

Investigate aspects of harassment



Steps are being taken at our school to minimize the occurrence of bullying. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) is part of an \$8 million Safe Schools/Healthy Students Grant Initiative implemented by the Montebello Unified School District to make schools safer and improve the learning atmosphere. On March 16, all male freshmen will attend a bullying-prevention presentation under Program Site Coordinator Vince Negrete.

Modeled by VANESSA CARILLO

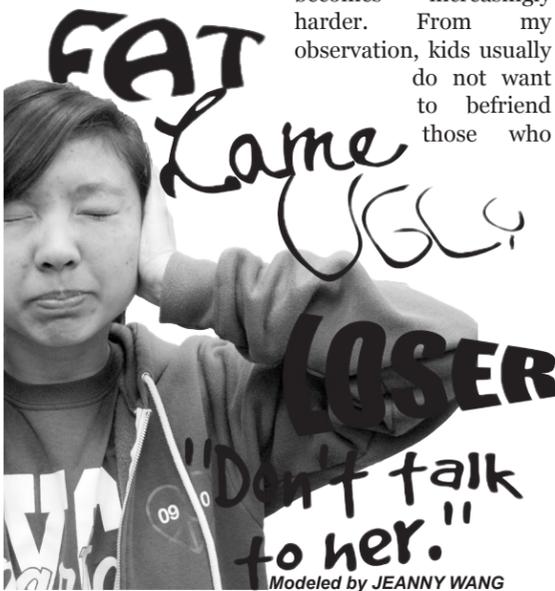
Bullying exists beyond physicality

BY ANNIE NISHIDA
MANAGING EDITOR

I always thought that bullies punched smaller kids, stole lunch money and stuffed people into lockers, but now I see that bullying does not necessarily have to be physical; it can be psychological as well.

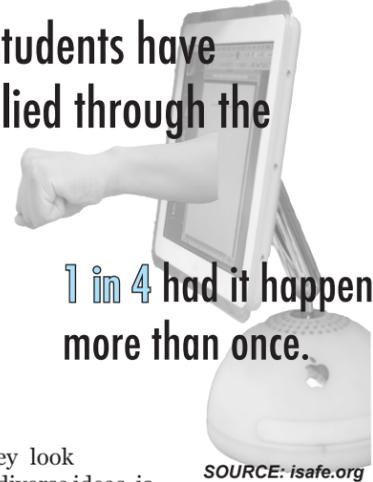
Throughout my time in school I was exposed to bullying without ever realizing it. Sure, I saw the occasional bigger kid picking on the smaller ones, but surprisingly, the girls, who never laid a hand on other people, were the ones responsible for most of the harm. Spreading false rumors, making mean comments about others and the ever-popular "silent treatment" were some of the methods of choice. True, these types of bullying do not give others black eyes, but that does not mean that they are any less harmful to a teenager trying desperately to "fit in."

When we first start school, we all want to fit in. However, when people draw attention to a characteristic that makes one different, making friends becomes increasingly harder. From my observation, kids usually do not want to befriend those who



Modeled by JEANNY WANG

42% of students have been bullied through the internet.



SOURCE: isafe.org

are picked on in fear of being made fun of too. Shunning others for whatever reason, whether it is because they look different or have diverse ideas, is indeed a form of psychological bullying, although many may not be aware of it.

Growing up, I always used to hear comments that people were making about their peers. "She's ugly. He's fat. I don't want them to hang out with us," are the common remarks I overheard as early as elementary school. Not only are these comments mean and hurtful, they also promote discrimination at a young age, which can carry over to actions later in life.

I do not think that children or teens realize that this is a form of bullying, but they should know that it is. Perhaps if they knew that they were actually bullying others, they would change the way they treat others. Adults should also be aware of this and should advocate its prevention, just as much as physical maltreatment. In truth, I think that the words hurt just as much as bodily pain. The long-term effects of psychological harassment may even be worse than those of physical bullying.

After learning about the harmful effects of psychological bullying, such as high levels of stress and lower self-esteem, it is hard for me to truly believe the old saying "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me."

Q&A with



Vince Negrete
OBPP Site Coordinator

What are some aspects of psychological and social bullying?

