Self-Regulation of Learning: The Silver Bullet to Bullying and Victimization Bullying
### Jenny Mischel, *Oxford College of Emory University*
Guest Editor

Jenny Mischel with her family

"It is crucial to teach our youth self-regulatory practices that help them address and overcome bullying/cyberbullying victimization." Jenny Mischel

"Bullying, if unchecked, can harm a classroom's chemistry and, most importantly, could potentially lower the victim's self-efficacy, which might cause them to struggle in class and school." Meldryck Parraga
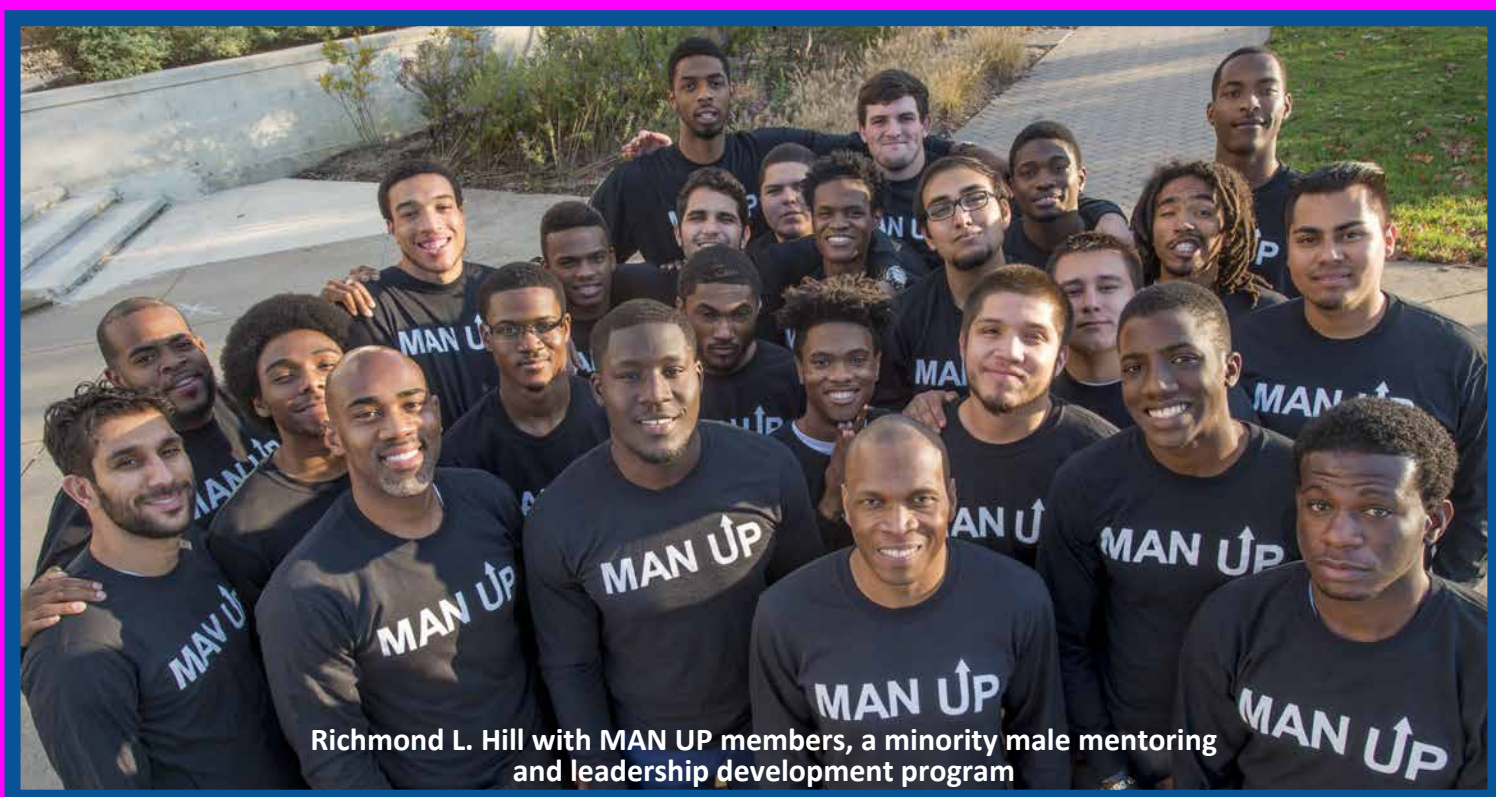
Richmond L. Hill with MAN UP members, a minority male mentoring and leadership development program

"Teaching self-regulated learning is an effective way to prevent bullying by making it uncool and creating an inclusive classroom community that prevents and addresses bullying when it occurs." Richmond L. Hill

SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AND SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS: ANTIDOTES TO COMBATING BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING
JENNY MISCHEL, *EMORY UNIVERSITY* (EDITORIAL)

Bullying is not a new phenomenon, yet it continues plaguing children, parents, educators, and counselors. The widely accepted definition of bullying is defined as any unwanted aggressive behavior that is repetitive in nature and includes an imbalance in power (Olweus, 1994). However, Volk, Veenstra, and Espelage (2017) posit this may need readdressing as concerns have arisen over how researchers define and study the behavior.

Cyberbullying still lacks an operationalized and conceptualized definition. Given this, it is not surprising that confusion about what constitutes bullying/cyberbullying, and how to address the behavior, is repeatedly expressed by parents and educators.

Much research has been conducted on this social problem and, subsequently, a variety of programs have been developed and implemented. Although some findings show significant changes in dispositions, beliefs, and behavior, few programs are effective. These findings may be due to inconsistencies in implementation within schools, failure to adjust to specific school climates or that the program does not adequately address youth's needs.

There is also a discrepancy in how children and adults perceive bullying (Mischel & Kitsantas, 2019). Compounding this further is the elusiveness of cyberbullying, which is perpetually evolving and can occur 24/7 (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013).
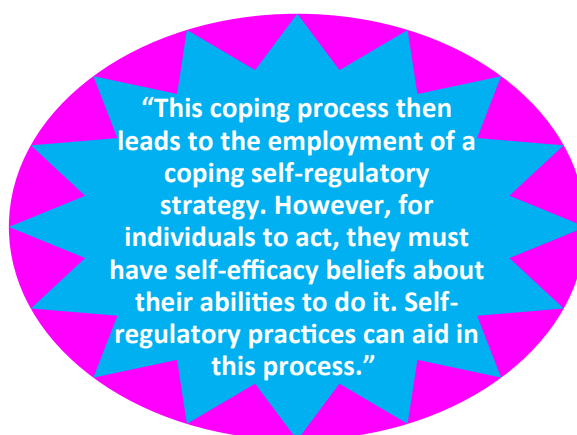
I focused my research on perceptions of bullying and cyberbullying behavior, coping strategies, and self-efficacy to enact the coping strategies reported to be effective by adolescents. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's beliefs in their perceived capability to employ a particular coping strategy (Rasaukus & Huynh, 2015).

Self-efficacy is an essential self-regulatory belief that helps individuals deal effectively with challenging situations, be persistent, put effort into essential tasks, and believe that they control the situations, environment, social interactions, and their own learning.

This research continues to be a passion of mine as I see, through interviews, surveys, and bullying/cyberbullying support groups, how this behavior directly impacts our youth. Once individuals experiencing bullying or cyberbullying realize it is not their fault and that they can stop and overcome the negative behavior, the bullying and cyberbullying stops affecting them, and they can begin the healing process. Thus, self-regulated learning and self-efficacy beliefs are essential antidotes to combating bullying and cyberbullying because this practice helps the individual devise a goal to combat or overcome the situation and whether they believe in their ability to do so. If their belief is high, they are more likely to carry out the coping strategy. Conversely, if their self-efficacy beliefs are low, they will not likely employ the strategy and continue to suffer.

