Preventing and Addressing Bullying and Intolerance

A guide for law enforcement

By Dr. Becki Cohn-Vargas

Partners in stopping hate

NOT IN OUR SCHOOL
STOP HATE. TOGETHER.

COPS
Community Oriented Policing Services
U.S. Department of Justice

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Contents

Acknowledgments . . . . . **ii**
Introduction **1**
How this guide will help you help others 1
Background **2**
The role of community oriented policing and school resource officers in creating safe and bully-free schools 2
Communities work best for youth when everyone works together 2
Bullying and victimization: National issues that require local solutions 2
Not In Our School and the movement to end bullying 3
Defining and Understanding Bullying and Intolerance **5**
The accepted bullying definitions: Something old and something new. 5
Research studies and statistics: More than just numbers on a page 6
Bullying has been linked to criminal behavior 7
Intolerance and bias 7
Where do people learn to be intolerant? How does intolerance foster bullying incidents?. 7
It's never too early to teach and to learn 8
Understanding All the Roles Kids Play in Bullying. **9**
When a child is being bullied: Changes to look out for 9
Understanding why a child bullies another child 10
Addressing a Bullying Incident **11**
Responding to a child who has been bullied: Listening with empathy 11
Followup: The key to successful intervention 12
Turn bullying bystanders into anti-bullying upstanders. 12
SROs can help students learn: They need your help to find their own courage 12
Shifting from the punitive model of discipline: You can help transform students who bully 13
Restorative practices help students who bully transform their behavior 13
No silver bullet: Many effective strategies to address bullying 15
Successful strategies: Create identity safe and empathetic school climates 15
Promising Practices for Law Enforcement Working with Schools to Address Bullying **17**
Evidence-based strategies and procedures to prevent and respond to bullying 17
Assuring a Positive Role for Law Enforcement in Eliminating Bullying **21**
Taking Action for Change **23**
Not In Our School bullying prevention campaigns 23
Steps to starting a Not In Our School campaign 24
Roles and Responsibilities of Law Enforcement 26
An Invitation to Partner With the NIOT Network 27
Appendix A. Sample Survey Questions. **29**
Appendix B. Examples of Not in Our School Activities **30**
Bibliography **31**
About the COPS Office **34**

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Introduction

Bullying consists of a wide range of actions from persistent teasing and unwanted physical or verbal comments—which are not in themselves considered to be criminal acts—to serious criminal behaviors such as extortion, threats, vandalism, robbery, assault, and battery. Local law enforcement officers and school resource officers (SRO) can be of great assistance to school personnel in helping to reduce or eliminate incidences of bullying by becoming involved in positive school-sponsored bullying prevention programs. Officers can play a leadership role through community policing programs that educate and help young people avoid arrest and prevent contact with the juvenile justice system.

This guide is intended to be a primary resource for law enforcement officers who play a large role in helping educate children and adults about the problems resulting from bullying and ways to prevent and intervene in bullying incidents. Officers can also help targets of bullying break a cycle by being a trusted and safe adult to whom children can turn. They can help bystanders learn to speak up to stop bullying, and they can help children who bully transform their behavior and break out of patterns of behavior that lead to further harm.

How this guide will help you help others

The purpose of this guide is to inform and to share some of the powerful and proven ways local SROs and other law enforcement officials can address and respond to bullying. SROs should help ensure campus safety. Although they are not on-site to carry out disciplinary functions that fall under the purview of school personnel, SROs can play an important role as law enforcers, educators, and informal counselors.[1, 2]

This guide begins with some background including definitions of bullying and intolerance. Next, the guide presents concrete ways law enforcement can partner with school leaders to prevent or respond to bullying. The guide concludes with ways law enforcement officers, SROs, school administration, students, parents, and community leaders can work together to address and prevent incidences of bullying and intolerance.

The ideas put forth in this guide apply to young people from all ethnic groups and genders and all ages from preschool to high school. In this guide, we use the words *students*, *children*, *young people*, and *teens*, as well as *she* and *he*, interchangeably.

Positive behaviors, like negative behaviors, are contagious and can spread through social networks. This is a hopeful sign given the urgency to address all forms of bullying and intolerance. Together we can find sustainable solutions to these issues and prevent tragic consequences.

This guide was produced as part of the *Not In Our Town: Working Together for Safe, Inclusive Communities* collaboration between Not In Our Town and the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office).[3]

1. *Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2014), http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf.
2. *To Protect and Educate: The SRO and the Prevention of Violence in Schools* (Hoover, AL: National Association of School Resource Officers, 2012).
3. All project resources and tools are available through the online project hub at http://www.niot.org/COPS.

Background

The role of community oriented policing and school resource officers in creating safe and bully-free schools

SROs and other local law enforcement personnel have an important role in creating and maintaining safe spaces at school where young people can flourish. SROs can foster positive relationships with students, serve as resources to staff and parents, and provide a sense of safety and security by offering expertise on crime prevention to educational leaders. According to the U.S. Department of Education, schools and law enforcement must "ensure that any school-based law enforcement officers' roles focus on improving school safety and reducing inappropriate referrals to law enforcement."[4]

When officers understand the dynamics of bullying and intolerance and effective strategies to use with young people, they can contribute to positive school environments and safe schools.

Communities work best for youth when everyone works together

Communities—including families, schools, law enforcement, and others—can work together to prevent and address bullying. Law enforcement officers and educators increase their effectiveness when they partner in the process of preventing and addressing bullying. Together they can serve as role models; educate; listen to, encourage, and strengthen students who have been bullied; empower bystanders to act; and help those who bully others to behave appropriately and kindly.[5]

Bullying and victimization: National issues that require local solutions

A proverbial ounce of prevention makes a big difference, and it is important that law enforcement officials learn to identify the various forms of bullying to which children are subjected.

Almost every law enforcement officer, school official, or counselor has a tale of bullying that has gone too far. We all know the mantra, "Sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me." However, words *do* hurt. Bullying can cause life-long damage to a child. People can no longer ignore these behaviors. When communities come together for local solutions, they can make a difference in student lives.

4. *Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 2014), http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf.

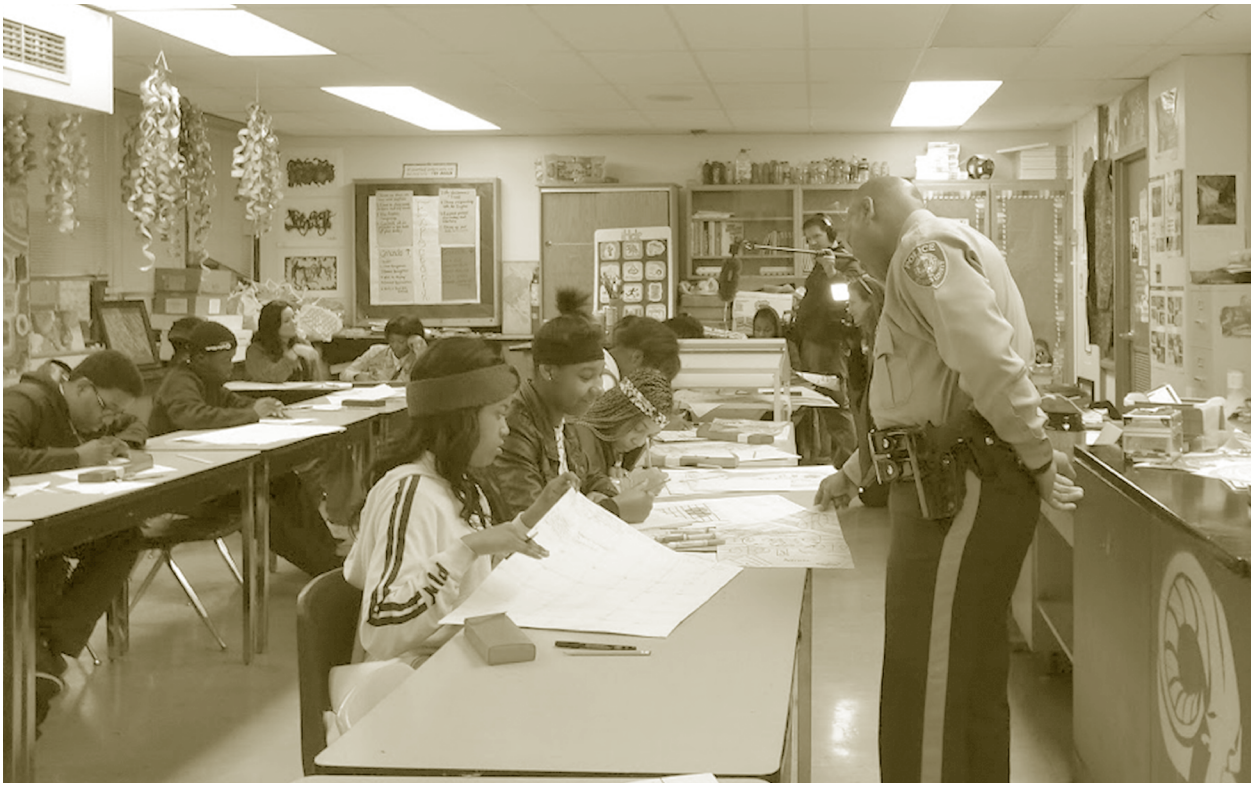
5. C. David-Ferdon and TR Simon, *Preventing Youth Violence: Opportunities for Action* (Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014), http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/pdf/opportunities-for-action.pdf.

