Megan's Story: Bullying & Cyberbullying in Today's World
OUR MISSION

TO SUPPORT AND INSPIRE ACTIONS TO END BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING, AND SUICIDE.
Megan Taylor Meier
Born 11/06/92
6TH & 7TH GRADE
SUICIDE

• Most youth who are involved in bulling do not engage in suicide-related behaviors

• Youth who are bullied and who bully others are more likely to report suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts

• Both bullying others and being bullied are linked to feelings of hopelessness and helplessness - feelings that increase a young person's risk of suicide

SUICIDE IS THE... 2ND LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH FOR YOUTH AGES 10-24
JOINER'S THEORY OF SUICIDE

- Thwarted Belongingness: "I am alone"
- Perceived Burdensomeness: "I am a burden"
- Capability for Suicide: "I am not afraid to die"

Suicide or Near Lethal Suicide Attempt
IS IT BULLYING?

RUDE
When someone says or does something unintentionally hurtful and they do it once

MEAN
When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they do it once

BULLYING
When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they keep doing it—even when you tell them to stop or show them that you're upset
IN 2014, THE CDC AND A PANEL OF EXPERTS PUBLISHED AN UPDATED AND UNIFORM DEFINITION OF BULLYING:

"Bullying is any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated."

"Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm."
CYBERBULLYING

Willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices to harass, threaten, and humiliate others.
WHERE DO YOU THINK CYBERBULLYING TAKES PLACE?
OUR EMOTIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA
LOOK LIKE CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY OR SEVERELY PHYSICALLY ABUSED;

RESPOND TO EVERYDAY STRESS LIKE COMBAT SOLDIERS WITH POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER;

LIFELONG PROBLEMS WITH CORTISOL AND ADRENALS LEADING TO CHRONIC HEALTH PROBLEMS;

SHOW SIGNS OF DYSFUNCTIONAL THOUGHT PROCESSING, CHRONIC DEPRESSION, AND ANXIETY INTO ADULTHOOD.
HOW DO WE CREATE A HEALTHY SCHOOL CLIMATE?
IN A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE, STUDENTS...

- Do better academically
- Engage in fewer risky behaviors like drinking alcohol or using drugs
- Feel better about themselves
- Attend school more regularly
- Engage less in bullying and other problem behaviors
SCHOOL INTERVENTION
WHEN CAN A SCHOOL STEP IN?

CERTAIN EXPRESSIONS ARE NOT PROTECTED BY THE FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHT AND ALLOW FOR INTERVENTION AND/OR DISCIPLINE, INCLUDING THOSE THAT:

- Substantially or materially disrupts learning
- Interferes with the educational process or school discipline
- Utilizes school-owned technology to harass
- Threatens other students or infringes on their civil rights
WARNING SIGNS A CHILD IS BEING CYBERBULLIED OR IS CYBERBULLYING

It's important to pay attention when a child exhibits sudden changes in digital and social behavior. Some of the warning signs that a child may be involved in cyberbullying are:

- Noticeable, rapid increases or decreases in device use, including texting
- A child exhibits emotional responses (laughter, anger, upset) to what is happening on their device
- A child hides their screen or device when others are near, and avoids discussion about what they are doing on their device
- Social media accounts are shut down or new ones appear
- A child starts to avoid social situations, even those that were enjoyed in the past
- A child becomes withdrawn or depressed, or loses interest in people and activities
PREVENTING AND ADDRESSING CYBERBULLYING

• If you think a child is being cyberbullied, speak to them privately to ask about it. They may also have proof on their digital devices

• If you believe a child is being cyberbullied, speak to a parent about it. Serve as a facilitator between the child, parent, and the school if necessary

• To understand children's digital behavior and how it relates to cyberbullying, increase your digital awareness

• Develop activities that encourage self-reflection, asking children to identify and express what they think and feel, and to consider the thoughts and feelings of others. Help children develop emotional intelligence so that they can learn self-awareness and self-regulation skills and learn how to have empathy for others

• Role model, reinforce, and reward positive behavior towards others

• Encourage peer involvement in prevention strategies
ACTIVITIES TO TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT BULLYING & CYBERBULLYING

Schools don’t always need formal programs to help students learn about bullying prevention.

