



Empowering Youth
Transforming Communities

Creating Safer Schools and Communities From the Inside Out

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Community Matters...

- A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, Founded in 1995
- Working throughout North America
- Safe School Ambassadors® program and book
- *School Violence-Prevention Report Card (2009)*
- Many other tools for school climate improvement.

CM is a thought-leader in the areas of school violence-prevention and youth development.

CM's mission is: *to collaborate with schools and communities to engage, equip and empower young people to become change-agents and peacemakers.*

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Bullying is...

- Occurring at younger ages
- Getting meaner
- Becoming more acceptable in youth culture
- More difficult for adults to identify because students are becoming experts in electronic aggression



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- 160,000 children skip school every day

- 5.5% of HS students in 2007 were afraid to go to school

- National Education Association

A third of students in 6th - 10th grades nationwide experienced some kind of bullying.

- National Institutes of Health



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22% of 4th through 7th graders reported academic problems due to bullying

Source: Hoover and Oliver, 1996

91% of 5th-graders reported bullying as their number one concern.



Source: Survey of 6 elementary schools, grades K-5, Sacramento, CA, 2007

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Cyberbullying Snapshot

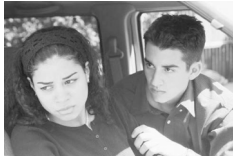
Among middle-schoolers, in a typical 30 days:

- Over 33% had cyberbullied another student
- Over 20% admitted to doing it just to make others laugh
- Over 40% reported being targets
- Youth who have been targets have suicidal ideation 72% more frequently/ intensively than those who have not been targets.



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79% of boys and 83% of girls report being sexually harassed, 85% by peers

- American Association of University Women 2001

51% of all teens hear LGBTQ slurs every day

- National Mental Health Association 2002

43% of teens are victims of cyberbullying

- National Crime Prevention Council 2007



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What are the personal costs to youth of mistreatment?

- Decreased focus, motivation & learning
- Illness - Absenteeism
- Drug and alcohol use or abuse
- Depression
- Eating disorders
- Self-mutilation
- Suicide



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What are the institutional costs to schools of mistreatment?

- Time spent on discipline
- Lower teacher and staff morale
- People are afraid and tense
- Students bring weapons
- Lower test scores



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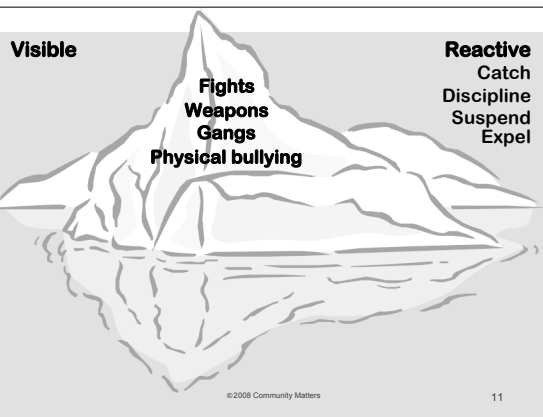
What are the financial costs to schools of mistreatment?

- Reduced ADA funds
- Increased dropping out
- Increased vandalism
- Lawsuits



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“Outside-In” Approach

- Security
- Adult-Driven
- Rules
- Consequences



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COSTS of the “Outside-In” Approach and its effectiveness

- For 2005, estimated national expenditure on school security equipment: \$985 MILLION!

- Source: US School Security Market (2006).



- However, there is no measurable evidence that heightened security or zero tolerance policies significantly reduces school violence.

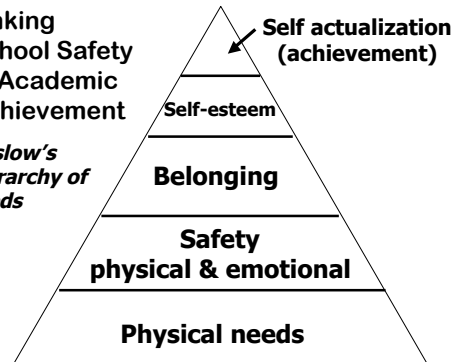
- Source: Skiba, Russell. (2002) University of Indiana.