This guide aims to offer SROs and other law enforcement officials a knowledge base about bullying; concrete examples of positive actions that can deter bullying behavior; and strategies that move away from suspension, expulsion and arrests, curtailing unnecessary entrance into the juvenile justice system.

Not In Our School and the movement to end bullying

Not In Our School (NIOS), a project of the 20-year-old national nonprofit organization **Not In Our Town**, is a movement for lasting change that asks the entire community to work together to transform the social climate in schools and communities away from bullying and intolerance toward safety and inclusion. NIOS works with schools to develop student-led bullying prevention campaigns and provides an array of films, lesson plans, and activity guides to assist schools in the process.

By becoming involved in **Not In Our School**, community members can model and practice empathy, thoughtful responses, and respect for different backgrounds, races, ethnicities, religions, and gender identities.



The Working Group

SRO Ron Cockrell observes an art class as he interacts with students on a daily basis.

At Grimmer Elementary School in Fremont, California, a sixth grader mentors a first grader to take a stand against bullying.

Photo: Becki Cohn-Vargas

Defining and Understanding Bullying and Intolerance

The accepted bullying definitions: Something old and something new

A common but outdated perception of a bully is a bigger kid physically overpowering another child to get his lunch money. Today however, especially with the anonymity of the Internet, bullying is far more complex than that. The U.S. Department of Education defines bullying in the following way:

> "Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include
>
> - *an imbalance of power:* Kids who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people;
> - *repetition:* Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.
>
> Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose."[6]

An imbalance of power may include physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or threats to popularity that are used in attempts to control or harm others.

There are three main kinds of bullying:

1. **Physical.** Hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, taking or breaking personal property or making mean or rude hand gestures.
2. **Verbal.** Teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, or threats of physical harm.
3. **Relational.** Leaving someone out on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors, or embarrassing someone in public.

Bullying often happens under the radar of teachers and other adults. When a young person is accused of being mean to another, they might respond with, "I was just kidding." This is one way bullying can start and gradually accelerate. The target feels bad, but out of shame, she does not report it. In other cases, a youth is threatened that worse things will happen if he reports.

Cyberbullying, defined as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices,"[7] has become increasingly prevalent in recent years. Cyberbullying is willful because it consists of intentional actions that, like other forms of bullying, are repeated with the intent to hurt another person. New forms of cyberbullying continue to emerge as different electronic applications ("apps") become available, making it possible to anonymously share words, photos, or videos with large numbers of people. The imbalance of power in cyberbullying manifests differently: Power in cyberspace may be gained from access to information, photos, or videos along with the capacity to spread the information quickly, rendering the target powerless to stop or respond to it.[8, 9]

6. "Bullying Definition," Stopbullying.gov, accessed July 17, 2015, http://www.stopbullying.gov/what-is-bullying/definition/index.html.
7. Justin W. Patchin, "What is Cyberbullying?" Cyberbullying Research Center, last modified December 23, 2014, http://cyberbullying.us/what-is-cyberbullying.
8. Sameer Hinduja and Justin W. Patchin, *Cyberbullying: Identification, Prevention, and Response* (Eau Claire, WI: Cyberbullying Research Center, 2014), http://www.cyberbullying.us/Cyberbullying-Identification-Prevention-Response.pdf.
9. *Understanding the Roles of Law Enforcement Officers in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts* (Washington, DC: StopBullying.gov, 2011), http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/hrsa_guide_law-enforcement-officers_508v2.pdf.

Research studies and statistics: More than just numbers on a page

A wealth of research has provided much information on the impact of bullying and effective methods to address it. University of California Davis researchers Robert Faris and Diane Felmlee studied bullying behavior in urban and suburban high schools. They found that bullying behavior is often triggered by youth seeking to climb the social ladder. Faris explains,

> Kids are caught up in patterns of cruelty and aggression that have to do with jockeying for status. It's really not the kids that are psychologically troubled, who are on the margins or the fringes of the school's social life. It's the kids right in the middle, at the heart of things . . . often, typically highly, well-liked popular kids who are engaging in these behaviors.[10]

These findings contrast with a popularly held notion that only socially marginalized youth engage in bullying. For this reason, schools need to design bullying interventions that target all students.

Faris proposes teaching students that bullying has negative consequences for victims *and* perpetrators and using research to demonstrate that in the long run, bullying will not afford youth the popularity they are seeking.

Law enforcement officials can be a valuable resource for helping children and adults move past the stereotypes and see the actual affected lives behind the numbers. As you read these research statistics, please remember that these are real people who are impacted by bullying:

- 20 percent of students in grades 9–12 experienced bullying.[11, 12]
- 70.6 percent of teens have seen bullying occur in their schools. If someone intervenes, the bullying stops within 10 seconds.[13] This statistic is significant because it shows both the prevalence of school bullying and the potential for stopping it if young people are taught safe ways to intervene.
- 64 percent of bullying incidents are underreported. Many youth who are targets will not tell *anyone*, not even an adult or a friend.[14] This points to the role of adults in monitoring student behavior to recognize when a child is behaving differently and possibly being bullied.
- Students who are different in some way are often the targets of bullying, teasing, and harassment, particularly around differences of race, religion, sexual orientation, appearance, and ability or disability.[15]
- Bullying can account for a decrease of 1.5 grade levels in one academic subject over three years.[16] This points to the need to address bullying to ensure students' success in school.

10. Robert Faris and Diane Felmlee, "Status Struggles: Network Centrality and Gender Segregation in Same- and Cross-Gender Aggression," *American Sociological Review* 76, no. 1 (February 2011), 48–73.
11. *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2013.* (Atlanta: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014), 167, http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/ss/ss6304.pdf?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=youth-risk-behavior-surveillance-united-states-2013-pdf.
12. Wendy M. Craig and Debra J. Pepler, "Observations of Bullying and Victimization in the Schoolyard," *Canadian Journal of School Psychology* 13, no. 2 (June 1998), 41–59.
13. Jaana Juvonen and Sandra Graham, "Bullying in School: The Power of Bullies and the Plight of Victims," *Annual Review of Psychology* 65 (January 2014), 159–185.
14. Anthony Petrosino et al., *What Characteristics of Bullying, Bullying Victims, and Schools Are Associated with Increased Reporting of Bullying to Officials?* Issues & Answers (Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences, 2010), http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/rel_2010092.pdf.
15. California Healthy Kids Survey, *Aggregated California Data Technical Report 2005–2006 & 2006–2007: Secondary* (San Francisco: WestEd, 2007), 101, http://chks.wested.org/resources/CA_Agg_Upper_0507.pdf.
16. Juvonen and Graham, "Bullying in School" (see note 13).

Bullying has been linked to criminal behavior

Some researchers have suggested that those who bully others are at higher risk of becoming involved in antisocial and criminal behavior later in their lives,[17] including dating and intimate partner violence.[18] In one study, 60 percent of those characterized as bullies in grades 6 to 9 had at least one criminal conviction by age 24.[19] These statistics underscore the importance of helping students who bully transform their behavior.

Intolerance and bias

Intolerance is often at the heart of bullying, revealed through unkind remarks and negative stereotypes regarding a person's race, ethnicity, language, social class, appearance, sexual orientation, religion, or physical ability.

Peers, family members, teachers, coaches, or other adults in a child's life sometimes encourage these intolerant attitudes. They may use anti-gay epithets or make remarks about people of different religions or racial groups or disparaging comments about a person's weight, appearance, or intelligence, all the while unaware that their children are listening. Intolerant behaviors are also learned through exposure to television, music, and the Internet. For example, students may hear news items about people of Middle Eastern descent being called terrorists and then target their own peers who wear turbans or hijabs. They may mimic anti-gay remarks about effeminate peers or repeat the overwhelming number of insulting comments about overweight people they hear in movies. Students may express intolerance out loud in a classroom or public place or online or in other secret places.

