Nonviolent Communication: A Conceptual Framework for Intervention and Prevention of Bullying

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Introduction

- Clinical psychologist
  - Specialization in adolescents and young adults

- Associate Director of PRYDE
  - Clinical training supervisor – Pepperdine University Irvine

- Private Practice
  - Computer and video gaming addiction – Harm Reduction Model
    - PC Moderator™
  - Parenting by Numbers™ Online Token Economy
  - Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

- Experience with Bullying and School Violence
  - OCSD SMART Team 2006-2010
  - Counselor Intern in Elementary and Middle School
PRYDE

Pepperdine Resource Youth Diversion and Education

- Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology Community Based Clinical Training Program
  - Training MFT and Psychology Practicum Students and Interns
- Provide Juvenile Diversion counseling and case management services for contract cities and unincorporated areas of Orange County
- Referrals from law enforcement, probation including SMART
- Affiliated programs include school and community based counseling programs including campus clinics throughout So. California
Agenda

- Overview of Bullying
  - Causes / Consequences of Bullying
  - Prevention and Intervention Programs

- Introduction to Nonviolent Communication (NVC)
  - Brief history of Marshall Rosenberg and NVC
  - Foundation: observations, feelings, needs and requests
  - Learning NVC

- Bullying Intervention and Prevention Framework
  - Structural Components
  - Educational Components
  - Counseling Components
Definition of Bullying

Aggressive behavior based on an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the target is intentionally harmful and occurs repetitively (Olweus et al., 1999)

Persistent threatening and aggressive behavior directed toward other people, especially those who are smaller or weaker (APA)
Bullying: Multiple Factors

Individual Factors

Community Factors

School Factors

Familial Factors

Peer Group Factors

Social Ecological Model of Bullying (2009) Swearer, Espelage & Napolitano
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Factors</th>
<th>Bully Victim</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
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<td>Depression</td>
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<td>Conduct Problems</td>
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<td>Social skills deficits</td>
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<td>Anger/Affect Regulation Problems</td>
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<td>Lower empathic concern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive attitude about bullying</td>
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Familial Factors

- Bullies are more likely to live with:
  - Parent pro-agression attitudes
  - High control, low warmth parenting
  - Anxious/Avoidant attachment to caregivers
  - Corporal punishment
  - Siblings they also frequently victimize

- Victims are more likely to live with:
  - Less authoritative parents
  - Low levels of negotiation
  - High degrees of conflict
  - Lower socioeconomic status
Peer Factors

- Peers select group with similar interests, values.
  - Exclude individuals “threatening” the group cohesion
  - Allies part of protected group

- Dominance Theory
  - Aggression serves to establish social status/order
  - Bystanders less willing to aid victim

- Attraction Theory
  - Adolescents attracted to peers that model independent (i.e. delinquent) behavior
  - Support also from popularity research

- Transition periods are of increased risk
- Positive peer social support can provide protective factors
School Factors

Factors predictive of *greater* bullying behaviors
- Poor monitoring of public spaces
- Informal student-staff/teacher relations
- High conflict school environment

Factors predictive of *less* bullying behaviors
- Classroom practices and teacher attitudes
  - Teacher warmth
  - Fast and consistent response to classroom aggression
- Schools with emphasis on learning
Community Factors

- How safe is the community?
- Are schools valued and well supported?
- Are community resources for victims and bullies available?
  - Counseling, parenting programs, youth activities
- After school programs
- School and family partnerships
My Bodyguard: Ineffective School Policies

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Consequences for Bully, Victim and Society

- Depression, anxiety and other mental illness
  - Greater suicidal ideation, loneliness, lowered self esteem

- Increased physical illness
  - Headaches, stomach problems

- Lowered school performance
  - School avoidance, attendance problems
  - Lower grades predicted for bully and victim

- Bullying is a lifespan problem
  - Both short term and long term negative consequences
  - Greater aggression and violence predicted in dating and intimate partner relationships (bully)
Motivation for Anti-Bullying Efforts

- Improve the quality of student’s lives and educational experience
- Reduce school violence
- Improve school attendance
- Academic improvement
- Reduce risk of litigation
- Meet State requirements
Anti-bullying Programs

- Many programs commercially available
  - Less than \( \frac{1}{4} \) are supported with evidence
  - Can be expensive to fully implement

- Best known and evaluated world-wide is Olweus™ Bullying Prevention Program
  - Originated out of Norway
  - Comprehensive – multilevel program (Individual, School, Classroom and Community levels)
  - Well structured and supported (training, etc.)
  - 50% reduction in some studies - US results more modest effect
Components of Anti-Bullying Program

- **Structural**
  - Staff participation, executive commitment
  - School, classroom rules and consequences
  - Establish bully reporting and handling methods
  - Program finance, management and evaluation

- **Educational**
  - Educate students on rules and consequences
  - Empathy training for students, teachers and staff
  - Anger Management training
  - Parent outreach/training

- **Counseling Interventions for Bully/Victim**
  - Individual and group counseling
  - Conflict Mediation Process
Life-Enriching Education