Psychological bullying is when a person uses any physical behavior to "mess with" another person's feelings of worth and positive self-esteem. Name calling, "put-downs" and dirty tricks (like stealing someone's books) create a sense of uncertainty and lack of control that makes the person being bullied feel miserable.

Social bullying involves getting other people to ignore or outcast a friend. Often, the person being targeted does not even know what they did to cause this. The Internet is sometimes used to "gang up" on a person and post mean comments, making the victim feel down and low.

What are the effects of bullying?

All types of bullying result in the same negative feelings for the person being bullied. Why is this happening to me? What did I do wrong to deserve this? What is wrong with me that caused people to treat me this way? The person will feel down, depressed, lonely, confused and anxious.

Why would people choose to act this way?

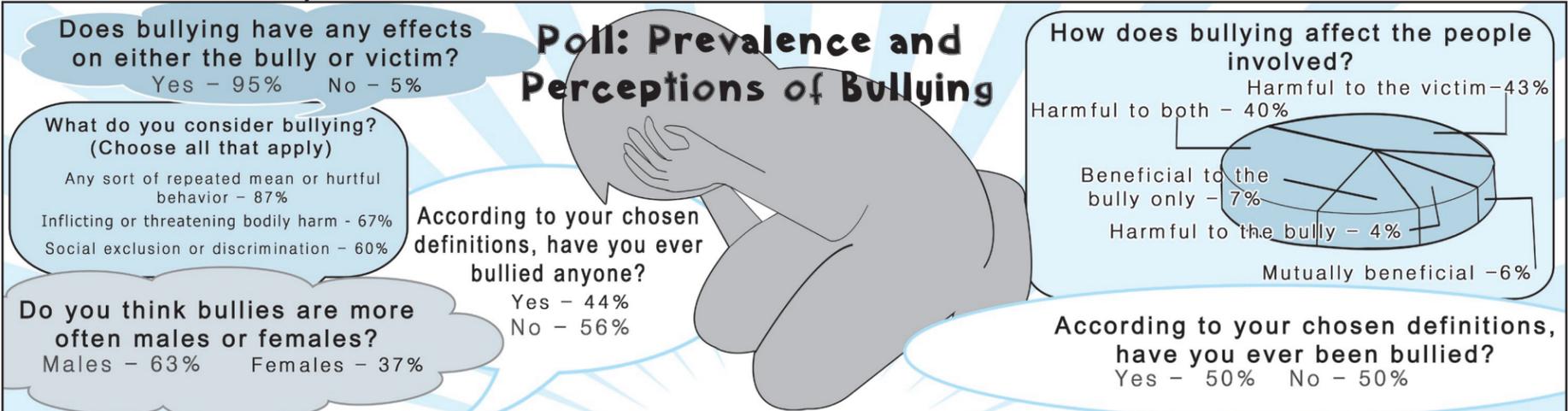
Two things stood out for me. One is that it can be the "norm," meaning it is an accepted pattern of behavior. Seniors, for example, may bully underclassmen, because they think they should exert dominance. On the other hand, the person who is doing the bullying may think negatively about themselves, and taking advantage of others allows themselves to feel superior to others. It does not solve anything, but I guess it gives a person a momentary sense of power.

How does a victim get out of this situation?

There are two levels people should think about; the first is school-wide. With education, students can start to reject bullying as the "norm." It is wrong to bully someone, as well as going against district policy and school rules. The consequences may be suspension or expulsion. The second level is the individual rejecting the idea to bully someone. Tell friends not to bully. Talk about why this is happening. The bullied individual should tell an adult, and we should work together to replace bullying with respectful, encouraging behavior. Students should feel that the adults on campus are willing to intervene and prevent this type of behavior. Everyone should understand that bullying is morally wrong; the negativity affects the learning atmosphere here at school, and it will not be tolerated.

What are the differences between female and male bullies?

The traditional answer is that males use or threaten physical violence and females use negative comments and social exclusion. Lately though, we are finding females using physical violence as well, although not nearly so to the degree of males. Cyber or internet bullying is also new and on the rise, involving both men and women.



Not all figures may add up to 100% due to incorrectly completed polls
SOURCE: 306 students in grades 9-12 were polled March 8

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