Adults are often unaware that bullying is taking place. In a diverse community, people may assume that since their child has been exposed to different races, sexual orientations, etc., he or she will automatically be tolerant. Children need adult guidance to help them understand that all people deserve respect and equal opportunities. While many organizations are dedicated to addressing bullying, often the link between bullying and intolerance is ignored. As part of bullying prevention efforts, it is crucial to examine intolerance and help children develop accepting attitudes about people from different backgrounds.

Where do people learn to be intolerant? How does intolerance foster bullying incidents?

Statistics show the link between bullying and intolerance. For example, consider the following:

- 65 percent of parents whose children have Asperger's Syndrome report their children have been victimized by peers.[20]
- 86 percent of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students report being bullied at school.[21]
- 67 percent of Sikh youth reported that they are bullied in school, especially those wearing turbans.[22]
- 80 percent of Muslim youth reported being bullied, and 50 percent said they had been taunted in front of teachers or administrators.[23]

17. Ann Shields and Dante Cicchetti, "Parental Maltreatment and Emotion Dysregulation as Risk Factors for Bullying and Victimization in Middle Childhood," *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology* 30, no. 3 (2001), 349–363.
18. Kathryn L. Falb et al., "School Bullying Perpatration and Other Childhood Risk Factors as Predictors of Adult Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration," *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine* 165, no. 10 (October 2001), 890–894, http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1107602.
19. Dan Olweus, *Bullying At School: What We Know and What We Can Do* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1993).
20. Shields and Cicchetti, "Parental Maltreatment" (see note 17).
21. Robert Kim, *A Report on the Status of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender People in Education: Stepping Out of the Closet, Into the Light* (Washington, DC: National Education Association, 2009), http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED505970.pdf.
22. *Go Home, Terrorist: A Report of Bullying against Sikh American School Children* (Washington, DC: The Sikh Coalition, 2014), http://www.sikhcoalition.org/documents/pdf/go-home-terrorist.pdf.
23. "ING Efforts Against Student Bullying is Cited in Congressional Hearing," Islamic Networks Group, last modified April 6, 2011, http://www.ing.org/2011/08/21/ing-efforts-against-student-bullying-is-cited-in-congressional-hearing/.

These numbers signal the need to help students learn to be empathetic and get to know people who are different from themselves. School resource officers and law enforcement officials can help children and adults change their attitudes, and in turn, change their behavior.

It's never too early to teach and to learn

Starting in preschool, children need to learn about differences and about being kind to others. Skills for social-emotional learning (SEL) can be taught at home and in school. Children can learn how to communicate and express feelings, how to be empathetic, and how to control their impulses and think before they act.

Playful teasing and calling other children embarrassing nicknames, which can begin innocently, should be stopped as well. The target may laugh on the outside to cover up hurting on the inside. Starting at a young age, children also need to be given clear messages that hurtful remarks and exhibiting cruel behavior are harmful acts and will not be tolerated.

As law enforcement officials, you have the opportunity to model a different form of behavior and articulate to the youth you work with that name calling and stereotyping can be both incorrect and extremely harmful. Your empathy will help foster trust and send a message of acceptance to students who are feeling different.

Jacob Rostosky was going through those difficult pre-teen years. He was also transgender. He didn't know where to go for help; he almost committed suicide. Jacob writes,

> "I was 12 years old when I realized I was transgender and 14 years old when I made the most important decision of my life, to transition from female to male. Transitioning at a young age wasn't easy, and I faced incredible bullying and harassment from my peers . . . .
>
> "Growing up I knew there was something different about me. I spent my childhood confused, and this confusion lead to depression, which quickly spiraled out of control. As if being depressed wasn't hard enough, as soon as I arrived in middle school I began to be bullied. Not a day would go by without someone calling me names, physically harassing me, and even sending me death threats. Things escalated when a boy sexually assaulted me. He said he wanted to teach me what it meant to be a girl . . . . However, I was too ashamed to tell my parents.
>
> "Worst of all, I would become incredibly upset every single day. So much to the point where I almost dropped out of school because I thought that would help me hide. I decided the only way out of this misery was to commit suicide . . . .
>
> "Luckily, as I was about to swallow the handful of pills, my mother walked in on me. Shocked at finding her 12-year-old daughter in this position, she broke down and cried, which allowed me to cry with her. This is when I came out to her and we made the decision that as long as I worked on learning to love myself, I could begin my transition to male. I kept that promise to her, and now at 22 years old, I have become a role model for transgender youth."

Source: Jacob Rostosky, "Learning to Love Myself & Why We Need to Support LGBTQ Youth," Not In Our Town Blog, last modified June 21, 2013, http://www.niot.org/blog/learning-love-myself-why-we-need-support-lgbtq-youth.

Understanding All the Roles Kids Play in Bullying

Who are the major players in a bullying environment? Many students play more than one role as they grow up.

When a child is being bullied: Changes to look out for

How can adults discern that a child is being bullied, especially amidst the typical angst associated with growing up? The biggest warning sign is a dramatic change in behavior. Parents may notice that suddenly their child comes home from school and locks himself in his bedroom. His answers are mostly just one word and are delivered in an angry tone. He says he has a stomach ache and doesn't want to go to school. Absences mount. A dramatic change in his demeanor is observed. Teachers notice his grades are starting to drop.

When asked if anything is wrong, he says no. He may not want to speak to teachers, administrators, or others in authority. Students of any age are often embarrassed that they have been bullied, or they may feel like they deserve it. Teens might worry that the bullying will get worse with adult intervention.

Unfortunately, if these incidents are not handled appropriately, the bullying often does get worse. If adults bring the target together with the child who is bullying her, the conflict might be exacerbated by intimidation or threats, or the bullying can go underground and become even more secretive. Therefore, handling bullying incidents must be done carefully.

School resource personnel and law enforcement officials can be an important extra set of eyes and ears and provide a different perspective before, during, and after the school day.

These are potential signs that a child is being bullied:[24]

- Unexplained injuries
- Frequent headaches or stomachaches, feeling sick, or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating; kids may come home from school hungry because they did not eat lunch
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Feelings of helplessness or decreased self esteem

Depression, anxiety, and isolation, among the most damaging effects of bullying, can have a lasting impact on a child's social identity and self esteem. Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from home, harming themselves, and—in rare instances—suicide or school shootings can also result from bullying. An eight-year longitudinal research study by *The Lancet Psychiatry* in 2015 reported that children who were bullied by peers only were more likely than children who were maltreated by adults to have mental health problems.[25] The impact of bullying can be life threatening and life changing for students of all ages and often persists into adulthood.

24. *Understanding the Roles of Law Enforcement Officers* (see note 9).

25. Suzet Tanya Lereya et al., "Adult Mental Health Consequences of Peer Bullying and Maltreatment in Childhood: Two Cohorts in Two Countries" *Lancet Psychiatry* 2, no. 6 (June 2015), 524–531, http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanpsy/PIIS2215-0366(15)00165-0.pdf.

These are instances where law enforcement officials are often directly involved, and a deeper knowledge about child and adolescent development, bullying, and youth violence is of great importance. Close collaboration between law enforcement and school and mental health personnel can prevent and moderate the impact on perpetrators, targets, and entire school populations.

Understanding why a child bullies another child

There are multiple and often complex reasons why a student will exhibit bullying behaviors. Many youth who bully have themselves been bullied or have been treated unkindly by others at some point while growing up. A child's aim of bullying is often to impress his friends or to raise his own social status. In order to belong and be accepted, the young person rejects someone he perceives to be different or "less than" to raise his own social standing.

Many times, with immediate intervention, consequences, skill-building, and clear expectations for future behavior, the bullying will stop. Adults must be careful to label the *behavior* as bullying and not the *child*. Calling a child a bully can shape his or her identity and create a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Another reason children bully is because they have been bullied, usually by a sibling or peer but sometimes by parents, teachers, or other adults. Melvin, the high school student from California whose story is featured on page 11, was bullied as a child. When he entered middle school, he decided to "man up" and bully others to gain the respect of his peers.

Unsafe communities or illegal activities at home can lead to bullying activities at school

Sometimes the social environment at school, in the neighborhood, or at home is unsafe or hostile. When there is a chaotic or violent environment at home or school, bullying behaviors thrive. Being victims of child abuse or being around illegal activity—like observing their parents abuse drugs or alcohol—has been found to contribute to bullying, being a target of bullying, or both.[26] Ultimately, the child who bullies deserves as much intervention as the target of the bullying. Bullying is a learned behavior, and every child who bullies can learn to stop.

