying activities. We provide an additional set of eyes to be on the lookout for students who need some extra attention. We work with students on an individual basis to show them effective strategies to prevent further bullying, and help students with special needs that may be at greater risk of being bullied.

One of our most powerful roles is as an educator in the classroom. Students love to learn about constitutional law and what their rights are, but it's also important to emphasize personal responsibility, civic duty and the role they play in creating safer communities. SRO's rely on the

[StopBullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov) resources, [training materials](#) and the [law enforcement User Guide](#), to support their classroom bullying prevention efforts. Our educational outreach efforts provide SRO's the opportunity to engage students as a group, but often it's the students who approach our officers after the session to ask questions who need the real support and counsel. These are the opportunities to help on a one-on-one level and build a relationship with that child.

SROs also have an opportunity to encourage and model behavior for other adults in a school environment. When I was an SRO, I was surprised to witness some pretty bad behavior of boys towards girls in the hallways of middle and high schools. It was a form of bullying, and it needed to stop. I encouraged the SROs in my unit to be a regular presence in hallways, address the bullying as it happened, and encourage teachers to do the same. We saw a remarkable change in attitude among the kids—and among the teachers over time.

But we don't, and can't, do this alone. We work closely with all members of the school community to ensure that our work is community-based. This includes the teachers who monitor the halls during class breaks, the principals who are managing disciplinary actions, the school nurses who may see an injury, as well as counselors and school psychologists. We all work as a team to ensure the safest and most supportive learning environments possible for our youth.

To access the resources referenced in this article:

Visit <http://www.StopBullying.gov>

Visit the StopBullying.gov Training Center and get the The Bullying Prevention Training Module at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/index.html>

Download the User Guide *Understanding the Roles of Law Enforcement Officers in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts* at http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/hrsa_guide_law-enforcement-officers_508v2.pdf

Preventing Bullying from the Very Beginning

By:

Dr. Rosemarie Truglio, senior vice president, department of content and research, Sesame Workshop with Erin Reiney, MPH, CHES, Health Resources and Services Administration



Dr. Rosemarie Truglio is the senior vice president of Education and Research at Sesame Workshop. Truglio oversees all education research pertaining to the development of content produced for *Sesame Street*.

Sesame Street has always been a destination for children and parents to laugh, learn and grow. Over the past 45 years, the show has focused on the whole child by addressing academic skills, social, emotional, health and societal issues. Many difficult topics have been addressed through the seasons, and *Sesame Street* has always been there to provide concrete information to children and the caregivers in their lives. This includes the topic of [bullying behaviors in preschool-aged children](#).

[Statistics have shown](#) that many children will encounter bullying as they grow up—as one who bullies, one who is bullied, or as an observer. Bullying can look different among different age groups. For children under the age of 5, bullying

can take the form of physical aggression (hitting, pushing, taking something), relational behaviors (exclusion) and verbal aggression (talk of hitting or pushing).

In the longstanding tradition of *Sesame Street* addressing sensitive topics, [Sesame Workshop](#) consulted with early childhood experts to develop an age-appropriate story to address the topic of bullying. Sesame Workshop is the nonprofit education organization behind *Sesame Street*.

Sesame Workshop projects teach critical lessons that focus on literacy, numeracy, health and wellness, and respect and understanding that help all kids grow smarter, stronger and kinder.

In “The Good Birds Club,” Big Bird is bullied by another bird in the neighborhood. He wants to join the club, but he is excluded based on his appearance—his feet are too big, he is too tall and his feathers are too yellow. Big Bird is experiencing relational bullying, as he is being excluded for his appearance. He feels sad and confused and tries to change how he looks so he can fit in. Elmo, Abby and the rest of the Sesame Street gang help young viewers understand that Big Bird is being bullied, that it isn’t right, and that nobody should change who they are to try to fit in. The episode encourages children to seek the help of an adult they trust when faced with challenging situations and provides safe strategies for empowering young children to help their peers in need. In the end, Big Bird realizes that he likes himself just the way he is, so Abby, Elmo and Chris start their own club, the “Happy to Be Me Club,” which will be open to everyone.

Sesame Workshop assembled a panel of experts to create additional resource materials for parents, teachers and early childhood caregivers. The five-part video series, “Happy to Be Me: An Anti-Bullying Discussion,” addresses bullying and the steps

parents, educators and children can take to prevent and stop the behavior in preschoolers. “Happy to Be Me” ensures that parents understand their role, as most ask, “What can I do to stop bullying?” and “How can I prevent it from happening in the first place?”

We at Sesame Workshop strive to help parents and teachers address the issue of bullying from the very beginning. Research shows that the first years of a child’s life are crucial for cognitive and emotional development. The quality of care that a child experiences, both in the home and classroom, has a direct impact on cognitive growth, problem-solving skills and growing insight into the world around them.