To glean perspectives from various sources, Héfer Bembenutty and I reached out to researchers, educators, counselors, and students to share their experiences and provide self-regulatory strategies they find effective in combating or stopping bullying. Their reflective insights and advice rendered in this special issue of the *Times Magazine* provide a deeper understanding of the behavior and self-regulated learning strategies that could inform, prevent, and effectively find solutions to any instances of bullying in

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our families, schools, and communities.

When youth are asked about what coping strategies students would use if experiencing such behavior, the number one strategy reported was to tell an adult (Tokunga, 2010). However, research shows that those experiencing bullying/cyberbullying do not tell an adult until the situation has become overwhelming (Bauman, 2010).

Students report that much bullying/cyberbullying flies "under the radar," and adults are unaware of what is transpiring. They also feel that adults do not know how to handle these interactions or make the situation worse. If the adults are not cognizant of the behavior and the students are reticent to seek help, they suffer in silence.

Therefore, it seems pertinent to teach our youth self-regulatory practices that help them address and overcome bullying/cyberbullying victimization.

We know from Bandura (2001) that the environment, behavioral patterns, and inner forces all interact and influence each other. When an individual first becomes aware of a bullying/cyberbullying situation, the individual appraises the situation and then responds (Gross, 2013). The emotions that arise influence the coping process and whether the individuals alter the relationship or change how they react or alter the situation (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). This coping process then leads to the employment of a coping self-regulatory strategy. However, for individuals to act, they must have self-efficacy beliefs about their abilities to do it. Self-regulatory practices can aid in this process.

By introducing students to effective coping strategies in various situations, they can choose those that feel most comfortable and enhance high self-efficacy in employing a particular strategy. In creating a strategic plan or goals to employ when confronted by a bullying/cyberbullying situation, the students have resources to rely upon.

As these types of situations are precarious and unpredictable, evaluative practices are necessary to assess what does and does not work. Success may not be achieved the first time employed, but it provides a possible strategy to stop or overcome the potentially detrimental outcomes from bullying/cyberbullying behavior. Certainly, self-regulated learning and self-efficacy beliefs are essential antidotes to combating bullying and cyberbullying.

Upon request, references are available from the author (jennifer.mischel@emory.edu).

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TEACHERS AS CHANGE MAKERS IN BULLYING PREVENTION
RICHMOND HILL
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Reducing bullying in schools is a major concern of educators, students, parents, and legislators. Teachers play a critical role in identifying the acts of bullying, assisting the children who are victimized, collaborating with healthcare providers for managing the physical and emotional consequences of bullying, as well as managing bullying at school (Shamsi et al., 2019).

As a former middle school counselor, I witnessed the deleterious effects that bullying can have on students. Bullying can also have a profound effect on a school's learning environment. Bullying contributes to an unsafe and hostile learning environment, which affects students' learning and participating in extracurricular activities. If left unchecked, bullying can result in more dangerous and sometimes deadly forms of violence (Kohut, 2007).

As a counselor, I also observed some teachers that were very adept at implementing practical bullying prevention strategies in the classroom. From my observations, it was evident that students in these classrooms appeared to experience a safer and more secure environment and reportedly experienced fewer bullying incidences.

While conducting a classroom observation to provide appropriate counseling support to a student, I observed a quite skilled teacher who prevented bullying in the classroom. What did she do? When she saw or heard students engaged in bullying, she immediately and appropriately addressed their behaviors.

In those moments, she made clear to her students that bullying is unacceptable, harmful, and can have long-term adverse effects. The teacher shared with me that she had an initial discussion about her position on bullying and regular discussions with her students, intending to increase their knowledge of how to self-regulate their behaviors by intervening, building empathy, and encouraging prosocial behaviors.

Furthermore, she taught students that they have a responsibility to intervene if they observe someone being bullied at school and how their behaviors can either support or discourage bullies. Her goal was to create a "no bystander zone" in her classroom. The teacher identified herself, administrators, and school counselors as resources for students experiencing bullying.

Unfortunately, every teacher was not as knowledgeable, confident, or willing to confront bullies and implement such bullying prevention strategies in their classrooms. I learned that bullying thrives in environments conducive to such behaviors and is stymied in environments where it is deemed intolerable. As a counselor, students would share their experiences across classrooms with me and how they could very easily identify which teachers were committed to encouraging self-regulatory behaviors through bullying prevention and which ones were not.

Through these conversations, I understood that students engaged in bullying in one classroom did not always engage in such behavior in other classrooms; they engaged in self-regulatory behavior. Engagement in bullying was mediated by clear messages from teachers that such behavior would not be tolerated and that students will be protected.

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> Richmond Hill

Teachers are likely to experience some form of student bullying in their classrooms. Students will do things in class that teachers will not see; however, teachers can still prevent bullying. Teaching self-regulated learning is an effective way to prevent bullying by making it uncool and creating an inclusive classroom community that prevents and addresses bullying when it occurs.

The more teachers talk with their students about bullying, the more likely they are to report it. Let them know it is safe to

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come to you when they witness or experience bullying. While bullying is a persistent problem, teaching students to stand up for each other and making your classroom a safe space are effective ways to reduce it.

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> "Moral disengagement is a self-regulation process, which can help individuals reduce the tension created when enacted behavior such as bullying others does not match their moral standards and moral norms (Wang, Lei, Liu, & Hu, 2016). The moral disengagement theory proposes that most people have developed personal moral standards to guide good behavior and deter bad behavior as a self-regulation process (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). "

Wang, X., Zhao, F., Yang, J., Gao, L., Li, B., Lei, L., & Wang, P. (2020). Childhood maltreatment and bullying perpetration among Chinese adolescents: a moderated mediation model of moral disengagement and trait anger. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 106*, 104507. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2020.104507
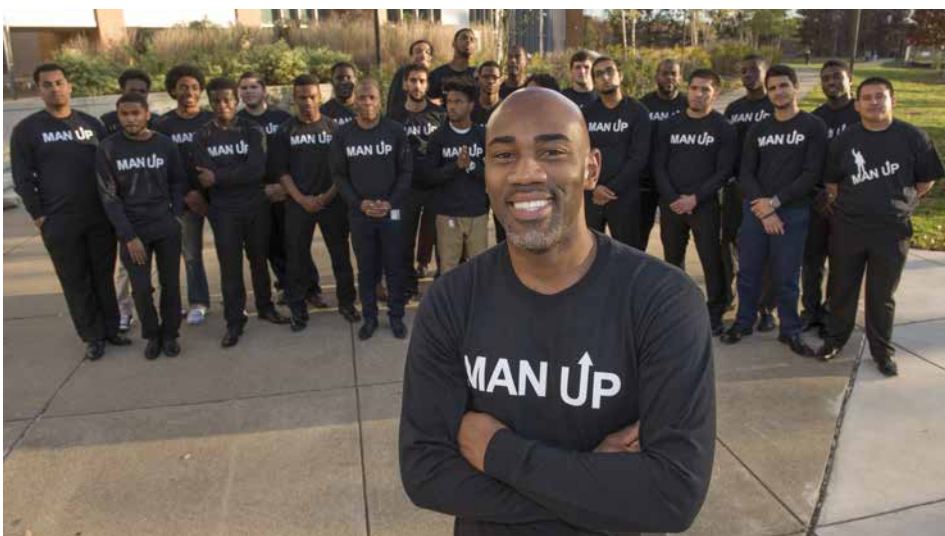
UNDERSTANDING BULLYING
SHERI BAUMAN
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

> "Self-regulation strategies can be taught, and so can the recognition of moral disengagement mechanisms, so that people can catch themselves and re-connect their self-regulatory strategies to inhibit this harmful behavior."
> Sheri Bauman

Although there are still academic squabbles about the precise definition of bullying, the generally accepted definition is that bullying is a form of aggression (behavior intended to harm another), repeated over time (or likely to be), characterized by a power imbalance (physical, social, psychological) between the perpetrator and target, who is unable to defend themselves effectively. The same definition applies to *cyberbullying*, with the addition of the *mechanism* of action (using digital communication).

It is also known that the motivation for bullying is the desire to achieve or maintain power and/or status in the peer group. Early studies focused on individual characteristics of bullies, victims, and bully/victims and sought to describe risk and protective factors.