The bullying "bystander:" Have you seen him or her? How can you help?

At some point, every kid becomes a bystander—someone who witnesses bullying but doesn't get involved. Bystanders play roles that go from silent witness to laughing to egging on the person who bullies. Bystanders provide the audience that those who bully are playing to and form the largest group of witnesses.

Bystanders also may have a range of feelings from shame to fear to anxiety. They may be trying to differentiate themselves from the target of bullying, or they may be afraid to speak up and then become another target of bullying.

Faris notes, "Positive behaviors can also spread through social networks and . . . kids may be more likely to intervene in bullying situations if they see their friends . . . discouraging that kind of behavior."[27] That is why the bystander is the focus of many bullying prevention programs. When you address bystander behavior, you can be assured that all children fit in this category. The next section outlines concrete actions you can take to address bystander behavior.

26. Anna C. Baldry, "Bullying in Schools and Exposure to Domestic Violence," *Child Abuse & Neglect* 27, no. 7 (July 2003), 713–732, doi:10.1016/S0145-2134(03)00114-5; Lucy Bowes et al., "School, Neighborhood, and Family Factors are Associated with Children's Bullying Involvement: A Nationally Representative Longitudinal Study," *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* 48, no. 5 (May 2009), 545–553; Dan Olweus and Sue Limber, *Bullying Prevention Program*, book 9 of Blueprints for Violence Prevention, ed. Delbert S. Elliott (Boulder, CO: Institute of Behavioral Science, 1999), https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/174202NCJRS.pdf; Melissa K. Holt, Glenda Kaufman Kantor, and David Finkelhor, "Parent/Child Concordance About Bullying Involvement and Family Characteristics Related to Bullying and Peer Victimization," *Journal of School Violence* 8, no. 1 (2008), 42–63, http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/15388220802067813; *Understanding the Roles of Law Enforcement Officers* (see note 9).

27. Faris and Felmlee, "Status Struggles" (see note 10).

Addressing a Bullying Incident

Responding to a child who has been bullied: Listening with empathy

The role of law enforcement is no different from the role of other caring adults when a child has been bullied. The power of an officer's authority can be very beneficial in helping a child who has been targeted feel safe. However, children may also feel intimidated. Building positive relationships and trust is important.

- **Listen** and **take it seriously.** When adults diminish the power of the child's experience or make an excuse for the behavior, a child may feel unsupported. Saying "Oh, he must have been joking around" or "Oh, he didn't really mean it" or "You're just too sensitive" or "Just walk away when he does it" is not helpful to the child.
- **Stay unemotional** and avoid being inflammatory or accusatory. Express your concern and empathy about what he is going through, but do not show anger or sadness. This may make him afraid to tell the truth again in the future.
- **Discuss** with the child why bullying happens. Make sure he understands that it is not his fault that he is a target. Explain that the person who bullies often has problems of his own, and bullying another child is his inappropriate way of dealing with those problems.
- **Reassure** the child that everyone will work together to make it better without retaliation from the bully. Often a child will feel like she is the only target. Explain that bullying is common, but not everyone talks about it.
- **Explain** that you will investigate the situation. **Calm** the students and parents down and reassure them. Explain that an overreaction or vengeful attitude by the parents may have the reverse effect and may cause the child to feel more shame and not supported.
- Inform the child's parents to **not speak directly** to the parents of the person who bullies, even if they know them well. This is rarely helpful. They are most likely going to be defensive if a parent says, "Your child has been bullying mine."

Melvin Evolves From a Bullying Victim to an Anti-Bullying Activist

When he was in third grade, California high school student Melvin Mendez was beaten up in the bathroom and threatened with more violence if he told anyone. In middle school, says Melvin,

> "Anger built up inside of me, and I wanted vengeance against those who made me suffer. I decided it was time for payback, so I started to bully others . . . . After seeing those kids who I bullied run into [the] bathroom to cry, I figured out that I was making a mistake because I saw myself in those that I harmed."

Melvin, now in college, wrote these words in a blog post sharing his path to becoming a student leader and an anti-bullying activist. At various points in his story, Melvin could have been called a victim, a bully, or a hero.

> "I was a victim and a bully, and I could have continued that cycle of violence, but I didn't. I chose a different path."

Source: Melvin Mendez, "Former Bully Stands Up for His Victims," Not In Our Town Blog, last modified April 3, 2013, https://www.niot.org/blog/former-bully-stands-victims.

Followup: The key to successful intervention

After a bullying incident, it is important to monitor and check in with the targeted student to assure there is no retaliation and that bullying has ceased. Counseling or skill-building support groups may be needed to help these students regain confidence.

Also, it is helpful to coach the student one on one or in a group to learn and practice refusal skills. First, set up a safe role-playing environment. Give the student(s) a scenario that involves verbal bullying. Choose scenarios that do not put children on the spot or embarrass them. For example, use a generic comment like "You're a creep, nobody likes you." Then have the students practice how to respond both when they are being bullied and when they observe others being bullied. Have them switch roles as they practice. For example, model how they could respond with something like, "Stop, I don't like it when you say that to me." Or "That is a mean thing to say, and I would like you to stop saying that." The kids will find their own words to use, but be sure that students take the activity seriously.

Turn bullying bystanders into anti-bullying upstanders

Bystanders should not be ignored after a bullying incident. They too need to be held accountable for not taking action or playing a role in the incident. They need to consider possible actions that they could have taken to interrupt the bullying or alert authorities.

You can teach bystanders how to be upstanders who stand up for themselves and others. Students can learn to reject comments such as "That's so gay" and "You throw like a girl" and speak up instead of egging on a fight. They can also learn to refuse to participate in spreading hurtful videos or text messages.

SROs can help students learn: They need your help to find their own courage

It takes courage to speak up on someone else's behalf. As Juvonen found, intervening can interrupt a bullying incident in 10 seconds.[28] SROs and educators can play a role in helping students learn how to safely intervene and support targets of bullying. Students can role-play to practice how to be upstanders when they see bullying. Helping students become upstanders means giving them the tools to be a person of character who helps someone else. These are skills that will empower students and benefit them across their lifetimes. There are four ways to be an upstander in a bullying situation, and each one needs to be taught and practiced:

1. Safely intervene. Say something to get the person doing the bullying to stop. This needs to be done in a safe way that does not increase the violent behavior or exacerbate the situation.

2. Get help by alerting a trusted adult.

3. Support the target in private—show concern, offer kindness, and reach out in friendship.

4. Become an active spokesperson in school efforts to address bullying.

It is important to tell students to quickly assess the situation before they intervene. Safely intervening means keeping themselves safe and ensuring that the situation does not escalate or cause anybody to get hurt. For example, if the person doing the bullying is confronted, it could result in a negative outcome: A fight might break out, the person intervening could be subject to bullying or injury, or the person doing the bullying could be attacked. Safely intervening may not be possible, and then going for help to an adult may be the better choice.

28. Juvonen and Graham, "Bullying in School" (see note 13).

Emphasize to students that they are not snitching when they report bullying incidents to an adult. There's a big difference between tattling or snitching and reporting a concern. Tattling is telling to get someone in trouble; reporting is telling to get someone out of trouble and stop harm from taking place. Teaching bystanders how they can take positive action in addition to practicing and role-playing these steps will give them confidence to step up in a real bullying incident. Engaging all bystanders in school-wide bullying prevention activities will reinforce their capacity to intervene in bullying situations. This will also help those who are targets and those who bully recognize the school's commitment to eliminating bullying.

Shifting from the punitive model of discipline: You can help transform students who bully

Students who bully need as much support and intervention as those they target. By refraining from calling a child a bully, you can avoid causing students to become stereotyped or labeled as bullies. All children are capable of bullying at one time or another, and our goal is to help them all learn not to bully.[29]

When students have engaged in bullying, adults need to help them learn to transform behaviors and to feel and exhibit empathy and kindness. Adults can do this through words and, even more importantly, by modeling the desired behaviors.

The vast majority of students who bully respond positively when subjected to disciplinary consequences in combination with guidance by teachers and administrators. However, some students need more intensive skill building or counseling. Some schools provide small group or one-on-one counseling to help students transform their behaviors.

When a serious pattern of bullying has begun, the process of transformation can be slow and require a long-term commitment. The family, school counselors, and everyone who works with the student should be involved.

Take time to review all documentation of the student's bullying incidents, and get to know the student both by talking with and observing him. What are the patterns of behavior? What antecedents and triggers do the student or staff notice before an incident occurs?

