



GROWING HEALTHY MINDS

A VIRTUAL LEARNING COLLABORATIVE

Supporting Student Mental Health

**Bullying, trauma-sensitive de-escalation
and techniques for co-regulation**

February 18, 2025

Acknowledgements & Disclosures

This Project ECHO® is made possible through a grant from the New Jersey Department of Children and Families and collaboration with:



New Jersey State
School Nurses Association
Leading, Teaching, Caring.



St. Joseph's Health
ST. JOSEPH'S CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL



All identified relevant financial relationships have been mitigated and the educational content thoroughly evaluated by the New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics for fair, balanced, and safe, effective patient care.





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Accreditation Statement:

This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Medical Society of New Jersey. New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics is accredited by the Medical Society of New Jersey to provide continuing medical education for physicians.

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New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics designates this live internet activity for a maximum of 1.25 AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.

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Successful completion of this CME activity, which includes participation in the evaluation component, enables the learner to earn up to 1.25 MOC points in the American Board of Pediatrics' (ABP) Maintenance of Certification (MOC) program. It is the CME activity provider's responsibility to submit learner completion information to ACCME for the purpose of granting ABP MOC credit.

Continuing Nursing Education Credits

No one with the ability to control content of this activity has a relevant financial relationship with an ineligible company.

Requirements:

- Participation in the full duration of each Growing Healthy Minds session for which you are seeking contact hours
- Completion of a Growing Healthy Minds session evaluation for each session for which you are seeking contact hours, which will be sent to the email you used to register following each session

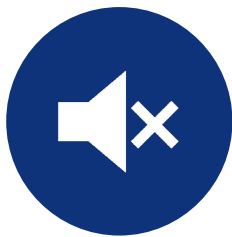
This continuing education activity was approved by the Ohio Nurses Association, an Ohio Board of Nursing approver. (OBN-001-91) Expiration date: 10/1/2026



Housekeeping



We encourage you to turn on your camera while engaging in the session.



Kindly remain on mute to reduce background noise when you are not speaking.



By participating in these ECHO sessions, you are consenting to being recorded.



To protect patient privacy, please refrain from sharing any protected health information (PHI).



Please unmute or use the chat function to engage in discussion with fellow participants and hub faculty.

Share your full name, role, and district in the chat!

Meet our Hub Faculty Members

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Bully/victim problems in school really concern some of our basic values and principles. For a long time, I have argued that it is a fundamental democratic right for a child to feel safe in school and to be spared the oppression and repeated, intentional humiliation implied in bullying. No student should be afraid of going to school for fear of being harassed or degraded, and no parent should need to worry about such things happening to his or her child.

—Dr. Dan Olweus, in “Sweden,” The Nature of School Bullying: A Cross-National Perspective

Bullying Overview

N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14 defines "Harassment, intimidation or bullying" as any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds as provided for in section 16 of P.L.2010, c.122 (C.18A:37-15.3), that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:

1. a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property; or
2. has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
3. creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

Key Considerations

- See NJDOE website - [Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying \(HIB\)](#)
- Can occur anywhere/anytime - not just in school, during school year
- Reasonable perception of characteristic - looking through eyes of the alleged victim
- Substantial disruption
- Identifiable Harm
- No need to prove bad intent - focus on impact and what student should have known
- Cannot informally pre-screen - Investigate of formal preliminary determination
- De-escalation is critical - Physical Restraint is last resort, only emergencies, many steps to follow
- Specific rules for when to involve law enforcement - e.g., bias-related act, credible threat, sexting
- Increased Risk of Suicidal Ideation, especially if bullied in-person and online
- Information sharing is critical and is permitted under FERPA where there is a legitimate educational interest

Q1:

What role do you think teachers, counselors, and administrators play in stopping bullying?