Later research acknowledged the importance of witnesses to bullying and investigated how their actions or inaction are associated with bullying reductions. Despite much research and numerous anti-bullying programs, the problem persists.

I look to the work of Albert Bandura for insight into the apparent difficulties in curbing this destructive behavior. Bandura asserted that the vast majority of people, including children, develop a moral code—a set of principles about what constitutes right and wrong behavior—and most of us want to regard ourselves as essentially good or moral.

We know from research that children generally endorse anti-bullying attitudes and express empathy for victims. How can some engage in bullying, a behavior that violates their moral standards, and to do so without self-censure and feelings of guilt? The theory of moral disengagement sheds light on this conundrum and points to the role of self-regulation.

Moral disengagement refers to a set of cognitive mechanisms by which we may disconnect the self-regulatory process when engaging in immoral behavior, removing the unpleasant emotions of guilt and unwanted cognitions regarding self-approbation.

Self-regulation is the way people exert control over their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Moral disengagement means we no longer need to self-regulate (inhibit the bullying behavior) because our usual moral standards do not apply; self-control is unnecessary.

Bandura (2016) identified eight such mechanisms, providing a menu of options for the transgressor to employ. *Moral justification* involves rationalizing the behavior by reframing it as designed to serve a higher purpose—the (noble) end justifies the (immoral) means. For example, bullying might serve the purpose of strengthening the team (by bullying the weak player into resigning).

Advantageous comparison refers to the thought that a behavior (e.g., bullying by social exclusion) is not nearly as bad as a physical attack. We can also redefine the bullying using euphemistic labeling (e.g., "It was just a joke.").

Two mechanisms serve to disable our sense of agency in bullying situations. *Diffusion of responsibility* is enlisted when several persons are involved (group bullying), allowing the perpetrator to think, "Everyone was doing it, not just me. It's not my fault." *Displacement of responsibility* abdicates our agency by thinking that someone else is the "real" guilty party.

Perhaps a child tells themselves, "It's the teacher's obligation to make and enforce the rules, so I am not responsible if they are not doing their job." Another mechanism often applied in bullying situations is *distorting the consequences*. The perpetrator of verbal bullying might say, "It's not harmful and it toughens them up to face the real world."

Finally, two mechanisms use the victim to excuse our actions: *dehumanizing the victim* (relegating them to a lesser status not worthy of humane treatment [as seen in historical events]), or *blaming the victim* (e.g., "It's their fault for being so nerdy.") Engaging in these thoughts disconnects the self-regulatory mechanisms allowing the bullying to proceed without constraints.

While this is not the only explanation of the persistence of bullying, it is worthy of consideration. Self-regulation strategies can be taught, and so can the recognition of moral disengagement mechanisms, so that people can catch themselves and re-connect their self-regulatory strategies to inhibit this harmful behavior.

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> "Self-regulation is the way people exert control over their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. Moral disengagement means we no longer need to self-regulate (inhibit the bullying behavior) because our usual moral standards do not apply; self-control is unnecessary."
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BUILDING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE WITH OLDER INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
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TRANSFER INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, NEW YORK CITY

Our high school is a unique place—even here in New York City. We serve international and local NYC students, aged 17-21. Pre- COVID, our hallways hummed with languages and accents from all five boroughs and all over the world. "Transfer Schools" like ours serve students with complicated stories of trauma and feelings of failure; all of our students come to us to be built up again—to find peace, education, and to graduate from high school. On average, they are with us for about two years before they move on to college.

As it is most traditionally defined, the act of "bullying" often spares students like ours for several reasons: First, our students are older than the average high school student, focused on moving on with their lives. Second, they are with us and each other for a much shorter amount of time. Third, and perhaps most importantly, most traditional student aggression strategies depend on having a common language, common/shared media platforms, and common cultural norms.

And yet, bullying does occur at our school. Though it may look less "traditional," it is just as dangerous. And perhaps surprisingly, it is actually the fact that our students do not have a common language, media platforms, and cultural norms that sits at the root of the "bullying" we find most common.

About a year ago, one of our students, a young NYC-born, African American female student, was approached by six recently immigrated Dominican young men. The boys clumsily attempted conversation. She was minimally receptive—until one of them uttered the words "Negra Chula." As an African American woman, she was both shocked and furious at the obvious act of aggression—six Hispanic men, one African American woman, and the word "Negra." As the woman began to shout back in English, the men stared, then angrily shouted back at her in Spanish.

Restorative Justice is a strategy prominently featured in New York State's Dignity for all Students Act (DASA), and though it's not explicitly mandated, it's become ubiquitous. It attempts to avoid punitive measures (such as a suspension) in favor of de-escalating and resolving conflicts by engaging both parties in a protocol that includes close listening, validation, ownership, and ultimately, a mutually satisfactory resolution. Since it is evident in the case we describe above that a teacher's quick "what's wrong?" in the hallway is not going to resolve this situation, Restorative Justice presents a much more productive alternative. The facts here include that for the boys,

"Negra" was a benign descriptor meant as a compliment. In the United States, "Negra" sounds alarmingly close to one of the most incendiary racial slurs in American culture. By definition, this woman had indeed experienced an act of bullying. The nuance that there was no initial intent to harm is important, and makes this case of "bullying" unconventional, but becomes secondary when the young men become openly angry at the woman, insisting on their innocence.

Restorative Justice is a process that takes effort, consistency, time, and commitment. Using the steps described here, participants listen, take stock, and openly take ownership of their actions--all demanding steps to take for any of us at any age. Yet when we patiently walk through each step with commitment, it works. We build a little piece of a rock-solid school community that will not break; we create genuine trust and real understanding. In the case described here, all seven students were able to leave with a mind newly free of that conflict— they can go back to class, back to their lives, and on to graduation with the calm peace that comes with real resolution.

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HERE'S HOW RESTORATIVE JUSTICE WORKS AT OUR SCHOOL
Step One: "Unpacking"

After an incident, students sit separately with one guidance counselor to uncover both the timeline and the root of the issue. This step is critical; once a student is validated and clear about which specific parts of the incident and perhaps underlying factors they need "healed," they are ready to do the remaining work. In our case, this absolutely means the sessions are held in the native language of each student, can take minutes or hours, and require both trust and endurance.

Step Two: The Restorative Circle

Both parties, their counselors, and a facilitator meet together. A talking piece allows for one voice at a time, the counselors' presences provide an element of advocacy, and active listening skills mean all involved are heard. Again, this is not often a "neat," or linear process. Since anger is a secondary emotion, there are often older, unresolved feelings festering beneath, and those are the emotions--rather than the anger--that require resolution.

For instance, the young woman described above would rightfully not be satisfied with "We didn't mean it." While she could hear the young men had no intent to hurt her feelings, their refusal to hear that it was inappropriate for six men to approach one woman minding her own business with any nickname, let alone approach an African American woman with what she knew to be violent, vicious humiliation was an act of aggression.

This situation demands cultural competency—it's not enough to respect the words, terms, and languages of each other, but the context of their words as well. Once the young men understand and accept that though unintended, theirs was an act of humiliation, she can feel actual resolution. And once the young men hear that she understands they had no ill will, they can too. Most importantly, this issue is never *erased* or *forgotten.* It's quite the opposite—this issue is now RESOLVED.

BULLYING PREVENTION: POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS
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QUEENS COLLEGE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Bullying can have long-term, adverse effects on schoolchildren in any grade. Over the past several decades, school officials, educational researchers, therapists, and parents have paid close attention to the problem of bullying. This article focuses on self-regulatory strategies that teachers and students can use to prevent and address bullying in the school environment. These self-regulatory strategies include the use of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and function-based interventions.

The use of PBIS to directly address the misbehaviors of students across school settings has been well established. Some PBIS strategies include identifying pro-social alternatives to problematic behavior and directly acknowledging students who engage in pro-social behaviors by applying positive reinforcement.