Restorative practices help students who bully transform their behavior

Restorative justice (RJ) is an approach that initially started in the criminal justice system and now is being used effectively in schools (see figure 1 on page 14). It is based on the belief that those who hurt others can take accountability to repair the harm and change their behavior. In addition, using RJ strategies can help mitigate the negative impact on those they have harmed. The RJ framework shifts interventions away from blame and toward creating a safe and caring environment for all. With RJ, discipline becomes a learning opportunity rather than a punishment.[30]

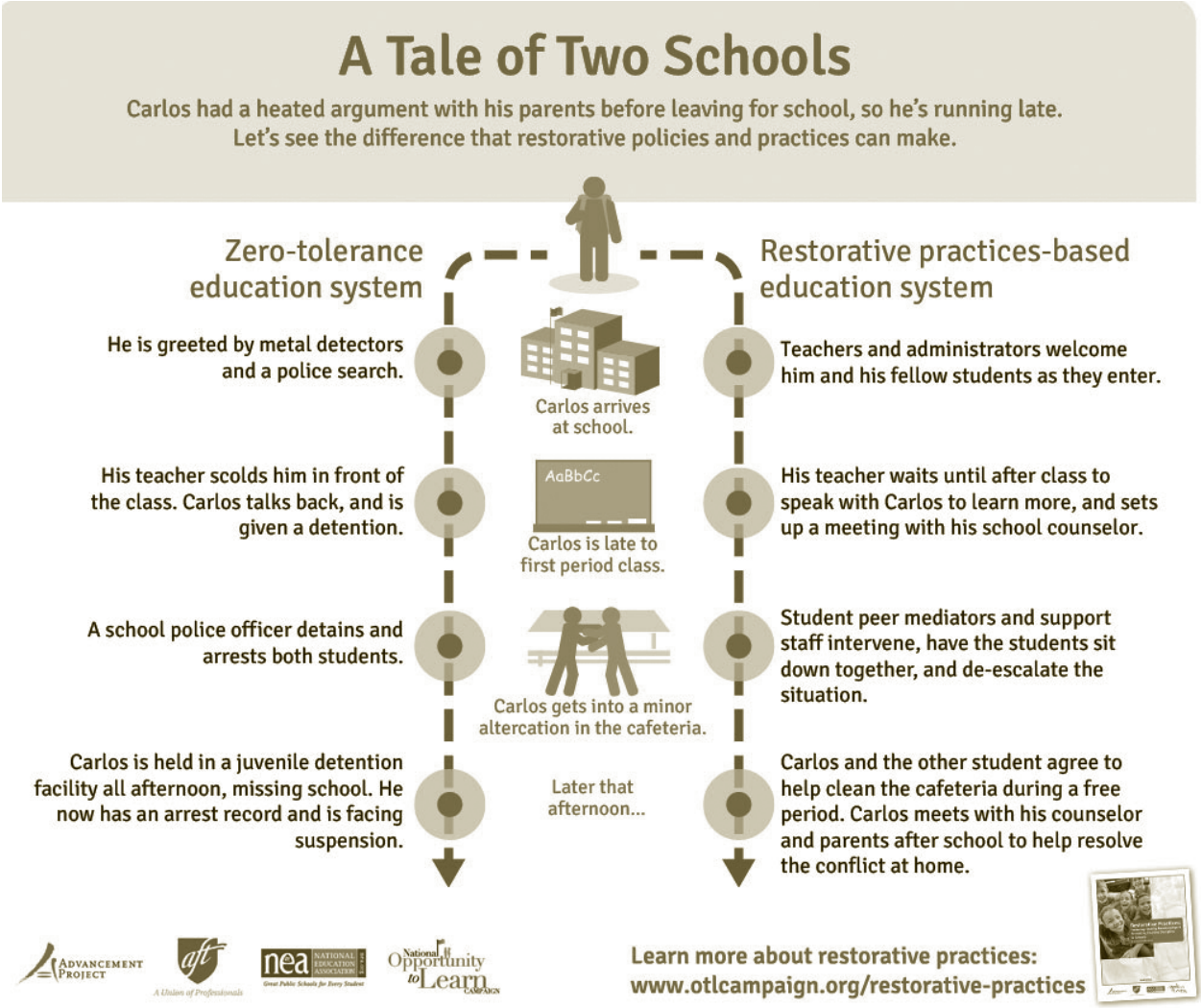
In the case of bullying, the RJ process involves the target and the perpetrator separately because the target often feels vulnerable and fears retaliation. One approach is to craft a set of agreements with the perpetrator and convey the agreements to the target. *The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools*[31] offers a process to explore the student's thinking during the bullying incident, get the student to remember a time when she was harmed,

29. *Two Wrongs Don't Make A Right: Why Zero Tolerance is Not the Solution to Bullying* (Washington, DC: Advancement Project, 2012), http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/documents/policy/Two-wrongs-dont-make-a-right.pdf.

30. Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz and Judy H. Mullet, *The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools: Teaching Responsibility, Creating Caring Climates* (Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2005).

31. Ibid.

Figure 1. Restorative practices versus zero tolerance in schools



Source: *Restorative Practices: A Guide for Educators* (Washington, DC: Advancement Project, 2014), 5, http://www.otlcampaign.org/sites/default/files/restorative-practices-guide.pdf.

and consider the point of view of the person that she bullied. The dialogue gets her to be accountable for making a mistake and finding a way to repair the harm and make things better for the target. Finally, agreements are written and the student practices what she will say when meeting with the target. This process encourages reflection and helps a student learn from mistakes and realize that she can change. It is critical to follow up all RJ with regular support for both target and perpetrator and monitoring to be sure the bullying has stopped.

No silver bullet: Many effective strategies to address bullying

There is no one strategy that works for all students. Each strategy requires consistency and patience to find positive qualities in the student and to give the student a voice, helping her take accountability without shaming her. Implementing some of these strategies requires training or bringing in specialized staff members.

Some strategies require significant time, often occurring in combination with counseling and small-group, skill-building sessions. These strategies require coordinated planning and the belief that young people can change their behavior.[32] As law enforcement officials and SROs, you can play a positive role in this process.

While the SRO's role is not to replace the school administrator in disciplining students, an empathetic yet firm encounter with an officer can help a child who bullies realize he has made a mistake and can improve his behavior. Demonstrating your confidence that he *can* change will boost his own belief in himself.

Successful strategies: Create identity safe and empathetic school climates

A bullying prevention program cannot be successful without people simultaneously working to create a positive and welcoming school climate. School climate is defined as the quality and character of whole school environment. This includes how each member of the school community has a sense of belonging and feels valued and safe from physical or psychological harm.

A positive climate is achieved through shared goals and norms of behavior together with positive relationships between teachers and students and among students in an affirming organizational structure. Research has shown that a positive school climate fosters not only academic achievement but also improved student behavior and a reduction in bullying.[33]

Identity safe school climates are those in which educators work to ensure students that their social identities are an asset rather than a barrier to success in school. Acknowledging students' identities, rather than trying to ignore differences or being colorblind, can build the foundation for students to feel a sense of belonging.[34]

In spite of real and powerful social inequalities in the world at large, identity safety is an antidote to negative stereotyping in our society and to stereotype threat (the fear of confirming a negative stereotype). Research on stereotype threat shows that student behavior is impacted even by the worry that he or she may inadvertently confirm a negative stereotype. Improving school climate is critical when it comes to addressing bullying.[35]

32. Olweus and Limber, *Bullying Prevention Program* (see note 26).
33. Dan Bellizio, *December 2012 Policy Update: School Climate and Bully Prevention Trends State-by-State Assessment* (New York: National School Climate Center, 2012), http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/documents/policy/sc-brief-v6.pdf.
34. Dorothy M. Steele and Becki Cohn-Vargas, *Identity Safe Classrooms: Places to Belong & Learn* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2013).
35. Bellizio, *2012 Policy Update* (see note 33).

Students from Oakland High School play a “No Hate” basketball game to support a transgender student, who was set on fire on a city bus.

Photo: The Working Group

Promising Practices for Law Enforcement Working with Schools to Address Bullying

Each school district should have a policy for reducing or totally mitigating bullying and harassment behaviors at school. The following suggestions will help you to determine how you can best support the school.[36]

Officers can be involved in the following ways:

- Partner with schools in staff training and bullying response protocols.
- Partner with schools to assess levels of bullying and intolerance and help measure improvement.
- Provide one-on-one mentoring for students who are either targets or perpetrators.
- Provide training for students in different topics, such as bullying or cyberbullying.
- Join with the school to start bullying prevention campaigns.

