

12-2018

## **Bullying Prevention through Kindness**

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### **Recommended Citation**

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Bullying Prevention through Kindness

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9/18/18

Title: Bullying Prevention

Abstract:

The capstone project promotes awareness of childhood bullying and methods of prevention.

Bullying is a major issue throughout the United States (US) and bullying rates need to drastically drop. The project teaches students the meaning of kindness, emotions, and treating people with respect to help our future generation start eliminating bullying. The kindness project provides hands on activities for children giving them empathetic and practical ways to focus on being kind to their peers. The expected outcomes were to bring awareness to the classroom and after the post-survey have students feel more confident, have better relationships with friends, and feel safe at school. The most important finding so far is the number of kids who have been bullied at very young ages. Fourth grade is generally the start of bullying and over 50% of students have reported being bullied. The next step for every agency is to implement the kindness project in every fourth-grade classroom.

**Agency and Communities Served**

The agency that I interned at was Monterey Bay Charter School in Pacific Grove.

Monterey Bay Charter School stems from the Waldorf education system. The agency's mission is "The heart of the Waldorf method is that education is an art – it must speak to the child's experience. To educate the whole child, his heart and his will must be reached, as well as the mind." ( -Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) This alternative outlook on education includes music, dance, theatre, writing, religion, and outdoor experiences. It is a holistic arts integrated approach to learning, which emphasizes a child's relationship to the natural world thereby promoting respect for the environment and humankind. (Mbayschool.org, 2018) Monterey Bay Charter school only has approximately two classes per grade and teachers follow their classes from kindergarten to sixth grade. This kind of learning system allows for students and teachers to grow and learn together over the years, thereby developing rapport and understanding learning needs and styles. Monterey Bay Charter School began in 1998 and continued to grow over the past twenty years. Monterey bay Charter School is a tuition free public charter school serving all of the county, including Seaside, Monterey, Marina, Pacific Grove, Carmel, Big Sur, and Salinas.

**Problem Issue or need**

Bullying is a growing concern within every school regardless of location, socioeconomic status of the school, or ethnic majority. (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). “Of those students who reported being bullied, 13% were made fun of, called names, or insulted; 12% were the subject of rumors; 5% were pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on; and 5% were excluded from activities on purpose.” (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016). Students who experience bullying are at increased risk for poor school adjustment, sleep difficulties, anxiety, and depression (Center for Disease Control, 2015).

Students who are both the targets of bullying and also engage in bullying behavior are at much greater risk for both mental health and behavior problems than students who only exhibit one of the behaviors, either bullying others or are are bullied (Center for Disease Control, 2015).

Bullied students indicate that bullying has a negative effect on how they feel about themselves (19%), their relationships with friends and family and on their school work (14%), and physical health (9%) (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2016). Due to these statistics students who experience bullying are at increased risk for poor school adjustment, sleep difficulties, anxiety, and depression (Center for Disease Control, 2015).

## Bullying prevention through kindness

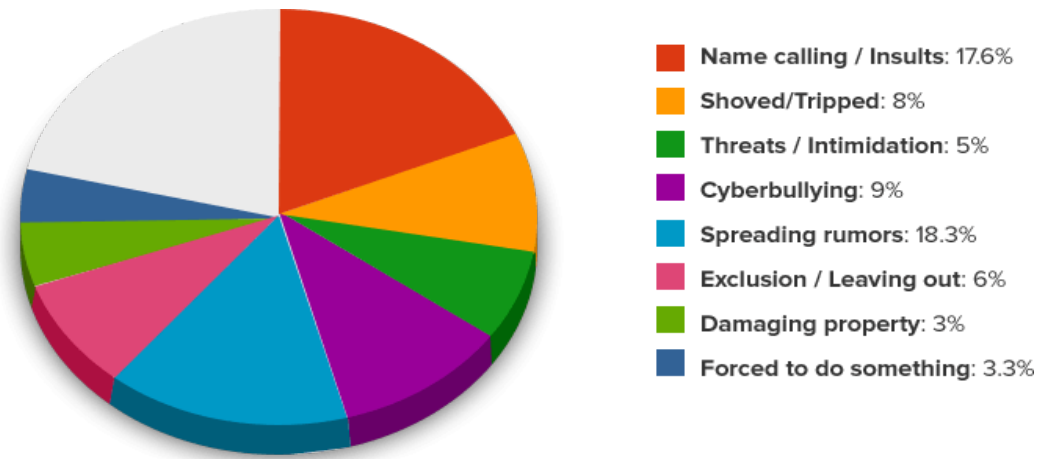
In my opinion, bullying is a preventable problem in children's' lives around the nation, which is the primary reason I chose to focus on bully prevention and incorporating kindness acts as a means of prevention this type of behavior.