The effectiveness of positive reinforcement in a PBIS framework has been demonstrated to improve many types of behavioral outcomes, including peer-to-peer social interactions. When PBIS is applied to school-wide systems, it can improve the school's overall culture and reduce the occurrences of negative behaviors such as bullying (Horner & Sugai, 2015).

One particularly important aspect of using PBIS to reduce bullying is accurately identifying and defining pro-social behaviors counter to bullying. An example of pro-social behavior is *being respectful to peers*. Once this behavior is carefully defined for specific school environments, self-regulatory skills are explicitly and directly taught to all students. Furthermore, when teachers witness students engaging in being respectful to peers, they should consistently acknowledge and reinforce those behaviors. By creating a school culture that focuses on pro-social behaviors, students are far less likely to engage in problematic behaviors such as bullying (Bradshaw, 2013).

Even in schools with the best implemented PBIS plans, some students may still engage in bullying for different reasons. One of the most influential factors contributing to on-going bullying is peer attention. The perpetrators of bullying often have their actions reinforced by the attention they receive from their peers. This attention enables their actions and provides a sense of satisfaction that, in turn, encourages more bullying episodes. Although it is crucial to address the bullying behaviors directly, it is also vital to address peers' reactions (often referred to as bystanders).

These bystanders play a critical role in bullying interactions and can be taught how to effectively intervene on behalf of the victim while simultaneously not attending to the bully's behaviors (Abbott et al., 2020). These self-regulatory responses are called function-based interventions because they focus on the function of the problem behavior (i.e., the attention that the perpetrator gets for engaging in the behavior).

To reduce bullying behavior occurrences that are maintained by peer attention, teachers should focus on ensuring that bystanders do not provide attention to the bully by directly teaching bystanders to recognize and self-regulate their reactions. Instead, teachers can instruct bystanders to focus their attention on supporting the victim of the bully. This effectively removes one of the reinforcing components from the interaction and leaves the bully without an audience or the attention they are looking for. In a study conducted by Ness and associates (2014), teaching these self-regulated responses effectively reduced bullying interactions among three groups of middle school students identified as "In need of bullying prevention interventions."

In summary, self-regulatory practices such as PBIS and function-based interventions can be effective in reducing bully interactions. Teachers, school professionals, and students should create positive and welcoming learning environments, free from bullying. These strategies take a proactive and positive approach to address the challenges of bullying.

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Lenwood Gibson

Killing them with Kindness: Manipulating the Bullying Social Dynamic

Laura Dallman

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Growing up, my father counseled that the way to deal with a bully was to "kill them with kindness." Taking his advice, I took a pre-emptive approach to bullying in my various K-3 classrooms. With an intuitive socio-ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), I created a classroom climate that encouraged self-regulatory behaviors such as cooperation and participation by recognizing the value of every student's unique abilities and emphasizing the importance of each individual in helping others grow and learn.

Using metaphors and storytelling, we discussed how we were stronger together than on our own, and established a daily routine of reading aloud anonymously submitted compliments, encouragements, and offers of friendship. Students enjoyed writing these kindnesses as much as they enjoyed receiving them, as evidenced by the stacks of tributes at the end of each day.

The goal was to make positivity our class norm and the basis for social capital (Evans & Smokowski, 2015). Because students with low self-esteem and weaker social identities are more likely to be bully-victims (Cassidy, 2009), an ethos that emphasized collaboration and kindness could bolster weaker identities.

Forsberg and Thornberg (2016) assert that some bullying is caused by students attempting to organize the class hierarchically. In an attempt to manipulate this dynamic, domination was defined by expressions of kindness, so subjugated children may not have felt victimized. It is worth noting that I also had these discussions with parents at Back-to-School Night to reinforce positivity in the broader social environment and to fortify each parent's positive contribution to our classroom community.

In addition to developing a positive ethos and encouraging relationships through self-regulatory processes, I endeavored to help students with low self-esteem and low social capital identify their unique talents and find a meaningful role in the class. This was not always easy.

Occasionally, such students were attracted to the dominant, subjugating student, seeking social capital through their association with the class leader (Evans & Smokowsi, 2015). To build independent sources of self-esteem, I asked about their outside interests and sincerely complimented their accomplishments. I also created opportunities for students with lower social capital to showcase their authentic abilities. The goal was to encourage a practical sense of competence in separate areas from that of the class leader.

Facilitating a supportive environment required continuous awareness of, and attention to, peer relationships. The situations described above needed attention before the dynamics became toxic. Farmer, Goforth, Hives, Aaron, Jackson, and Sgammato (2006) advise providing multiple ways for students to gain social capital.

I tried to build separate areas of competence, but I also tried to build friend groups. Seating charts were designed with more than academics in mind. Students might still have needed specific proximity to the teacher to enhance learning, but once those children were placed, the development of friendship and the integration of each student into the community became the primary goals (Gest & Rodkin, 2011). Seating was regularly changed to accommodate shifting peer relationships and growing or devolving dynamics.

Trying to manage the classroom social dynamic to pre-empt bullying required careful planning, nuanced intervention, and continuous monitoring and revision of self-regulatory practices. Despite the necessary effort, I recommend that teachers take the time at the start of the school year to build a sense of community, based on mutual support—and even kindness. This time spent building self-regulatory practices that helps establish a dynamic that frequently precludes bullying and makes for a nice place to work and teach.

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> "I worked to create a classroom climate that encouraged self-regulatory behaviors such as cooperation and participation by recognizing the value of every student's unique abilities and emphasizing the importance of each individual in helping others grow and learn. "
> Laura Dallman

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BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING IN CLASSROOMS AND SCHOOLS
JOHN RIVEAUX, *VISUAL ARTS TEACHER, NEW YORK CITY*

I have witnessed bullying my entire life. As a child, I remember encountering bullies at school. The bullies had power over me because I feared them. They terrorized me for as long as I could stand it. When I was cornered in my moments of desperation, and I could not run away, each of those bullies disappeared. I was forced to fight back. When I fought back, it did not seem to matter whether I physically won or lost because they ceased to be my tormentors when I decided to take a stand and no longer be an easy victim. In other words, I resisted. I learned that the way to challenge a bully is to shift the balance of power.

Balance of Power

As a child growing up in the five boroughs of New York City in the 1970s, bullying was a fact of life. It was part of the environment and came with the territory. Parents seldom settled disputes. The social order was determined and settled mostly outside our houses and apartments. Many, if not most, social challenges were shaped and settled on the streets, in schools, and on the playgrounds.

Although it seemed harmless at the time, the effects of violent disputes and bullying back then seem to be no less debilitating and harmful as today's fashion of settling disagreements in our communities. The song remains the same. There will always be victims and people will get hurt when the imbalance of power goes unchecked. That is the stain, the burden, and the damage sustained by the culture of bullying.

Bully Culture

Bully Culture is a term that I formulated as I began writing this article. Bullying happens everywhere: in schools, amongst children and adults, workplace environments, and finance and business cultures. Bullying pervades the media and is ubiquitous in politics.

There is no *we* in the term bully. The bully seeks to dominate and take over. It is winner takes all. The bully seeks to disempower their victim. Bully culture instills insecurity about one's power and must discredit others to appear strong and to be right at all costs.

Bully Culture sets out to damage and disable and is a zero-sum game. Examples can be found in politics (Legislative and Executive branches) when our culture demonizes and sidelines people who have unpopular opinions. Our bully culture has run amok. Our leaders and other adults contribute to bully culture, which sets a poor example for our children.

Our media and technology worsen

> "Teachers should self-regulate their behavior and be aware that their behavior and treatment towards students and faculty matter. In self-regulating behavior, teachers might be more aware of implicit biases and other unintended behaviors, which could cause unintentional harm."
> John Riveaux

and perpetuate bully culture, referred to as *cyberbullying*. When cyberbullying goes viral, the intended target is deluged with a tsunami of social disasters. Young peoples' lives are undermined, and their education is impacted. Bullying Culture does not end with school. It follows people into their adult spaces and threatens to destroy lives and careers.