Evidence-based strategies and procedures to prevent and respond to bullying

Discuss procedures with school administrators in advance of an incident to be able to work together with them when something occurs. Check to find out how the school handles bullying. Offer to support administrators in setting up their systems. Following are promising practices for school bullying prevention and response:[37]

- **Reporting systems.** Students should have several methods of reporting. Find out how students are informed of the reporting system. Effective methods include
  - official reporting forms available in the office;
  - identified staff who receive reports: administrators, teachers, counselors, and paraprofessional staff;
  - anonymous systems for students to report if they have observed a peer being bullied.
- **Supervised and safe campus.** Find out how the school collects data on bullying and learn how the campus is supervised during the school day and as students come to school in the morning and depart in the afternoon. Schools have specific bullying hot spots, like the hallways, cafeterias, locker rooms, school buses, and places in the school yard where there is less supervision. Develop plans to assure these areas have sufficient supervision.[38]
- **Staff training.** All staff members need training on definitions of bullying and intolerance; school policies; and how to **recognize, respond to,** and **prevent** bullying. New staff members need the full training, and information needs to be updated regularly. SROs should be included as participants or leaders of the training.

36. Susan M. Swearer, Susan P. Limber, and Rebecca Alley, "Developing and Implementing an Effective Anti-Bullying Policy," ch. 4 in *Bullying Prevention and Intervention: Realistic Strategies for Schools* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2009).
37. Maria M. Ttofi and David P. Farrington, "What Works in Preventing Bullying: Effective Elements of Anti-Bullying Programs," *Journal of Aggression, Conflict, and Peace Research* 1, no. 1 (2009), 13–24.
38. *Measuring Bullying, Victimization, Perpetration, and Bystander Experiences* (Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011).

- **Bullying curriculum and refusal skills.** Students need to be taught about bullying and intolerance as part of the curriculum during elementary, middle, and high school. They need to do role-plays to practice refusal skills and need to be taught how to be an upstander instead of a bystander.[39]
- **Additional supports for students who are bullied and those who bully.** Individual and small group counseling and skill-building groups need to be offered for those who have been bullied or who have bullied others repeatedly.
- **Parent education and involvement.** Parents need education so they can support their children in being safe at school, not engaging in bullying behaviors, and insuring siblings at home do not bully one another. Parents can also join and support school-wide events and efforts to prevent bullying.
- **Identity safe school climate building activities.** Empathy, positive relationships, and valuing each person's background need to permeate the school environment and be reiterated in classrooms and school-wide activities.[40]
- **Assessment and evaluation.** School-wide surveys are a useful way to assess the problem of bullying and to evaluate progress on bullying prevention programs. Parents should be notified when surveys are conducted and parental consent obtained as required. Responses should be kept confidential to protect privacy. Surveys should be conducted before and after implementing bullying prevention activities to measure their success. Reports of bullying-related discipline are also useful to review. After findings are analyzed, they should be distributed and discussed.[41]

For all strategies used, it is important to monitor effectiveness and identify what works to reduce bullying in a particular school.

39. Michele Borba, *The Essential Six Rs of Bullying Prevention* (Micheleborba.com, 2012) http://www.micheleborba.com/Borba-6_Rs_To_Bullyproof.pdf.

40. Ibid.

41. "Assess Your School" (Stopbullying.gov), http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/at-school/assessbullying/index.html#Develop%20and%20Implement%20an%20Assessment.

Tools and Resource to Assist SROs and Other Law Enforcement Personnel

- Bullying prevention assemblies for students

  Cyberbullying Research Center has information on bullying prevention assemblies and the need to make them part of a larger ongoing bullying prevention strategy.
  http://cyberbullying.us/bullying-assembly-programs-schools-need-know/

- Upstander assemblies and role-playing activities

  NIOT offers a free "how-to" kit on producing an effective student-launch assembly.
  https://www.niot.org/nios/assemblykit

- Bullying prevention training

  Stopbullying.gov is the federal hub on bullying prevention by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. They offer a PowerPoint "Bullying Prevention Training Module" for staff and a set of PowerPoints in English and Spanish for parents and communities.
  http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/training-center/index.html

- Cyberbullying assemblies and training materials

  NetSmartz provides formatted presentations on cyberbullying for law enforcement to provide at schools.
  http://www.netsmartz.org/LawEnforcement

- Bullying and cyberbullying reporting

  Stopbullying.org offers guidance on reporting bullying and cyberbullying.
  http://www.stopbullying.gov/respond/on-the-spot/index.html
  http://www.stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/how-to-report/index.html

  The Cyberbullying Research Center provides a range of reporting tools, including one using Google Voice.
  http://cyberbullying.us/setting-up-a-free-bullying-and-cyberbullying-reporting-system-with-google-voice/

Theo Baar

SRO Moses Robinson of the Rochester (New York) Police Department chats with an East High school student.

In Rochester, New York, School Resource Officer Moses Robinson is a leader in preventing bullying and intolerance both on his high school campus and also in the larger community. He collaborates with a range of youth and mental health organizations and civic leaders across the city. In between mentoring kids and working with school site leaders on creating protocols for handling bullying, he also participates on a citywide task force that is developing a new discipline policy for the school district that will incorporate the ideas of restorative justice.

Robinson says, "When you look at kids who bully, many have been so hurt and damaged inside, that they go out and do what has been done to them. We need to let kids know it is unacceptable to hurt others just because you have been hurt. We need to try to help you start the process of healing. And even though we cannot fix all of your hurt, we help you reconcile inside yourself. You identify that you have committed an error against someone and then become motivated to not want to hurt others. Both persons can begin to heal."

In 2014, the community had some serious fights between Black and Latino students rooted in racial mistrust. To begin addressing these issues, last fall, Robinson helped a group of young people share their personal stories through the West Side Story Project, initiated by the COPS Office. This collaborative effort brought together members of the police department, youth agencies, and the Rochester Latino Theatre Company, Inc. Producing the play *West Side Story* opened the conversation about addressing youth violence, youth - police relations, and cultural differences.

In spring 2015, Robinson continued to move forward by organizing a community forum focused on young people's interactions and relationships with both police and sheriff's officers. Teen leaders facilitated dialogue between youth and law enforcement personnel to identify areas for improvement and actions to reduce violence, crime, and improve community relationships.

Assuring a Positive Role for Law Enforcement in Eliminating Bullying

While heightened attention to bullying has, in many cases, brought about positive change, there is also a risk in increasing harsh punishments for bullying behavior. The U.S. Department of Education reports that of the 42 states with laws that address the consequences of bullying, 24 of them (57 percent) rely solely on punitive measures.[42] In some instances, when law enforcement officials have been brought into an incident, the result is that students who bully have entered the criminal justice system and begun a path that leads to further arrests. This has resulted in a higher rate of juvenile arrests and court citations.[43]

Research has shown that suspension, expulsion, and juvenile arrests have not been effective tools in improving student behavior. Rather, they have been associated with disproportionate disciplinary actions.[44] African-American students are more than three times as likely as their white peers to be expelled or suspended. In January 2014, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan issued a call to educators to reexamine school policies and procedures to ensure fairness and equity for all students.[45] Additional data is available from the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC).[46]

High rates of exclusionary discipline practices also occur in preschools and early learning settings with even higher rates for young boys of color. As part of President Obama's *My Brother's Keeper* initiative, Duncan and Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia M. Burwell released a joint policy statement to address expulsion and suspension practices in early learning settings, encouraging states, early childhood programs, and families to prevent, reduce, and eliminate the expulsion and suspension of young children from child care and preschool programs.[47]

Research on the effectiveness of suspension and expulsions has shown that these punitive disciplinary actions lead to what has come to be known as the pipeline to prison. Students—particularly those of Latino or African-American backgrounds—who have been repeatedly suspended are not remediated. Rather, as suspensions mount, these youth fall further and further behind, and patterns of school failure ensue with an increasing potential for entering the criminal justice system.[48]

42. *Two Wrongs Don't Make A Right*, 8 (see note 29).
43. American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, "Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools? An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations," *American Psychologist* 63, no. 9 (December 2008), 852–862, http://www.apa.org/pubs/info/reports/zero-tolerance.pdf.
44. *Two Wrongs Don't Make A Right* (see note 29).
45. Policy Statement on Expulsion and Suspension Policies in Early Childhood Settings (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Education, 2014), http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/policy-statement-ece-expulsions-suspensions.pdf; Sylvia M. Burwell and Arne Duncan, letter announcing policy statement on expulsion and suspension policies, December 10, 2014, http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/letter-suspension-expulsion-policy.pdf.
46. "Civil Rights Data Collection," U.S. Department of Education, accessed July 17, 2015, http://ocrdata.ed.gov.
47. *My Brother's Keeper Task Force Report to the President* (Washington, DC: My Brother's Keeper Task Force, 2014), https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/053014_mbk_report.pdf.
48. *Test, Punish, and Push Out: How "Zero Tolerance" and High-Stakes Testing Funnel Youth Into the School-to-Prison Pipeline* (Washington, DC: Advancement Project, 2010), http://b.3cdn.net/advancement/d05cb2181a4545db07_r2im6caqe.pdf.