Stopbullying.gov has developed a User Guide specifically for early childhood educators and care providers ([*Understanding the Roles of Early Child Care Providers in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts*](#)). Sesame Workshop also provides excellent resources through the [*Happy to Be Me*](#) series.

To access the resources referenced in this article:

Visit <http://www.StopBullying.gov>

Visit the StopBullying.gov Training Center and get the The Bullying Prevention Training Module at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/index.html>

Download the User Guide *Understanding the Roles of Early Child Care Providers in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts* at http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/hrsa_guide_early-education-child-care-providers_508v2.pdf

Get the facts about bullying at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/news/media/facts/>

Find out more about bullying behaviors in preschool-aged children and view the *Happy to Be Me* series at <http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/topics/bullying#>

Visit the Sesame Workshop at <http://www.sesameworkshop.org/>

Where Policy Meets Practice in Making Schools Safer

By:

Dr. Stephen West, superintendent, Winona Area Public Schools
with Erin Reiney, MPH, CHES, Health Resources and Services Administration



Dr. Stephen West is a career educator who recently joined the Winona Area Public Schools in Winona, Minnesota as superintendent. He specializes in education equity issues and works to create positive change for all students in his school district. He speaks on how to actively and practically understand the situations of poverty and the culture surrounding the issues. Dr. West serves as an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota St. Mary's, in their principals' administrative specialist degree program.

Photo courtesy of *The Winona Daily News*

Bullying is tough on all kids. A few years back, I had to deal with a situation in a middle school that exemplifies this. There was a young lady who had been called terrible names on the bus for more than a month. As her frustration and humiliation became too much, she came to school with a stick and assaulted the young man who was bullying her. As a result, not only did the young man who was bullying her have consequences, but so she did as well because of her reactive actions. It really showed me how complex bullying can be, and the importance of encouraging students to report incidents and of addressing these issues before they escalate. If she had reached out for assistance,

instead of suffering in silence then using violence to stop the bullying, there may have been a different outcome. It's one of those situations where I wish I had known so that I could have helped.

I don't want kids to be silent. In fact, as part of a more comprehensive focus on bullying, the Winona Area Public Schools (WAPS) district in Winona, Minnesota is currently implementing an incident-reporting program to empower students. Each student has a number that they can text to alert the administration anonymously about a bullying incident so that the principal can investigate immediately. Silence is a big challenge that we are

working to overcome, and communication is key. School staff care and want to prevent bullying. With the help of technology, kids are advocating, reporting and speaking up on behalf of others.

At the elementary school level we have a “Buddy Bench” as part of our broader efforts. Kids can sit at the bench and a “buddy” can join them if they are feeling lonely and left out. The students are also encouraged to be advocates for inclusion and reach out to all kids sitting on the Buddy Bench, even if they don’t know them. Watching kids “be the change” is quite inspiring and frankly, pretty awesome.

I am proud of the bullying prevention initiatives here in Minnesota. In 2012, our governor commissioned a [Prevention of School Bullying Task Force](#). This multi-agency effort called on experts, including those from the Minnesota Department of Health, to examine bullying, harassment and intimidation incidents and policies in Minnesota schools. Based on those findings, the task force developed

recommendations for policy initiatives for the governor and legislature, resulting in the [Safe and Supportive Schools Act](#).

With Safe and Supportive Schools, the school board, the community and parents are more informed of the [official bullying prevention policies of the WAPS](#). In addition, every staff member (from teachers to custodians to bus drivers), is trained in bullying prevention strategies and understands how to report an incident. Our strong prevention policy, student reporting system and the Buddy Bench give just a snapshot of what we can do to prevent bullying situations from starting and potentially escalating.

The top priority for any school administrator is protecting students. It is the thing that keeps me awake at night. Preventing bullying supports our commitment to empowering teachers and educators to reach all children.

[Free training](#) and other [resources for school administrators](#) can be found at [StopBullying.gov](#).

To access the resources referenced in this article:

Visit <http://www.StopBullying.gov>

Visit the StopBullying.gov Training Center and get the The Bullying Prevention Training Module at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/index.html>

Read the definition of bullying at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/definition/index.html>

Download the User Guide *Understanding the Roles of School Administrators in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts* at http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/hrsa_guide_school-administrators_508.pdf

Find out about Minnesota’s Prevention of School Bullying Task Force at http://mn.gov/mdhr/public_affairs/bullying_prevention.html

Find out about Minnesota’s Safe and Supportive Schools Act at <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/SchSup/SchSafety/SafeSuppAct/058980>

Download the bullying-prevention policies of the Safe and Supportive Schools Act at http://www.winona.k12.mn.us/sites/winona.k12.mn.us/files/files/Private_User/gmortens/WAPS%20MN%20Safe%20Supportive%20Schools%20Act.pdf

stopbullying.gov