The Dignity Act

Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) was signed into law by former New York Governor David Paterson on September 13, 2010, but it was not fully enacted statewide until July 1, 2012. The Act places responsibility on primary and secondary schools to report bullying, discrimination, and harassment if it should happen on school grounds or school events and holds students and school employees responsible.

Should bullying take place off school grounds or events but show causality or connections, which impact students' education and well-being, the Act shall be applied in such spaces as the internet, and is therefore considered cyberbullying.

DASA empowers schools as an arm of the Civil Rights movement. It documents offenses and acts to protect against harassment and discrimination. According to the New York State Center for School Safety (2019): "*Discrimination means discrimination against any student by a student or students and/or an employee or employees on school property or at a school function, including but not limited to discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.*"

DASA requires schools to create a climate of safety for our students, provide accountability, and educate our communities to promote healthy social behavior. Employees of the school and students have a mutual responsibility to protect schools' dignity and promote a message that we care to our communities. The bully challenges that assumption, but thanks to reforms like DASA, we can, perhaps, make changes in the bully's perception.

We cannot allow people to exploit others. Bullying and being bullied are not rites of passage as they may have been thought of earlier. Especially in a hyper-induced atmosphere where so much of our news and daily events seem dire (from climate change, pandemics, and hyper-partisanship), we need to build a culture that exalts virtue and devalues exploitation.

Teachers must remember that they are accountable factors in the DASA equation. If a teacher witnesses or is aware of bullying acts, they are responsible for reporting this to their administration and the DASA coordinator within their school. It should be documented (e.g., in a form and/or an email), and the administration is responsible for reporting incidents of bullying and violence to the state at the close of the school term, annually.

Teachers should self-regulate their behavior and be aware that their behavior and treatment towards students and faculty matter. In self-regulating behavior, teachers might be more aware of implicit biases and other unintended behaviors, which could cause unintentional harm. For example, a teacher might say something that was intended to be humorous but might hurt a student's feelings.

Whether we believe it or not, we as teachers have power and authority, and our words carry weight. We are responsible for what comes out of our mouths and how that might impact students, possibly throughout their academic life.

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DOES YOUR MINDSET OR BIAS CONTRIBUTE TO CYBERBULLYING CULTURE?
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It is Fall, which signals for many the beginning of a new school year. Educators and supporters of children and teens are preparing to teach in different ways as we begin this school year, as many ended it, virtually. Families in the midst of a pandemic are managing staying safe while taking care of day-to-day responsibilities such as working, parenting, and staying financially and mentally stable.

Our youth are dealing with increased bullying and cyberbullying in their academic, social, and extra-curricular worlds as time online increases. Cyberbullying statistics show that 66% of teens who have witnessed online cruelty have also witnessed others joining; 21% say they have also joined in the harassment.

Of children currently experiencing a mental health problem, over two-thirds (68%) say they experienced cyberbullying last year. In a January 2019 google survey of teachers (Google Survey), cyberbullying was the number one issue of six top online classroom issues. Teachers recognize cyberbullying as a concern, but do they consider their possible role in contributing to a bullying culture due to operating in a *deficit mindset* or bias?

"Please put your cameras and mics on?" Students oblige us, begrudgingly, nervously, happily, or curiously. Some cannot wait to see their classmates, even though it is through an electronic device. For those who are in stable social-emotional and academic spaces, or whose families have advantage or privilege, it is a simple click of a button. Others cannot click that same button as easily. The request reverberates against their emotions leading to anxiety, fear, or some other negative response.

We have begun to see more instances of cyberbullying. In a virtual classroom environment, we are exposed to the vast differences in economic backgrounds and familial structures among students' living environments. Some are waking up and applying makeup or stressing about camera visible dress, in response to perceived pressures. Engagement is measured by whether a camera or microphone is on during instruction or interactions with others. Backgrounds, noises, and actions of family members during their daily lives are not considered.

In some cases, it is just not a psychologically safe space. Screenshots and videos are posted online for the world of cyberbullies to spew insults or other harsh messages behind their screens. Schools are navigating how to support families as these incidences occur. How do we, as educators, indirectly promote bullying culture or operate in a deficit mindset that negatively impacts students?

Operating in a deficit mindset focuses on problems rather than potential. The moments when we say a student refuses to engage because they are not responsive or visible during class, instead of asking them, "What could be your barriers?" "How can I support you better?" Alternatively, asking ourselves, "Does bias play a role in my mindset and responses?" Or "What partnerships can I build with colleagues and students' parents to support my students?" In not asking these questions, we can miss an opportunity to presume positive intent and create healthier interactions between students to prevent cyberbullying incidences. It is how we essentially create a safe space for them.

A cyberbullying culture must be combatted with self-regulated learning, a level of intentionality, empathy, respect, and seriousness. Furthermore, yes, educators must self-reflect and evaluate their behaviors as potential contributions or perpetuations of a bullying culture, no matter how big or small the request or actions are. We should consider how we can shift from operating in bias or a deficit mindset and contributing to potential victimization, to taking self-regulated learning specific action to shift towards creating anti-bullying cultures that create safer online spaces and potentially reduce cyberbullying incidences.

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> "A cyberbullying culture must be combatted with self-regulated learning, a level of intentionality, empathy, respect, and seriousness. Furthermore, yes, educators must self-reflect and evaluate their behaviors as potential contributions or perpetuations of a bullying culture, no matter how big or small the request or actions are."
> Katrina Williams White-Sneed

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> "Delay ability predicted less physical and verbal aggression, less bullying behavior and higher self-worth and self-esteem. These findings underline the importance of uncovering strategies that children can use to self-regulate and overcome immediate temptations. These strategies may ultimately help them later in life to overcome increasingly demanding contexts that require exertion of 'willpower.'"

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SMALL GROUP COUNSELING AS AN INTERVENTION TO COMBAT BULLYING
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RONALD REAGAN MIDDLE SCHOOL, HAYMARKET, VIRGINIA

When the word *bullying* is mentioned it makes us cringe. Especially for a school counselor, like myself, working in a public middle school. I often find the term misused to describe a single instance of mistreatment as opposed to mistreatment that repeats.

The emotions around an alleged bullying incident are always raw. One student feels victimized and the other misunderstood. I have found that both sides need attention and education to address their social and emotional deficits.

I decided to try small group counseling as an intervention for victims of bullying. I ended up admitting bullies into the group as well. The bullies were also victims in different situations. The small group referrals were gathered from a student needs assessment administered at the beginning of the school year. One of the questions asked if the student needed help dealing with bullying. All group members were screened before starting the group. I ran the group at two different middle schools, two years in a row.

The sessions were structured to teach a skill at the beginning followed by an open share time. The groups met 12 times. The group taught resiliency, personal strengths, perspective-taking, self-regulation, self-talk, coping skills, analyzing the bully, and spreading kindness in their school community. The most powerful outcome from these small groups was the camaraderie built between group members.

They all had new friends that understood them and would be their ally;

Jessica Elliot has been a School Counselor for 15 years. She currently works for Prince William County public schools at Ronald Reagan Middle School in Haymarket, VA. She also serves on the board of an anti-bullying non-profit called Payton's Project.

they finally felt they belonged in a group of their peers. These new relationships gave the group members hope. Neither group wanted to stop meeting. The exit survey showed 100% increase in skills to deal with bullying behaviors and increased self-value.

The small group counseling approach allowed me to connect students who were hurting with other students also struggling. I used each member's strengths to build social skills with other group members. For example, one student was really witty and came up with effective comebacks against hurtful comments. Another student enjoyed sharing her "kill them with kindness," techniques. They all took steps towards healing, which led to a more socially and emotionally evolved version of themselves.

The more common approach to bullying behavior in the school setting is one-on-one counseling. This approach works but pales in comparison to the ability to reconnect the victim with like-minded peers in a group setting. The feelings of isolation disappear after a few weeks in a group. The small group format I use is called Payton's Peers. It is free for any mental health professional to use: http://www.paytonsproject.org.