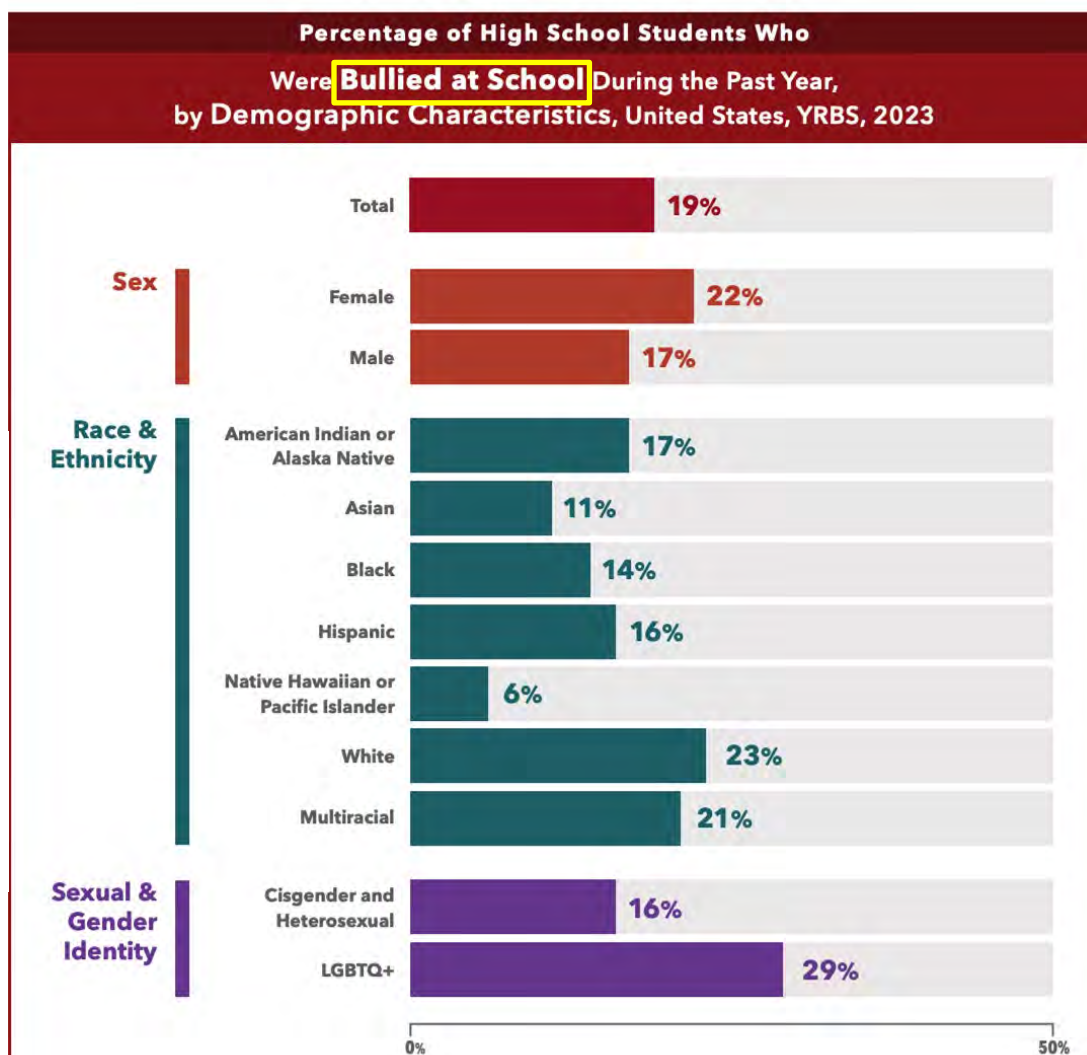
Q2: What's the biggest challenge when addressing bullying in your role?

Behind Every Stat, is a Lived Experience

In 2023, 19% of high school students were bullied on school property during the past year. Female students were more likely than male students to be bullied at school. Asian students and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students were less likely than Hispanic, White, and Multiracial students to be bullied at school. LGBTQ+ students were more likely than cisgender and heterosexual students to be bullied at school.