To avoid the criminalizing of student behaviors, this guide recommends that officers not become involved in routine school discipline[49] but instead participate in violence and bullying prevention activities and help students who bully transform their behavior.

Law enforcement and SROs who are aware of these issues can help students learn better ways to behave by using strategies described in the previous section and engaging with students as a role model, mentor, educator, and informal counselor who has the student's back and helps him or her stay out of the pipeline to prison.

The Working Group

SRO Ron Cockrell in dialogue with students at Central Middle School in Riverview Gardens near Ferguson, Missouri.

49. John Rosiak, "How SROs Can Divert Students from the Juvenile Justice System," *The Journal of School Safety*, Spring 2015, http://cops.usdoj.gov/html/dispatch/05-2015/sros_and_students.asp.

Taking Action for Change

Not In Our School bullying prevention campaigns

The main goals of a bullying prevention campaign are to raise awareness and to work for sustained change. Not in Our Town/Not In Our School has developed a research-based model to address bullying by bringing together students, school leaders, law enforcement, and community leaders.

Every NIOS campaign focuses on local issues and the needs of the school community. A NIOS campaign mobilizes everyone to be upstanders who take action to stand up for themselves and for others and to create a climate that reflects the values of safety, respect, and inclusion in the following ways.

Identification of problems of intolerance and bullying

The community focuses on its particular needs and on the problems that result from the bullying or hateful behavior of the students in the schools. The first step is to start with a dialogue about the particular problem. It's critical that everyone have the same descriptions of the behaviors. What one person calls bullying, another may think is just kids joking around. Because students are often bullied for being different in some way, it is important to explore the social dynamics in a school population.

Solutions defined by students and peer-to-peer actions

Students are supported in defining the problems and finding their unique solutions to make their schools safe and help bystanders gather the courage to become upstanders.

An Entire City Gets Involved, Including the Chief of Police

For the past two years, citizens of Marshalltown, Iowa, have joined together to implement a Not In Our Town campaign to address bullying and intolerance. Their coalition, initiated by a newspaper editor, includes the town police chief and other community leaders. Marshalltown High School students have formed a Not In Our School (NIOS) club. When a fellow student said he planned to bring a gun to school and attack other students, members of the NIOS club went to the high school principal. The principal reported that the club empowered youth to take action and trust in adults. The school reached the student's parents, averting a potential tragedy. Students saw their principal, police chief, and other local leaders encouraging them to stand up for themselves and others. Building such trust takes time and effort, but it can bring about real change.

In 2014, 37 students and staff members from Marshalltown High School participated in day-long NIOS training sessions, learning ways to intervene in violence, including talking to the victim, talking to the perpetrator, going to trusted adults, and diverting or delaying actions. After the training, students said they felt more comfortable knowing how to intervene during a conflict or bullying situation. The students presented what they had learned from violence prevention trainings to the entire school. Marshalltown is part of the Safe Schools, Healthy Students initiative sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, and Justice.*

* "In the Aftermath of Murrysville, How One School is Working to Prevent Violence," Not In Our Town Blog, last modified April 16, 2014, https://www.niot.org/blog/aftermath-murrysville-how-one-school-working-prevent-violence.

Speaking in a collective voice

The entire school community unites to say NOT IN OUR SCHOOL. This could be stated in many forms—buttons, banners, slogans, t-shirts, pledges, assemblies, and school wide activities.

Steps to starting a Not In Our School campaign

1. Use the momentum to gather committed people ready to take action.

When there has been a bullying incident, people are upset and ready to do something. That is a great time to call them to action. Action brings people together and leads to both healing and hope for keeping such incidents from happening in the future. Draw on that momentum and newly found community strength to create a unified force for positive change and to develop a sustained infrastructure to create a coalition to lead anti-bullying efforts.

It only takes one person to start a campaign, but that person needs to immediately enlist others. Students, counselors, teachers, administrators, law enforcement, and parents have initiated NIOS campaigns. Reach out to students from many social networks and grade

Students at Watchung Hills Regional High School in New Jersey have been participating in Not In Our School for five years. After listening to a presentation given by hate crimes task force officer Dave D'Amico, they started a discussion about the widespread problem of online bullying and began a campaign to spread kindness on Facebook. The students created a Not In Our School campaign called the "White-Out to Erase Bullying" after they heard about an Orange Out Against Bullying in Marshalltown, Iowa.

The goal of the White-Out to Erase Bullying was to call awareness to the issue of bullying and bring together a community in its entirety to support the worthy cause. After garnering support from their school superintendent, they approached two student leaders to develop a logo and formed a student leadership group that partnered with an existing school diversity committee.

Then students began a massive outreach effort to civic leaders, school superintendents, and community groups from the towns that feed into Watchung Regional High School. Students developed campaign materials and distributed posters, stickers, and a how-to guide to the 13 local elementary and middle schools that feed into their high school.

Students also offered mini-workshops to help younger students at the feeder schools plan activities and a huge banner for the pledge. For the White-Out, high schoolers tied white ribbons on trees, and high school, middle school, and elementary school students all led activities pledging not to be silent in the face of bullying. Even the mayor and city council members joined the effort. Here are two student reflections on the events:

"We all have a desire to initiate change in our communities, and at Watchung Hills, it is always stressed that we not only be good students but we push ourselves to be upstanders in our school and our towns. We heard about the White-Out idea from our teachers and we immediately jumped at the opportunity to be a part of something bigger than ourselves." *—Catherine, junior*

"One little kid, when asked what he will do to stop bullying, said with the most enthusiasm, 'We will speak up, stand up, and UNITE to stop hate!' It just made all the difference hearing that . . . . Something that really surprised me about the White-Out was the amount of supporters we had accumulated throughout the event and how one group of kids and teachers could bring the entire community together." *—Andrew, freshman**

* "Students Reflect on White-out to Erase Bullying Event," Not In Our Town Blog, last modified October 18, 2013, https://www.niot.org/blog/students-reflect-white-out-erase-bullying-event.

levels. A broad-based group with diverse participation by people of different ages as well as ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic groups is recommended. The broader the coalition, the more powerful the results. However, it is important to remember that even very small groups can make a big difference.

In the movie *Bully,*[50] there is a frightening scene of a town hall meeting where community members are distraught and angry about the lack of response to bullying in their school community. While the anger and frustration are real, a focus on solutions brings people together and moves toward positive change. Remember, this is not a problem that will be solved overnight!

2. Keep the message upbeat and avoid the blame game. Positive responses lead to positive actions.

Once you have secured a meeting with a person or group, the following guidelines can help to ensure a positive outcome:

- Create an inviting atmosphere and accept all levels and offers of time, energy, and commitment.
- Try not to point fingers at others, whether they are school officials or parents. It only puts people on the defensive.
- Be inclusive and hear suggestions and ideas from all participants, especially students.
- Keep your goal in mind, and communicate your passion; define your group's mission.
- Be ready to enlist, support, or encourage others to act.
- Be prepared for the next step, such as showing a video.
- Before leaving, remember to ask for participation and support.
- Stay flexible and adaptable.
- Create a leadership and decision-making structure that maximizes each person's voice and lets people contribute based on their unique skills and gifts.

3. Propose your ideas to a range of people in the community.

Do some research to find out what has already been done in the community to address bullying. In different communities, NIOS campaigns have involved business leaders, civic leaders, university staff and students, newspaper editors, churches, synagogues, and community groups like the Boys and Girls Club, 4-H, and the YMCA. Other advocates to approach include parents and PTAs, librarians, afterschool programs, and local government officials (school board members, city council, the mayor).

4. Identify issues in the school and community with students, staff, and parents.

Find out what data exists about the school(s) and if they have already surveyed students (see assessment suggestions above). Review that data before you conduct another survey. You can ask questions to determine how safe students feel at school and to identify the issues that are keeping the classrooms and school from being safe. Sample survey questions are found in the Appendix A on page 29. Comprehensive school climate surveys with bullying assessments can be found at the National School Climate Center website.[51]

50. *Bully*, directed by Lee Hirsch (2011), http://www.thebullyproject.com/about_film.