I have given a lot of thought to the root of bullying. Students are looking for validation from the outside world because they do not feel validated from a variety of contexts such as social, emotional, and familial. When they feel empty or lacking inside, the outside world is where they seek fulfillment. Students lash out when they are hurting. Students are easily hurt by these bullying behaviors when they hurt inside.

Doing the self-work or valuing one's self is the key to helping a student transcend a negative situation and achieve long-term social/emotional growth. When a student loves themselves, they do not need validation from the outside world and the words or actions of a bully lose their impact. My goal is to get students to a point where they do not value a stranger or bully's opinion anymore; validation is derived from within.

> "The sessions were structured to teach a skill at the beginning followed by an open share time. The groups met 12 times. The group taught resiliency, personal strengths, perspective-taking, self-regulation, self-talk, coping skills, analyzing the bully, and spreading kindness in their school community. The most powerful outcome from these small groups was the camaraderie built between group members."
>
> **Jessica Elliot**

> "Longitudinally, seconds of delay at age 4 have been linked to positive outcomes 30 years later, including less bullying and aggression in individuals who are particularly prone to externalizing behavior (Ayduk et al., 2000). Consistent with these findings, male parolees who showed preference for an immediately available monetary reward over a larger amount only available after a variable longer delay behaved more aggressively in a second task (Cherek, Moeller, Dougherty, & Rhoades, 1997). Likewise, children with externalizing disorders show a preference for response options that bring about immediate gratification in laboratory-based tasks... Collectively these findings suggest that inability to delay gratification may be associated with higher risk for externalizing behaviors because such behaviors reflect difficulties with using strategic attention deployment to regulate arousal, and in substituting automatic response patterns with more controlled, reflective behaviors that serve long-term goals."

Ayduk, O., Rodriguez, M. L., Mischel, W., Shoda, Y., & Wright, J. (2007). Verbal intelligence and self-regulatory competencies: Joint predictors of boys' aggression. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *41*(2), 374-388. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2006.04.008

PREVENTATIVE TECHNIQUES TO CURB BULLYING
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GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

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Abraham Flanigan, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Educational Psychology at Georgia Southern University. His research focuses on the interplay among mobile technology, self-regulated learning, and academic motivation.

"Existing research and our own experiences in the classroom indicate that it is possible to curb bullying using self-regulation of learning strategies. In the present essay, we have explained how social-emotional skills training and anti-bullying content can be embedded within the existing curriculum to cultivate a more empathetic environment within the school."

EMILY RAY & ABRAHAM E. FLANIGAN

Bullying—face-to-face or online—is a common problem faced by students across all K-12 education levels. Although schools have policies to guide teachers and administrators when addressing bullying instances, these reactive policies have proven ineffective at curbing the problem (Bickmore, 2011). Instead, preventative measures focused on self-regulation of emotions should be applied to decrease the number of incidents altogether. This essay discusses two such preventative measures: the teaching of social-emotional skills and embedding anti-bullying programming into content instruction.

First, while it is probably impossible to eradicate bullying in schools altogether, implementing social and emotional skills training has been shown to lead to a decrease in bullying (Mukasheva et al., 2020). A recent study found that teaching students various social-emotional skills (such as decision-making, conflict-free and effective communication, and the ability to empathize) decreased bullying frequency (Mukasheva et al., 2020).

By focusing on promoting a warm, inviting environment—and not relying entirely on punitive actions—schools can promote the kind of empathetic atmosphere needed to curb the occurrence of bullying. Speaking from personal experience, proactively teaching social-emotional skills would be more effective than retroactively punishing the bully because most bullying incidents are not witnessed by a teacher or reported to anyone.

Teaching social-emotional skills would help decrease the total number of incidents, thus decreasing those unnoticed incidents. In essence, the kinds of programs advocated by Mukasheva and associates (2020) can mitigate the emotional toll experienced by bullying victims by reducing its occurrence.

Second, it is essential to consider how bullying prevention programs are introduced to students. It is far more effective to embed anti-bullying programs directly into content instruction than hold a one-off seminar with students (Flores et al., 2020).

For instance, the effectiveness of embedded strategy instruction was recently witnessed during field placement in a Kindergarten classroom. The classroom teacher read a book whose main character was being bullied. The teacher then used the book's characters to demonstrate how they should and should not behave towards each other for her students.

The students were engaged and participated in the discussion by suggesting healthier, alternative ways the bullies could have expressed themselves.

The teacher then encouraged the students to use these suggestions to guide how they behaved towards each other in the future. While viewing this exchange between the teacher and her students, it was clear that these embedded techniques can be easily included within content instruction.

In summary, existing research and our own experiences in the classroom indicate that it is possible to curb bullying using self-regulation of learning strategies. In the present essay, we have explained how social-emotional skills training and anti-bullying content can be embedded within the existing curriculum to cultivate a more empathetic environment within the school.

By following these recommendations and not relying on punitive measures that often exacerbate the problem, teachers can be positive agents of change and curb the amount of bullying that their students experience.

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Mukasheva, A. B., Kassen, G. A., Galiyeva, B. Kh., Tulekova, G. M., & Onalbekov, Y. S. (2020). The formation of anti-bullying skills of adolescents: Approbation results of the program for prevention violence and cruelty in School Environment. *Talent Development & Excellence, 12*(1), 781–798. https://www.iratde.com/index.php/jtde/article/view/650

Flores Buils, R., Caballer Miedes, A., & Romero Oliver, M. (2020). Effect of a cyberbullying prevention program integrated in the primary education curriculum. *Revista de Psicodidáctica (English ed.), 25*(1), 23-29. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psicoe.2019.08.004

"We examined college instructors' perceptions of student use of mobile technology for off-task purposes during class. Previous research demonstrated that digital distraction hinders student learning, yet little is known about instructor views and reactions to this behavior. Phenomenological interviews with 11 college instructors revealed that student digital distraction has a profound influence on their pedagogical decision-making, relationships with students, and professional satisfaction. These instructors regularly encounter student digital distraction during class and have well-defined views on the deleterious influence digital distraction has on the integrity of the classroom learning environment. However, instructors were divided in their perceived responsibility to curb this behavior. Most rely on proactive prevention strategies rather than reactive strategies out of concern for negatively impacting student-instructor rapport. Moreover, these instructors experience frustration stemming from student digital distraction. Findings indicate that student digital distraction influences pedagogical decision-making and threatens the quality of student-instructor rapport."

Flanigan, A. E., & Babchuk, W. A. (2020). Digital distraction in the classroom: Exploring instructor perceptions and reactions, *Teaching in Higher Education*, https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2020.1724937

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PARENTAL MEDIATION IN THE MITIGATION OF CYBERBULLYING

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"The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between bullying, victimization and a number of social-emotional variables such as trait emotional intelligence, empathy and self-efficacy in 206 elementary school 6th graders in Greece. Results indicated that boys reported significantly more direct and indirect bullying behaviors than girls, and higher victimization. Bullying was negatively correlated with overall self-efficacy and its academic component, trait emotional intelligence, empathy and its cognitive component, while victimization was negatively correlated with overall self-efficacy and its three dimensions, trait emotional intelligence, affective and cognitive empathy. Gender, trait emotional intelligence, and cognitive empathy significantly predicted bullying, whereas victimization was predicted by gender, trait emotional intelligence and affective empathy."

Kokkinos, C.M., Kipritsi, E. (2012). The relationship between bullying, victimization, trait emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and empathy among preadolescents. *Social Psychology of Education,* 15, 41–58. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-011-9168-9

With many school districts beginning the new school year with online instruction and children spending more time at home, parents must help children and teens self-regulate interactions while participating online and through social media.

Increased internet connectivity has advantages, including providing exposure to new thoughts, ideas, sources of information, current events, and connection when in-person communication is impossible. However, social media use carries with it several risks for children and teens. Cyberbullying is one of these risks.

Cyberbullying, which includes mean or hurtful comments online, internet rumors, threats sent through texts or cell phones, impersonating others online, and posting disparaging photos to a website or social media site, is increasingly common.