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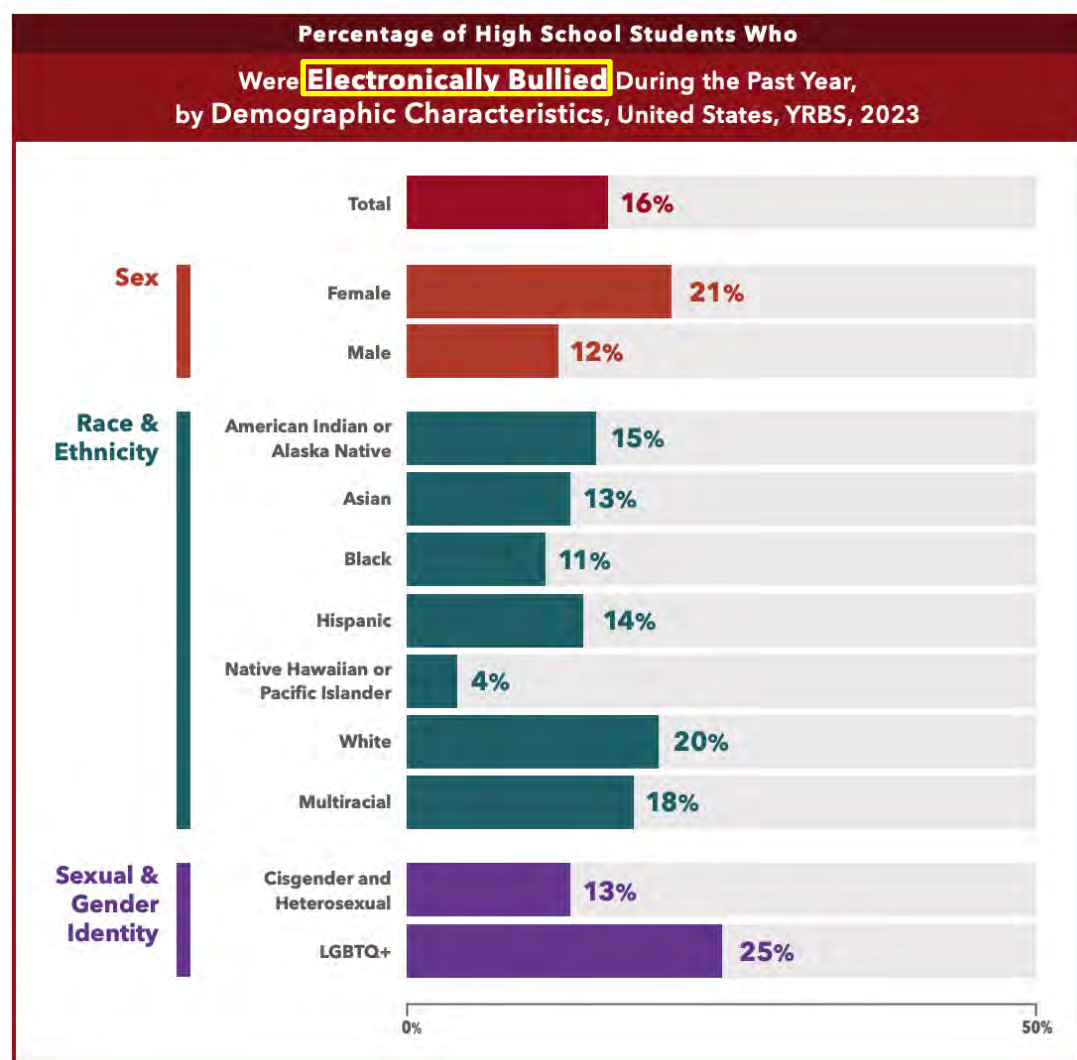


Behind Every Stat, is a Lived Experience

In 2023, 16% of high school students were electronically bullied, including through texting, Instagram, Facebook, or other social media, during the past year. Female students were more likely than male students to be electronically bullied. Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander students were less likely than students from most other racial and ethnic groups to be electronically bullied. LGBTQ+ students were more likely than cisgender and heterosexual students to be electronically bullied.