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Linking School Safety to Academic Achievement

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs



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Current Conditions

- Fewer \$\$
- Fewer staff
- More mistreatment
- More stress

A perfect environment
for the virus to grow

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Ten-Year Retrospective

School Violence Prevention Report Card (2009)
Overall grade = D+

Learnings:

- More than bullying → “Mistreatment”
- Adults miss most → Iceberg
- Targets & Aggressors → “Bystanders”
- Rules → “School Climate”

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More than “Bullying”

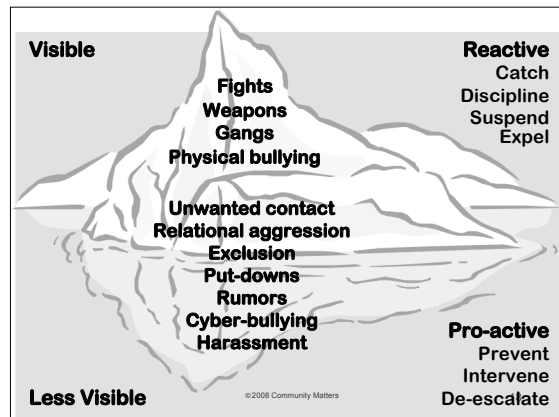
5 Types of Mistreatment

- Exclusion
- Put-downs
- Bullying/Intimidation
- Unwanted physical contact
- Acts against campus



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“It’s not a hardware issue anymore — it’s an interpersonal issue.”



“It’s the relationships between the people in the school.”

- Bill Bond, Security Consultant, National Association of Secondary School Principals, USA
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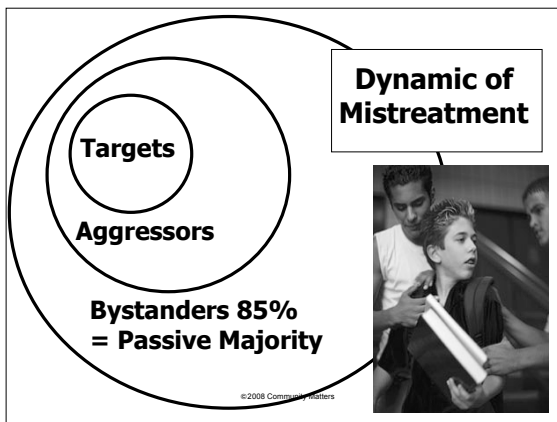
“Inside-Out” Approach

- Relationships
- Student-Centered
- Norms
- Social Change



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What is school climate?

- Degree of safety & belonging
- Based on our inner sense
- Everyone can feel it
- Influences our behavior
- We influence it...



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School Connectedness & Positive Climate

- **“The single strongest association with connectedness was school climate.”**
- Source: Blum, Robert, MD, Ph.D., (2002) University of Minnesota. Findings from study involving 71,515 students and 127 administrators at 134 schools, grades 7 - 12.
 - **“Students who have a stronger attachment to school develop increased feelings of security and acceptance within the school... lead[ing] to improved academic and behavioural functioning and increased literary skills.”**
- Canadian Public Health Association, 2003
 - **“Increased school connectedness is related to educational motivation, classroom engagement, and better attendance. These are then linked to higher academic achievement.”**
- Source: Wingspread Declaration on School Connections. (September, 2004). *Journal of School Health, 74(7)*, 233-234. Report based on a detailed review of research and in-depth discussions among an interdisciplinary group of education leaders.
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5 Determinants of School Climate

1. Institutional factors
2. Staff/personnel factors
3. Family factors
4. Community factors
5. Youth factors



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What institutions can do...

- **Physical environment**
 - Warm and welcoming
- **Policies**
 - Asset-based
 - Implemented fairly
- **Governance**
 - Inclusive decision-making
 - Open communication

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What staff can do...

Be an Assets-Builder

- Build/strengthen relationships
- Observe/notice mistreatment
- Intervene effectively



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What parents / guardians can do...

Educate & Be Involved

- **With your child(ren)**
 - High expectations
 - High communication & support
 - Watch for signs
- **With other parents**
- **With their school(s)**
 - Be present; partner
 - Advocate



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What communities can do...

Communicate & Collaborate

- **Involve all sectors**
- **Educate**
 - Value of youth
 - Respectful interaction
- **Model / practice**
- **Create opportunities for deepening connections**

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The Power & Potential of Youth

Students:

- See, hear and know things adults don't.
- Can intervene in ways adults can't.
- Are first to arrive at an incident of mistreatment.
- Set the tone and social norms on campus.



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Each time a person stands up for an idea, or acts to improve the lives of others, or strikes out against injustice, s/he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

- Robert F. Kennedy

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