According to the Cyberbullying Research Center (Steven, 2020), 36.5% of 12-17 year-olds reported being a target of cyberbullying at least once in their lifetime, and 15% reported cyberbullying others. Sixty percent of 12-17 year-olds reported witnessing cyberbullying. Despite the prevalence of cyberbullying, most teens acknowledge that they would not report cyberbullying or attempt to intervene.

How can parents guide children and teens to self-regulate towards positive online interactions? This is a question groups of students have researched for policy brief assignments over the years in my child development course. Vygotsky's (1986) theory provides some direction. According to Vygotsky (1986), interactions with parents are crucial scaffolds through which children develop media literacy and through which they can interpret online interactions.

Parental guidance, known as parental mediation, is a critical factor in developing healthy online habits. Parental mediation is any strategy parents use to control, supervise, or interpret media content for children (Nikken & Schols, 2015). Parental mediation can include posing restrictions on time or content of social media use, discussing content, supervising media use, monitoring online activities afterward, or using technical restrictions like parental controls to regulate inappropriate content.

When children and teens are engaged in media use, parents should apply the form of mediation that is developmentally appropriate. For younger children, technical restrictions like limiting access to certain sites and parental controls can help children develop healthy internet habits.

Parents should also engage in co-viewing or co-using online content with young children and continuing the practice as children grow. At all ages, parents should guide children by having open discussions about the differences in appropriate and inappropriate online behavior. Children should be taught to treat others with respect in online environments and avoid communication that can compromise their safety.

Parental mediation that begins early and continues over the course of the elementary and secondary school years can pay dividends towards children's understanding of online citizenship. Open discussion born out of co-viewing, co-use or monitoring increases the likelihood that youth will report cyberbullying to a parent or caregiver or ask for help if they fall into difficulty while online.

Parents can also discuss with older children and teens examples of cyberbullying they have experienced or witnessed personally, or examples from the news. In addition, parents can require that their children and teens set up online accounts from their parents' email addresses, which gives parents the option to monitor online activities afterward. This strategy is particularly useful for older children and young teens.

The complexities of cyberbullying and the speed at which technology becomes more accessible to younger children means parents must be vigilant in helping children, and teens, learn to self-regulate towards responsible online behavior. Parental mediation is an essential strategy in the mitigation of cyberbullying.

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BULLYING AND THE POTENTIAL EFFECT ON SELF-EFFICACY
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Bullying for some years was viewed as a part of those growing pains that built thick skin and helped develop character. Throughout development, a bully, at times, would be pictured as an obstacle or the final boss to overcome. However, bullying (and its newest incarnation of cyberbullying) are now viewed in a light that illuminates the damages it can do to a young person's psyche.

Studies have shown the correlation between bullying and a student's self-efficacy (Andreou, 2004). As educators, it is one of our many classroom duties to identify bullying, put an end to it, and use the experience as a teachable moment for both parties.
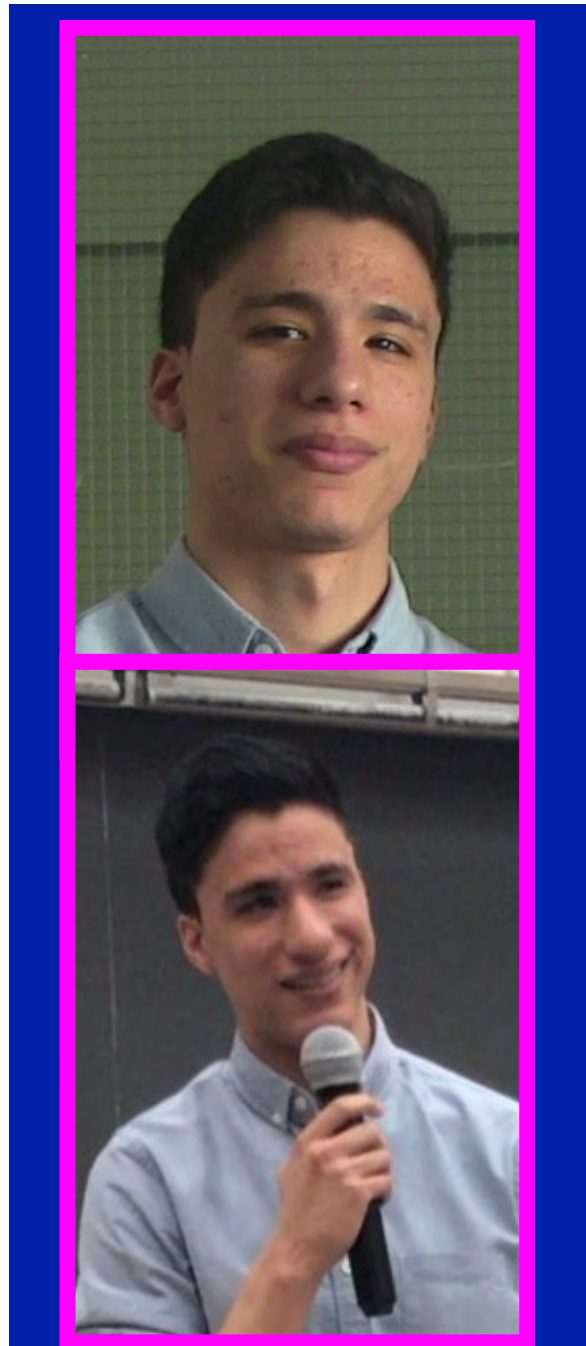
In my three years of teaching, I have been no stranger to seeing bullying in classrooms, hallways, or even extracurricular clubs. My responses to bullying in these situations have differed because no scenario is alike, and, in my opinion, there is no universal intervention. I teach bilingual history to high school students, primarily between the ninth and tenth grades.

Maturity levels in the class fluctuate on any given day, and comedy can be found in the simplest of places. When a student wants to share a response, it can be an anxiety-inducing moment in the classroom, and it can take courage for some to share what is on their mind. In my classroom, I accept answers in the student's native language, but I also encourage and reward students for taking a chance and answering in English.

Occasionally, a student will answer in English, and a classmate will make a joke (e.g., about the accent or incorrect usage of a word). I have learned to quickly make these scenarios a teachable moment. First, I acknowledge the student who answered in English with positive feedback, and then I take a moment to give a general statement to the class about our learning environment and that it encourages chances and allows for mistakes to be made.

Last, I have a short conversation with the student who joked at the other student's expense in which they are held accountable for their actions and must apologize to the other student. The conversation can vary depending on how the student responds, but a teacher's tone should never be scolding.

The idea behind this is to create an environment that is positive for learning, where mistakes are part of growth and one in which everyone is accountable for their actions. Again, this will not be the proper intervention for every case in the classroom; however, it is a good foundation for intervening with bullying behaviors in the classroom.

Bullying, if unchecked, can harm a classroom's chemistry and, most importantly, could potentially lower the victim's self-efficacy, which might cause them to struggle in class and school. Teachers must continue to be vigilant for signs of bullying and, even more so, with cyberbullying. It is our role as teachers to provide a positive environment for all our scholars.

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Meldryck Parraga, a Queens College graduate in Social Studies and Special Education comes from a family of immigrant parents in Queens, New York City. He was a recipient of the Peter Greeman Scholarship and currently teaches at Uniondale High School, New York.

"Studies have shown the correlation between bullying and a student's self-efficacy (Andreou, 2004). As educators, it is one of our many classroom duties to identify bullying, put an end to it, and use the experience as a teachable moment for both parties." Meldryck Parraga

"For reasons given earlier, moral conduct is motivated and regulated mainly by the ongoing exercise of self-reactive influence. The major self-regulatory mechanism, which is developed and mobilized in concert with situational factors, operates through three major subfunctions. These include self-monitoring of conduct; judgment of conduct in relation to personal standards and environmental circumstances; and affective self-reaction. To exercise self-influence, people have to monitor their behavior and the situational circumstances in which they find themselves enmeshed. The process of self-monitoring is not simply a mechanical audit of one's performances and social instigators. Pre-existing conceptions and affective states can bias how one's actions and the instigators for it are perceived and cognitively processed. Self-monitoring is the first step toward exercising influence over one's conduct but, in itself, such information provides little basis for self-directed reactions. Actions give use to self-reactions through a judgmental function in which conduct is evaluated against moral standards and environmental circumstances."