IB



Behind Every Stat, is a Lived Experience

Student Reports of Bullying: Results From
the 2022 School Crime Supplement to the
National Crime Victimization Survey

WEB TABLES
MAY 2024

NCES 2024-109rev.
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Publication of the National Center for Education Statistics at IES

- The 2022 [School Crime Supplement](#) to the National Crime Victimization Survey (National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice) indicates that, nationwide, about **19.2% of students ages 12-18 in grades 6-12** reported being bullied, with approximately **15.4% of students** reporting being **bullied with a power imbalance**, **14.5% being bullied repeatedly**, and **12.7% being bullied with both a power imbalance and repetition**.

Lessons from the Field

- 7/26/23 - \$9.1 Million settlement reached in case involving suicide and alleged failure to address HIB
 - Increased risk of suicidal ideation for students who experience HIB
- Critical to address mental health needs of BOTH victims and aggressors
- Extended period of bullying may create a disability, lead to violation of Child Find, FAPE
- More than half of students engaged in school shootings were victims of HIB. More than half experienced suicidal ideation.
 - See article [Mental Health, Threat Assessment and the Law](#)

Recent Case Law

- S.G. o/b/o B.H. v. BOE of the Township of Montvale, Commissioner 1/26/2024 – Difficulty making friends/social connections is not HIB
- K.W. and S.W. o/b/o A.W. v. BOE of the School District of the Chathams, Commissioner 3/15/2024 – Prompting AI to produce discriminatory conduct seen by other students can be a form of HIB - *See also recent incident where NJ High School Students used AI to create fake, sexually explicit images of female students* - [Westfield parent/daughter interview](#)
- H.P. o/b/o R.S. v. BOE of the Borough of Tenafly, Commissioner 3/26/2024 – A typical conflict can turn into HIB when one student goes from insulting athletic ability to Anti-Semitism
- E.H. and B.H. o/b/o J.H. v. BOE of the Twp. of Jefferson, Commissioner 5/30/2024 – Inappropriate touching of student may be HIB even if behavior is a manifestation of student's disability

ACES

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) (CDC, 2022)

- Traumatic events in childhood that occur prior to 18 years old. For example:
 - Experiencing violence, various types of abuse, or neglect
 - Witnessing violence in the home or community
 - Having a family member attempt or die by suicide
- ACES are linked to chronic health issues, mental illness, and substance use
- ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance use problems in adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education, job opportunities, and earning potential.
- ACES score – the higher the score, the more likely the individual will experience adverse effects, unless mitigated through protective factors (Boullier & Blair, 2018).

Effects on Students

- Both students who are bullied and THOSE WHO BULLY are at risk for adverse outcomes
- Students who are bullied
 - Higher level of depression and anxiety
 - Health complaints
 - Decreased academic and attendance outcomes
- Students who bully
 - Higher level of substance use
 - Higher levels of violence
 - Higher dropout rate
 - In adulthood - lasting effects in relationships

Effects on Students: LGBTQ

LGBTQ Populations

- Trevor Project (2021)
 - **The majority of LGBTQ youth (52%) who were enrolled in middle or high school reported being bullied either in person or electronically in the past year.**
 - Transgender and nonbinary students (61%) reported higher rates of bullying compared to cisgender LGBQ students (45%).
 - Those who were Native/Indigenous (70%), white (54%), and multiracial (54%) reported higher rates of being bullied compared to those who were Latinx (47%), Asian American/Pacific Islander (41%), or Black (41%).
- CDC (2023)
 - In 2023, female students and LGBTQ+ students experienced more violence, signs of poor mental health, and suicidal thoughts and behaviors than their male and cisgender and heterosexual peers.

“Behavior is the Language of Trauma”

Children will show you before they tell you that they are in distress.