Schools can incorporate the topic of bullying and cyberbullying prevention in lessons and activities.

• Internet or library research, such as looking up types of bullying, and cyberbullying, how to prevent it, and how kids should respond

• Presentations, such as a speech or role-play on stopping bullying and cyberbullying

• Discussions about topics like reporting bullying and cyberbullying

• Creative writing, such as a poem speaking out against bullying or a story or skit teaching bystanders how to help

• Artistic works, such as a collage about respect or the effects of bullying and cyberbullying

• Classroom meetings to talk about peer relations
"You should have..."
Least likely to have positive effects
• Told me it wouldn't happen if I acted differently
• Told me to stop tattling (most harmful adult action)

"Connection, support and reframing"
Most helpful
• Listened to me
• Encouraged me
• Checked back with me over time to make sure I was ok

"Direct Intervention"
Effects varied from school to school. It matters we do these!
• Supervision
• Punishment/consequences
PEER STRATEGIES

Confrontation by bystanding peers - Least effective of positive strategies

- Peers told aggressors to stop angrily or calmly

Included me/spent time with me at school - Most helpful actions overall

- Walked or spent time with me at school
- Talk to me at school to encourage me
- Gave me advice (hope)
- Helped me get away; made a distraction
- Helped me tell adults

Encouraged me - Strong positive effects

- Talked to me at school to encourage me
- Called me at home to encourage me
STRATEGIES

CONSIDER THE SCHOOL CLIMATE
Comprehensive effort to change norms, attitudes, & behaviors

TRAINING
All school staff should be trained appropriately to address these issues

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT
Help educate parents on ways to support children outside of the school environment

COLLECT DATA
Gather school & community-wide data on bullying to inform prevention efforts

UPDATE SCHOOL POLICIES
Ensure all school anti-bullying policies and procedures are up-to-date and expectations are clear for students
STRATEGIES

VALIDATE STUDENTS
Actively engage and listen to students and their needs nonjudgmentally

ADULT INVOLVEMENT
Increase adult supervision in the school with appropriate response

OFFER SERVICES
Identification of students and families in need of services and obtaining services for them

IMPLEMENT PREVENTION PROGRAMS
Education and awareness among students, parents, & educators about warning signs and importance of their involvement is vital
HOW TO VALIDATE FEELINGS

COMMUNICATING
Your intent to listen without judging or blaming and calling yourself out if you stray from this empathetic stance.

BEING SENSITIVE
To acknowledging how difficult and even embarrassing it is to be “different” when he/she wants to be like everyone else.

ACKNOWLEDGING
The problems in his/her life and that they matter.

REFLECTING
About how upsetting it feels when his/her emotions seem to spin out of control.

UNDERSTANDING
Of how deep shame (often non-detectable to frustrated parents) can keep influencing the child to behave in ways that he/she may regret later.
State of Missouri Children’s Service Funds

**Jackson County**
Children’s Services Fund
https://jacksoncountykids.org/Lincoln County

**Lincoln County**
Lincoln County Resource Board
www.lincolncountykids.org

**Franklin County**
Franklin County Community Resource Board
www.franklincountykids.org

**St. Louis County**
St. Louis County Children’s Service Fund
https://www.stlouisco.com/csf/St-Louis-County-Funding/Who-We-Fund

**Boone County**
Boone County Children’s Services Board
https://www.showmeboone.com/community-services/funded-organizations.asp

**City of St. Louis**
St. Louis Mental Health Board (MHB)
https://www.stlmhb.com/partnerships/

**Jefferson County**
Community Treatment, Inc., dba ComtreA
www.comtreA.org

**St. Charles County**
The Community and Children’s Resource Board
www.stcharlescountykids.org

**Lafayette County**
Lafayette County Children’s Services Fund
http://www.lccsf.org