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ADDRESSING BULLYING BEHAVIORS IN THE MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASSROOM
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"The aim of the present study was to investigate how basic moral sensitivity in bullying, moral disengagement in bullying and defender self-efficacy were related to different bystander behaviors in bullying. Therefore, we examined pathways that linked students' basic moral sensitivity, moral disengagement, and defender self-efficacy to different bystander behaviors in bullying situations. Three hundred and forty-seven teenagers completed a bullying survey. Findings indicated that compared with boys, girls expressed higher basic moral sensitivity in bullying, lower defender self-efficacy and moral disengagement in bullying. Results from the SEM showed that basic moral sensitivity in bullying was negatively related to pro-bully behavior and positively related to outsider and defender behavior, mediated by moral disengagement in bullying, which in turn was positively related to pro-bully behavior and negatively related to outsider and defender behavior. What differed in the relations between outsider and defender behaviors was the degree of defender self-efficacy."

Thornberg, R., & Jungert, T. (2013). Bystander behavior in bullying situations: Basic moral sensitivity, moral disengagement and defender self-efficacy. *Journal of Adolescence, 36*(3), 475-483. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2013.02.003

While bullying is a common and perennial feature of the middle school experience, the teacher plays a key role in its appearance or eradication from the classroom. At the school where I teach, the prevalent types of bullying are relational aggression and cyberbullying, while physical and sexual bullying incidents remain relatively less common.

Students receive character education beginning in Kindergarten and are routinely exposed to bullying prevention programs such as Olweus and PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports). By the time students reach my 8th-grade classroom, they can recite lines from the training, know exactly what to say in response to the hypothetical scenarios presented, and have a solid grounding in the definition and signs of bullying. Nevertheless, it still occurs.

From the first day of school, I work to establish a culture of trust, respect, and equality in my classroom. A few strategies that I employ to accomplish this include: having students generate the list of classroom ground rules, honestly sharing personal experiences from my past, and genuinely listening to students when they share their thoughts, concerns, and questions.

I teach students the importance of working cooperatively and assign group work regularly, incorporating explicit instruction on communication and conflict resolution strategies. I set clear expectations.

Nevertheless, students invariably push the boundaries and test me during the first weeks of school. I address this by privately assuring the student that the behavior will not be tolerated, usually by whispering in their ear a few minutes after the infraction occurs. The effort I put into creating a caring and safe learning environment pays off; I have never witnessed an overt incidence of bullying in my classroom in 15 years of teaching.

What I do see in my classroom are micro-aggressions and possible mini-snapshots of larger bullying events. The most common behaviors that I witness indicate relational aggression, and I address them every time they occur. One example of micro-aggressive behavior happens when I call on one student to answer or speak in class, and another student raises his or her hand, shouts out the answer, or whispers the answer to the student I called upon.

Another common example is talking about a student who is not present (gossiping). Both behaviors are rooted in the students' belief that they are better, more critical, and/or smarter than others.

My response is to concisely identify the behavior and express my concern related to the other students involved. I always do this privately after the end of class. My goal is to help the student self-regulate their behavior by pointing out the connection between the current incident and the anti-bullying programming that the student has participated in for years. I utilize the verbiage from the anti-bullying program as much as possible in order to help the student self-regulate (e.g., self-realize and self-analyze) in that context.

The student often does not realize that their behavior is communicating a belief of academic or social inferiority to the other student. By creating an explicit connection to the pre-programmed anti-bullying rhetoric that the student is familiar with, I hope to increase the student's motivation and ability to self-regulate and practice pro-social behavior.

Bullying and bullying behaviors should never be accepted or ignored. Ultimately, as teachers and caretakers, our primary focus should be to create a safe learning environment, and we can do so by teaching students how to self-regulate their behavior. Then we must maintain it while populating it with opportunities for students to learn, practice, and grow.

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Jennifer Heilen

BULLYING AND EXCLUSION:
TIPS TO MAXIMIZE INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
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With the Covid-19 pandemic, classroom instruction is no longer confined to a school building, classroom or outdoor playground. Learning virtually using remote learning platforms has brought both teacher and student successes and challenges. Remote learning appears to be especially difficult for those with learning differences or challenges, diagnosed disabilities, and/or those who require accommodations or specialized instruction that require individualized education programs (IEPs). Remote learning not only leaves these students vulnerable to missing instruction (approximately 24% of parents of students with IEPs reported that their child was not receiving differentiated instruction and/or accommodations remotely) but also vulnerable to cyberbullying by classmates via remote learning platforms (EdTrust, 2020).

Approximately 64% of students who are deaf and hard of hearing are educated in the general classroom for a significant part of the school day (US Department of Education, 2018). Students who are deaf are not all the same. Some use sign language, some use speech, some talk and sign, and some have additional disabilities. However, all students who are deaf and participating in online learning will benefit from a safe environment that supports access and inclusion. Research shows that teenagers who are deaf report being bullied 2-3 times more than their general education classmates (50% vs. 28%). Exclusion as a form of bullying was most often reported (26.3% vs. 4.7%) by students who are deaf (Warner-Czyz, 2018).

Remote learning sets up the student who is deaf for further exclusion and possibly more bullying. What worked for in-person learning may not work for online learning. Educators must take steps to maximize inclusion for students who are deaf during remote learning to minimize exclusion. By maximizing communication access and assuring equitable access to all parts of the virtual school day, educators can begin to combat cyberbullying before it starts.

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS

SET UP CLEAR COMMUNICATION POLICY
How will students reply to questions? Will they raise their hand? Will you unmute them or use the Zoom spotlight? Utilize Zoom features when possible. Also, remember for some platforms, a limited number of faces can be seen at once. How will a student who is deaf know who is talking if students are on multiple screens?

COMMUNICATION SUPPORTS
If your student has an interpreter or speech-to-text reporter, make sure that you have back up plans for days that technology does not work or when supports may not be present (e.g., out sick). Be proactive.

REDUCE BACKGROUND NOISE
Mute the mic of students who are not speaking or participating. Check your sound environment. Construction outside, dishwasher running or clothes drying add to unnecessary sounds for the child to discriminate. Remember, hearing is not the same as understanding what is said.

CLOSED CAPTION ON VIDEOS
Ensure that all of the videos, clips, or websites you use during remote learning have captions for access. This is especially important when you expect group work.

Get creative with participation
Some students who are deaf may express themselves through an interpreter in sign language while others may prefer to write in a Zoom chat box to their classmates. Use a variety of discussion formats to encourage participation.

REMEMBER- ZOOM FATIGUE IS REAL
Tracking visual information (e.g., maps, math formulas, movies, infographics) while trying to lip-read, or watch an interpreter or read speech-to-text will lead to missed information. Provide notes or recordings of lectures so that students who are deaf can review materials and feel more prepared to participate.

RETEACH YOUR STUDENTS ABOUT THEIR CLASSMATE WHO IS DEAF
What students learned for inclusion during in-person instruction may not work for virtual classrooms (e.g., tap on a shoulder, speak in front of the person who is deaf). Problem-solve these challenges before they become a target of exclusion.

ASSURE SOCIAL OR PLAY OPPORTUNITIES
Children learn best through play. With virtual learning, play opportunities are minimized. Work to ensure your students who are deaf can participate in group work, tutoring, and social opportunities with their classmates.

WORK WITH OTHER SUPPORT SERVICE PROVIDERS
Students who are deaf may also be working with a Speech-Language Pathologist, Audiologist, and/or itinerant teacher for the deaf. Work with these professionals to problem solve and find the best strategies for inclusion in your virtual classroom.

Upon request, references are available from the author.