However, few educators know how to identify and respond to traumatic stress behaviors in children.

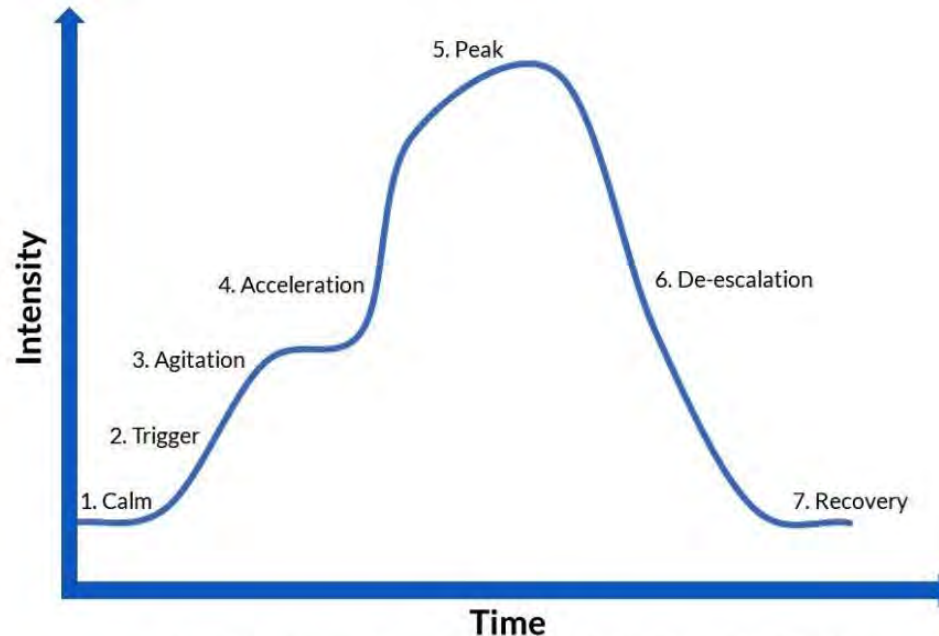
Trauma Informed De-Escalation

Re-traumatization can occur when a student who has been exposed to acute, chronic or complex trauma is met with punitive responses from authority figures that embarrass, isolate, attempt to control, demean, or demoralize them.

- Making eye contact using soft eyes when speaking with students or making a request
- Remove student from stimulation calmly with redirection
- Do not engage while student is in aggravated state - allow time and space
- Listen
- Recognize the emotional stress - give options - journal, music, deep breaths

Prevention and De-escalation of Intense Behavior Responses

Understanding the Acting-Out Cycle



Adapted from *Appropriate Responses to the Seven Phases of the Escalation Cycle* (Colvin 2004)

Adult Responses that May De-escalate or Prevent Intense Behavior	Adult Responses that May Escalate Intense Behavior
Model calm through your breath, nonverbal expression, self-talk, tone of voice, and use of calming strategies. The more upset the student becomes, the calmer the adult needs to become	Avoid power struggle. A loud tone of voice and close proximity when it is not needed can be signs of a power struggle. Be careful not to set up a win-lose situation.
Wait for a later time to discuss the behavior with the student. Only after everyone is calm and back in a rational state of mind should there be any discussion.	Avoid the threat of consequence or punishment during escalation. Punishment does not de-escalate behavior.
Pre-teach, prior to a student escalating, how to self monitor tension levels and use self-regulation strategies for alleviating tension. This instruction can not take place during an incident of heightened emotion.	Do not expect a student to access a skill that they have not been taught, have not been taught to proficiency, or have not been taught to expand across environments.
Know and be able to implement a student's IEP, BIP or 504-plan that specifies behavioral interventions. Follow the specific responses or accommodations that are individualized for the student, especially with regard to the necessary adult support or approach that best meets that student's needs	Do not improvise or deviate from the written plan. Consistency in the adults' approach will help de escalate an intense behavior and support a student in learning, applying or generalizing a skill.
Pause and engage in active listening to show that you are listening to the student and that you understand and respect their feelings.	Do not argue, interrupt, talk over, mock, make threats, or set demands and limits the student is unlikely to meet.
Always validate a students' feelings. Use language that validates the student's feelings and not the student's behavior. Validating a student's feelings does not mean you validate the behavior.	Do not tell a student not to be upset, angry, sad, etc. Telling a person not to feel whatever they are feeling can be harmful and escalate the situation.
Know and follow your school or district policy related to contacting the police or emergency services.	Do not call the police outside of your school or district policies. Do not threaten to call the police in an attempt to manage a student's behavior.