- Created by Marshall Rosenberg almost 50 years ago
  
  “An education that prepares children to learn throughout their lives, relate well to others and themselves, be creative, flexible and venturesome, and have empathy not only for their immediate kin but for all humankind.” (2003, Rosenberg)

- Implemented in schools throughout the world
  
  - While results promising and some schools still remain, not a great success

- Failed to catch on: too ambitious
  
  - Completely change how students are taught and evaluated
Marshall Rosenberg

- PhD in Psychology in 1961 at University of Wisconsin
  - Studied under Carl Rogers
- Developed his NVC process and was first used in federally funded school projects in the 1960s for mediation and communications skills training
- Founder of the Center of Nonviolent Communications (1984)
  - International peace keeping organization.
- Now has over 200 certified trainers in 35 countries around the world

"Every criticism, judgment, diagnosis, and expression of anger is the tragic expression of an unmet need."
NVC Process

- The Concrete actions we *observe* that affect our well-being
- How we *feel* in relation to what we observe
- The *needs*, values, desires, etc. that create our feelings
- The concrete actions we *request* in order to enrich our lives
Four Components of NVC

- **Observations** - When I see (hear) ....
  - No judgment, criticism, put downs, sarcasm, bitterness

- **Feelings** - I feel ....
  - Sharing honestly about our feelings – no insults or –ed statements

- **Needs** – Because I am needing....
  - We all have universal human needs
  - Critical to get in touch with our needs

- **Requests** - And I would like ...... OR would you be willing to ..... 
  - No demands, must be willing to accept “No”
<table>
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<th>EXCITED</th>
<th>EXHILARATED</th>
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*Small sample
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<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Adjectives</th>
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<td>AFRAID</td>
<td>apprehensive, dread, foreboding, frightened, mistrustful, petrified, scared, suspicious, terrified, wary, worried</td>
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<td>DISCONNECTED</td>
<td>alienated, aloof, apathetic, bored, cold, detached, distant, distracted, indifferent, numb, removed, uninterested, withdrawn</td>
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<td>PAIN</td>
<td>agony, anguished, bereaved, devastated, grief, heartbroken, hurt, lonely, miserable, regretful, remorseful</td>
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<td>SAD</td>
<td>depressed, dejected, despair, despondent, disappointed, discouraged, disheartened, forlorn, gloomy, heavy hearted, hopeless, melancholy, unhappy, wretched</td>
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*Small sample*
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*Small sample
Expressing honestly

- **O** – Observation (no judgment, criticism, put downs, sarcasm, bitterness)
  When I see (hear) ....

- **F** – Feelings (sharing honestly about our feelings – no insults or –ed statements)
  I feel ....

- **N** – Needs (we all have needs)
  Because I am needing....

- **R** – Request (no demands, must be willing to accept “No”)
  And I would like ...... OR would you be willing to .....
Receiving empathically

- **O** – Observation (no judgment, criticism, put downs, sarcasm, bitterness)
  When you see (hear) ....

- **F** – Feelings (sharing honestly about our feelings – no insults or –ed statements)
  Do you feel .... ?

- **N** – Needs (we all have needs)
  Because you are needing ....

- **R** – Request (no demands, must be willing to accept “No”)
  And would like ...... (specific action)
The Language of NVC

- Taught as a new language
  - Helps others hear us more accurately
  - Can start teaching at any age (earlier the better)
  - Proficiency improves over time

- Teaches self awareness and mindfulness
  - Roots of feelings are needs, awareness of needs brings greater personal responsibility

- Teaches responsibility for our choices

- Tools such a Giraffe and Jackal Puppets used
  - Empathic vs. unhelpful critical thoughts
  - Distancing/defusion (ACT) from thoughts

- Helps an individual to apply self empathy
  - Helps with anger management
Training

- Books
- Workbooks
- Videos
- Audio tapes/Cds
- NVC Practice Groups
- NVC Training Programs
- NVC Certified Trainers
Bullying Intervention and Prevention Framework

- **Structural**
  - Staff participation, executive commitment
  - School, classroom rules and consequences
  - Establish bully reporting and handling methods
  - Program finance, management and evaluation

- **Educational**
  - Inform and reinforce rules and consequences
  - Empathy training for students, teachers and staff*
  - Anger management training*
  - Parent outreach/training*

- **Counseling Interventions for Bully/Victim**
  - Individual and group counseling*
  - Conflict Mediation*

*NVC training as universal language of empathy
NVC as Empathy Training

- Empathy training will directly enhance empathic concern
- Age/culture appropriate workbooks are already available or can be developed
- Limited class time spent on training
  - Take home assignments involve parents
  - Videos, online activities
- Workshops and activities
  - Upper graders can be trainers for the younger students
- Mandatory participation required for bullies in lieu of suspension or expulsion
- Individual and group counseling includes NVC coaching
References

Resources

- California Department of Education: Bullying Publications & Resources
  - [http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/bullyres.asp](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/bullyres.asp)
- Center for Nonviolent Communication
  - [http://www.cnvc.org/](http://www.cnvc.org/)
- StopBullying.gov
- Bullying Prevention Resource Guide: Colorado Trust
  - [http://www.bullyingprevention.org/](http://www.bullyingprevention.org/)