51. National School Climate Center, http://www.schoolclimate.org/programs/csci.php.

Select and view NIOS videos (available to stream at no cost at NIOT.org) for inspiration and to spark conversations. Hold class and staff discussions about the issues that keep a school from being safe.

5. Identify the issue(s) of the highest concern.

For the most impact, a NIOS campaign needs to include meaningful discussions with the participation of all students, exploring the issues and identifying authentic and sustainable solutions. In groups with adults and students, be sure that student voices are heard and respected.

6. Sign a Not In Our School/Not In Our Town pledge to stop bullying, teasing, and intolerance.

Complete the NIOS pledge or adapt it to your community. Individuals can complete and submit pledges, or the pledge can be written on a large sheet of butcher paper that everyone can sign. It is important to discuss commitment to the words in the pledge and to recite it together.

7. Choose three or more activities to implement with the entire community during Not In Our School Week.

Keep in mind that a Not In Our School campaign can extend over an entire month, a week, or a single day, as long as build-up and follow-through activities are in place to support focus, clarity, and lasting change. Examples of different activities are listed in Appendix B on page 30. You can choose from these, or design activities of your own.

8. Document and publicize what is being done.

Take photos, film interviews, write articles, and collect and publish the students' writing assignments. Go to your local newspaper, public media station, or parenting blog to share the good news.

9. Identify the impact of your NIOS Campaign.

After the actions and activities, re-ask the students how safe they feel at school to determine the impact of the campaign and identify future actions.

10. Review the data and determine next steps.

Change does not happen overnight, and these efforts need to be ongoing. Holding an annual "Not In Our School Week" assures the students that NIOS, the values of inclusion, and an environment free of bullying and intolerance are here to stay. A yearly NIOS week can be used to articulate the values that will become part of the fabric of school life. During the rest of the year, the phrase "not in our school" becomes a reminder to stay the course and hold true to the values.

11. Join the NIOS Network.

On the NIOS website, new films and resources are added regularly. You can also sign up to receive a newsletter with updated resources. Contact us at info@NIOT.org.

Roles and Responsibilities of Law Enforcement

Law enforcement officers can play an important role in creating pathways to safe and inclusive school environments, free of bullying and intolerance. Young people are developing and impressionable, and being listened to and respected will open doors of communication. Your active involvement will help support students who are targets, motivate bystanders to take action, and help those who bully transform their behaviors. Positive relationships and constructive feedback form an important part of building trust.

Summary of ways that law enforcement officers can be involved in creating safe, bully-free schools:

Supporting Campus Administrators in Creating a Safe Campus Climate:

- Being informed about laws, policies, and promising practices in addressing bullying and offering guidance to school leaders
- Teaming with school leaders in developing a school code of conduct
- Being aware of school and community tools to prevent and address bullying

Supporting Campus Efforts to Educate Students About Bullying and How to Prevent It:

- Leading school assemblies on cyberbullying and other aspects of bullying
- Sponsoring Not In Our School campaigns or helping to organize student actions like skits, theater presentations, and events

An Invitation to Partner With the NIOT Network

What is happening in your town and in your school? Not In Our Town is ready to help you get started. Contact us at info@NIOT.org.

Schools and law enforcement officers across the U.S. are already partnering with NIOT and have stepped up to implement innovative strategies together with others in their towns. These communities have become part of the larger NIOT network. They recognize that shifting a culture is an ongoing process of standing together against bullying, intolerance, and all forms of victimization, *and* learning to live by the words "Not In Our Town" and "Not In Our School."

Many activities that schools have successfully implemented can be found in videos and lesson guides available at no cost on the NIOT website. Please visit our site to learn more, put your project on the map, and share your promising practices with others.

The Working Group

SRO Ron Cockrell with students as they create messages of support for a student whose father passed away.

SRO Ron Cockrell meets one on one with a student at Central Middle School near Ferguson, Missouri.

Photo: The Working Group

Appendix A. Sample Survey Questions

Select from these questions to develop an electronic or paper survey for students to be used before and after you have implemented your campaign. These questions can also be used for small or large focus group discussions by asking the questions and having the participants explain and elaborate on their answers.

1. If you could change one thing about the climate and culture of the school, what would it be?
2. Have you or other students from different racial backgrounds been teased and bullied by others in this classroom/school?
3. Do you think that immigrant students feel welcomed? Do they actively participate in all school activities?
4. Do you hear racist slurs, or have you seen racist graffiti around the campus?
5. Have you or other students been teased or called anti-gay names?
6. Have you heard the phrase "that's so gay"?
7. Have you or other students been teased or bullied about being overweight?
8. Have you or others been teased or bullied about being dumb (not as smart)?
9. Have you or others been teased for how much money you or your family has?
10. Where do you see bullying and cruelty taking place?
11. "I feel safe here." Is this statement true for you? Why or why not?

Appendix B. Examples of Not in Our School Activities

- Create your unique NIOS slogan, for example, "Stand Up, Stand Out: Not In Our School."
- Watch NIOS films (streamed at NIOT.org) in the classroom followed by discussions.
- Hold a school-wide assembly with student skits and speakers.
- Do the "Dissolving Stereotypes" activity at school or at a community event where everyone recalls negative stereotypes that have personally impacted him or her. Record the memories on rice paper and gently place them into a pool where they dissolve.[52]
- Lead a flash mob in the school cafeteria or on the steps of city hall.
- Sponsor a poster or video contest on the theme of NIOS.
- Design NIOS t-shirts, buttons, posters, or stickers, and distribute to all students.
- Teach students to be upstanders, and create scenarios where they can role-play and practice in their after-school program.
- Organize a mentoring or cross-age service-learning project where older students teach the younger ones and perform skits about responses to bullying.
- Link your NIOS campaign to the curriculum: Have the students research the areas of most concern and write essays.
- Have the students write letters to the newspaper and local officials describing their commitment to NIOS and making their school safe.
- Map the places where bullying happens in the school.
- Have students prepare a presentation or video to teach younger students about bullying.
- Collaborate with the city council or with the mayor's office to craft and pass a resolution for Not In Our School Week, or create a Mayor's Task Force on Bullying Prevention.
- Sponsor a kindness event. Examples include a "Walk for Kindness," a Kindness Facebook page, or a community-wide "Silence is Acceptance" group painting event.
- Sponsor a community screening of a NIOS film, followed by student-led small group discussions.
- Sponsor a broadcast of a NIOS film on the local cable station followed by a student panel.

52. "Dissolving Stereotypes," Not In Our Town video and lesson plan, https://www.niot.org/nios-video/dissolving-stereotypes-0.

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About the COPS Office

The Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

Rather than simply responding to crimes once they have been committed, community policing concen-trates on preventing crime and eliminating the atmosphere of fear it creates. Earning the trust of the community and making those individuals stakeholders in their own safety enables law enforcement to better understand and address both the needs of the community and the factors that contribute to crime.

The COPS Office awards grants to state, local, territory, and tribal law enforcement agencies to hire and train community policing professionals, acquire and deploy cutting-edge crime fighting technologies, and develop and test innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders and all levels of law enforcement. The COPS Office has produced and compiled a broad range of information resources that can help law enforcement better address specific crime and operational issues, and help community leaders better understand how to work cooperatively with their law enforcement agency to reduce crime.

- Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than $14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.
- To date, the COPS Office has funded approximately 125,000 additional officers to more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies across the country in small and large jurisdictions alike.
- Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than 8.57 million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.

COPS Office resources, covering a wide breadth of community policing topics—from school and campus safety to gang violence—are available, at no cost, through its online Resource Center at www.cops.usdoj.gov. This easy-to-navigate website is also the grant application portal, providing ac-cess to online application forms.

This guide is intended to be a primary resource for law enforcement officers who play a large role in helping to educate and support children and adults about: the problems resulting from bullying, teasing, and all forms of bias; ways to prevent and intervene in bullying situations; and how to break cycles of bullying and transform student behavior. It includes key definitions of bullying and intolerance, concrete strategies for law enforcement to partner with school leaders, and ideas for police officers, school and community leaders, and students to collaborate and take action together. Also featured are anecdotes from the Not In Our School campaign, an ongoing commitment to empower students to create safe and inclusive environments. The background information and strategies presented apply to young people from all ethnic groups and genders, and all ages, from preschool to high school.

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To obtain details on COPS Office programs,
call the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit COPS Online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.

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