Trauma Focused Approach

- **Trauma acts like a lens, shaping how a person sees the world. It's similar to wearing sunglasses—once you put them on, everything appears tinted. In the same way, trauma can alter a person's perception of their surroundings and experiences.**
- Demonstrating a person-centered, strength-based approach transforms the way educators and students engage, fostering a positive cultural shift
- Questions to ask yourself include:
 1. What type of trauma could be at play here?
 2. What are some possible triggers? They could be obvious or subtle.
 3. How could you respond in a trauma-informed way?

Bullying as a Traumatic Experience

- As mentioned earlier, many researchers recognize bullying as an Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) due to its long-term and cumulative impact.
- For students already facing other ACEs, bullying can further undermine their sense of safety and security at school.
- While the level of trauma experienced varies among individuals, all students can benefit from additional support.

Caring for Children Experiencing Trauma and Stress:

- Children experiencing trauma or toxic stress are not trying to be malicious. They are trying to regain control as a basic survival instinct.
- Remember: Bullying doesn't just affect the victim; it can also have a traumatic impact on the person who bullies and the bystanders who witness the ordeal.
- What strategies can adults use?
 - Comfort
 - Connect
 - Collaborate

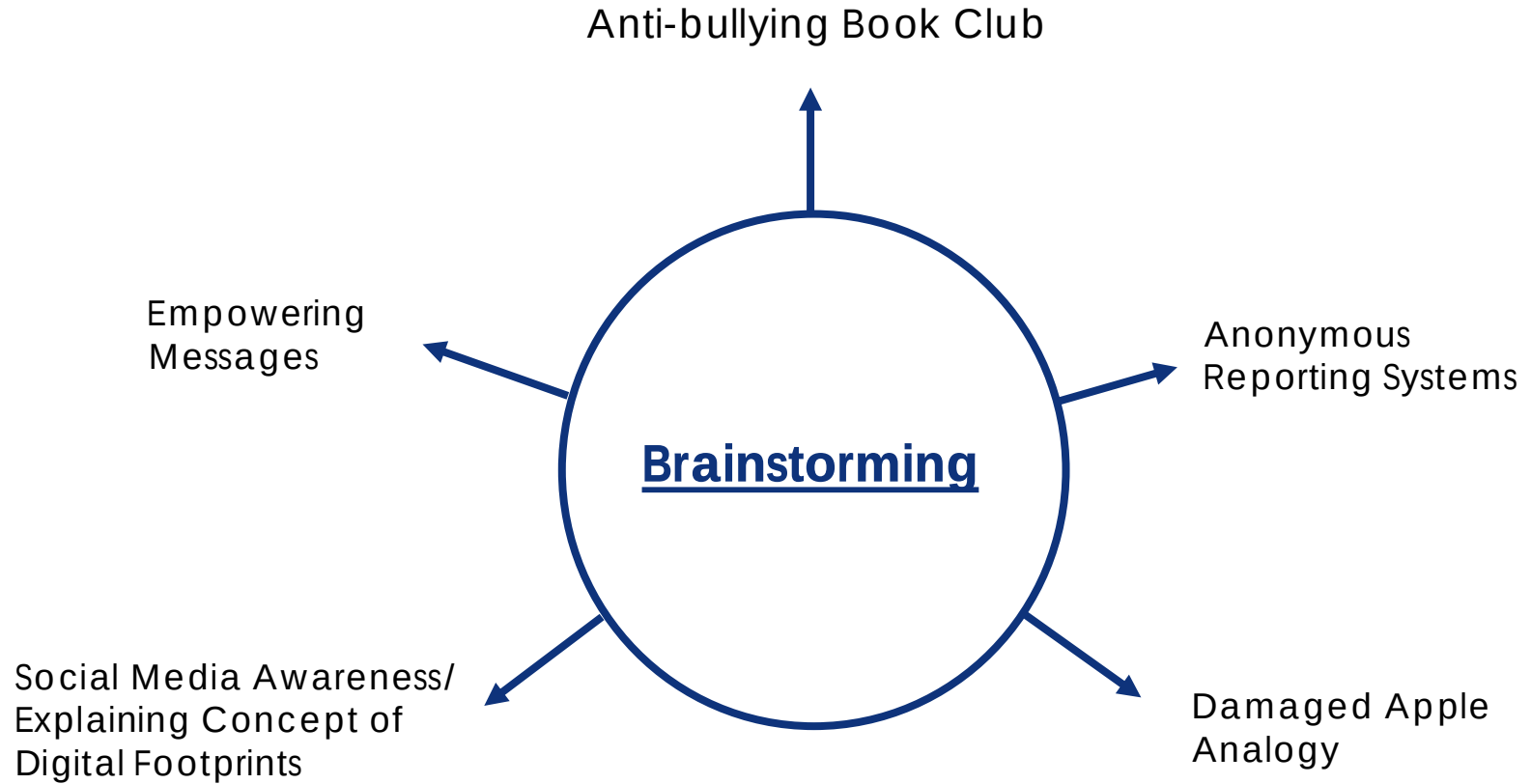
Break the Cycle!

