

## A Brief Look at the Story of Bullying

Learning to Love More

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## Getting Started

- **Definition:** A person's repeated exposure to negative actions over time on the part of one or more persons.
- **Why It Is Topical:** Increase in world population, influence of media, and ongoing research and bullying prevention projects make us aware of its injurious effects.



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## Life Cycle

- **Starts** in the family.
- **Continues** into our relationships in schools, workplaces, and personal life.
- **Globally**, in the interactions between communities and nations.
- **Complex PTSD:** Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) sometimes develops in targets and witnesses of bullying, may already exist in the bully, and can be seen throughout the lifecycle.

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## Research on Bullying



- **Child Suicide:** In the UK, at least 16 children kill themselves each year because they are being bullied at school.
- Each of these deaths is **unnecessary, foreseeable, and preventable.**
- **Cumulative stress index:** Bullying/harassment, loss of spouse or parent, and sexual abuse now rate as three major causes of childhood stress.

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## Well Being Implications

- **PTSD** and cumulative stress reaction complexes in target and bystander, leading potentially to violent retaliation
- **Trauma Triggers:** Trauma is triggered more by verbal and emotional abuse than by physical injury
- **Illness Onset:** Can be delayed, with effects lasting long after exposure



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## Psychiatric Injury

- **Complex PTSD** has been defined as a psychiatric injury, as opposed to a mental illness
- **Cause:** Any prolonged period of negative stress with one or more of these factors
  - Captivity
  - Lack of means of escape
  - Entrapment
  - Repeated violation of boundaries
  - Continual harassment
  - Betrayal and Rejection
  - Confusion

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## Results

- Lack of control, loss of control and disempowerment
- Sense of overwhelm due to nature of events or continual harassment
- Person's inability (helplessness, lack of knowledge, or lack of support) to deal with life experience

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## Bullying in Family

- **Causes:** Relationship dynamics, mental disorder, and substance and physical abuse
- **Signals:** Domestic violence and child abuse
- **Personality Issues:** Disordered personalities are sometimes at root of bullying, which can be explained by relentless urge to control

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## Bullying in Schools: Exclusion



- **Exclusion:** Not fitting in is highest ranked reason for being bullied, in elem schools, per major research survey in rural Midwest in 1993.
- **Bullying Traits** fall into two categories: appearance and social status.
- **90%** of student respondents reported being bullied.

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## Bullying in Schools: Teasing

- **Teasing:** Most frequent bullying behavior.
- **Confusion** about nature and intent of teasing in children and adults. Kids often don't know how to tell whether their teasing is hurtful.
- **Reciprocal Hurt:** Teasers who state teasing is done for fun often are hurt by teasing themselves and have experienced stress through teasing.



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## Schools: Prevention



- **Starts** in home
- **Integrate** parents into school anti-bullying campaigns
- **Educate** entire population—staff, school board, parents, and children; be inclusive!
- **Setting Limits:** Lovingly set clear limits and consistently enforce consequences for boundary violations

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## School: Policy

- **Unacceptability:** Faculty and staff must agree to definition of bullying and be prepared to enforce bullying as unacceptable through school-wide agreement on standards and consequences
- **Inclusion and Empathy:** Policy depends on inclusive, nonviolent, and empathetic modeling of faculty and staff in their relationships with each other

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### School: Policy



- **Good Samaritans:** Bystander kid who intervenes for target, loses social standing and is at risk for bullying.
- **Honoring Courage:** Honor acts of courage that stand out at school and integrate children in peer counseling and support functions related to bullying prevention.

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### Successful Anti-Bullying Programs

- **Bully-Proofing Your School:** Research-based American program focuses on education of 85% of student bystanders
- **Majorities:** It teaches silent majority skills to become caring majority who holds power and is accountable for making school safe



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### Successful Anti-Bullying Programs

- **Bullying Hurts:** Evidence-based program facilitated by high school students with elementary school students and parents.
- **Positive Behavior Support:** Communicates expectations to all community members and then recognizes caring behavior.
- **Violent behavior:** Have found that programs reduce undesirable behaviors, in general.

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### Bullying: Adult Opposition



- **Fear** bringing up a controversial issue.
- See issue as **challenge** to parenting, to sense of control or authority, or to professional reputation.
- **Natural order:** Believe it is needed in competitive/aggressive society.
- Feel **helpless** to do anything productive to prevent bullying.
- **Essentials:** Firm direction, commitment, and vision.

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### Bullying in Workplace

- **Definition:** Non-physical form of violence, abuse and harassment at work characterized by perpetrator and victim parts, role of power and control, and health consequences.
- **Health Effects:** Anxiety, depression, and PTSD.
- **Harassment Most Common:** In a study of violence at US Postal Service, most common form of harassment was verbal abuse, with risk of 1 in 4.
- **Verbal abuse:** Includes deliberate intimidation, shouting, threatening, and provoking arguments.

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### Bullying: Workplace Consequences



- **Rare Consequence to Bully:** Bullying with impunity is norm.
- **70%** of targets punished by firing, not bully.
- **Projection:** Bullies often project own fears or thoughts upon target, resulting in further confusion. Projection often starts with family of origin.

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## Workplace Bullying: Results/Solutions



- **Results:** Symptoms of target of bullying include stress disorders such as
  - \* General Anxiety Disorder
  - \* Reactive Depression
  - \* PTSD.
- **Long-Term Solution:** Change culture to one intolerant of destructive aggression. This can take time, requiring patience and vision.

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## Bullying in Communities and Nations

- **Cultural Speciation:** W/in species, group fosters group identification, which treats outsiders as inferior species; superiority as substantial factor in human exclusion and harassment.
- **Prejudice and Hatred:** Ever-growing capacity to justify heinous crimes against creation in name of God and superiority.



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## Bullying in Communities and Nations

- **Intimidation:** Threats and belittling of political campaign trails
- **Hostility:** War and aggression between sovereign states

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## Addressing the Challenge

- **Educate self.**
- **Avoid Pathological Explanations:** Differentiate between mental illness and psychiatric injury.
- **Ways of Coping:** Learn how to cope and share your experience with others.
- **Activate:** Become an activist in anti-bullying campaigns.



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## Spiritual Connection



- Prayer and meditation
- Infuse Divine in heart and soul regularly
- Talk and walk with Divine
- Let Divine do our work
- Reflect love back to Divine and to community
- Watch thoughts and change as necessary
- Learn to love more

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## Contacting Presenter

- Write to Hannah-Leigh Bull at [hlb@llamadeara.com](mailto:hlb@llamadeara.com)
- Visit Llama Deara Ranch web site [www.llamadeara.com](http://www.llamadeara.com)
- Call Hannah-Leigh in New Mexico at 505-685-9416

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