- **Connection** before correction.
- Establish trusting relationship with child and their family.
- Help children know what to expect with **structured** and **predictable** environments.
- Model and encourage **positive** social interactions.
- **Recognize** that when children act disruptive, they are showing you that they feel out of control.
- Actively **teach** and **model** healthy coping strategies.
- Help children and their families name their **emotions**.



If you could
implement one new
school policy to
address bullying,
what would it be?





“My doctrine is this, that if we see cruelty or wrong that we have the power to stop, and do nothing, we make ourselves sharers in the guilt.”

—A man named Wright,
in Anna Sewell’s *Black Beauty*



@GrowingHealthyMinds

Safeteens - by the Teens for the Teens

Early Childhood Resilience Toolkit



Early Childhood Resilience Toolkit — DeveloPlay, LLC

Supporting and Restoring Students' Senses of Safety

Empowerment Listening | Safe @ School

Preventing Bullying in Schools: Teacher Guide | 2025 Preventing
Test Prep - Teacher Certification

Prevention and De-escalation of Intense Behavior Responses:
What Adults Can Do

Scan this QR code to open
Linktree on device OR
access via URL:



<https://linktr.ee/GHM1>

Resources

- [Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying \(HIB\)](#)
- [Mental Health, Threat Assessment and the Law](#)
- [*Westfield parent/daughter interview*](#)
- [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System](#) (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023)
- [Student Reports of Bullying: Results From the 2022 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey](#)
- Book Sources:
 - [Safe Teen: Powerful Alternatives to Violence](#)
 - [Bullying at School](#)
 - [The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander](#)

Evaluation

Reminder:

If you are seeking educational credit for your participation in
this webinar,

Please be sure to complete the session evaluation at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CML5PFK>



Join us again!

Topic: Sextortion prevention and response

Cost: FREE! There is no cost to participate in this series.

When: Tuesday, March 25th from 6:00-7:15 pm

Where: All sessions are hosted virtually via Zoom.

Presented by:



Jennifer Chuang, MD, MS, FAAP



David Nash, Esq



Former Law Enforcement