Some contributing factors is the lack of parent involvement in the child's school education. There are many reasons for lack of parent involvement such a low income families where resources are limited. A child's homelife can be rough, with little or no parents around, where possible no boundaries are set for the kids for various reasons, many times allowing children act out due to limited rules or accountability measures. Another contributing factor is bullying that takes place at home whether it is physical or verbal abuse. Children may be influenced by this behavior at home and then repeated behavior at school. Another risk factor is the students may try and act "cool" by bullying, they may be influenced at school by their peers on how to act. The last contributing factor is teacher involvement. Teachers have so much on their plates and sometimes they overlook the bullying that is taking place, or even ignore it. Teacher involvement is critical and educating teachers on how to deal with or prevent the bullying is a crucial part of prevention. Specifically, the teacher is often with the student more hours each day than the parent and know more about what the child is exhibiting or experiencing. Unless the teacher shares this with the parent the parent has not idea there is a

need to intervene. Therefore, it is crucial the teacher intervene and also communicate with parents

The potential consequences that stem from a child being bullied include: feelings such as depression, sadness, loneliness, or even eating disorders. Although these feelings may not occur immediately it can be feelings that develop over time. Another consequence of bullying can lead to poor academic success. Children may feel threatened or scared to go to school and that could possibly lead to bad grades or not being able to focus in class, and down the road lead to skipping class or even dropping out. Although this consequence may seem extreme, suicide is also another leading cause of bullying. Bullying can lead to substance abuse which will alter their thinking, which is another cause of suicide. ("Effects of Bullying", 2018) These may seem like extreme effects, but they are very relevant consequences in many children's life due to bullying. This is one of the reason I chose to bring this in at a young age and hopefully it will help in preventing bullying in the future.

<https://www.accreditedschoolsonline.org/bullying-awareness-guidebook/>



### Capstone Project Description and Justification

#### Anti bullying through Kindness

This is the Type 1 project which focuses on training or an educational intervention. The purpose of my project focuses on incorporating five acts of kindness for twenty one days. This program was started a couple years ago and has been implemented in many schools across America. This project focuses on students performing five acts of kindness throughout the day as a bullying prevention. It is an alternative approach and rather than focusing on bullying, this method focuses on intentional kind acts instead of mindless bullying. On a national level 1 out 5 students have been bullied and only 33% have reported being bullying to adult. ("Bullying Statistics", 2018)

This kindness project should be implemented because it will help teach students what kindness means, have a positive effect on their relationships, and teach them the effects bullying can have in the future. Furthermore, a recommendation of this project is to hold assemblies with



all the school and honor student who have exhibited kindness, making kindness and good acts the norm to be looked up to, instead of the rare unnoticed action of a student. I started this project in a fourth grade class and i'm hoping that eventually this will carry out as a school wide project. The 21 days of kindness program has a specific curriculum to follow. I measured the effectiveness this program has on the kids by testing how many kids have been bullied, and by the end of my Capstone measuring if this project helped with bully prevention. According to the 21 days of challenge website, 443,000 lives have been impacted, 43 schools are participating in this kindness program, and it is a proactive response to bullying. ("21 Day Kindness Challenge", 2018) The method I have used is pre and post-surveys. I started by giving students the pre-survey to test if bullying is even relevant in this grade. According to the survey results, bullying was affecting children, so from there I began my implementation and activities. I have been in the class two- three days a week and during those times they report back on activities, feelings, and relationships have been going. I bought each student a Kindness Journal and for homework everyday they report back on feelings, friendships, and kindness deeds they have done that day. Following that, we do an activity each time as a class. We have done things such as make a poster board, with quotes and kindness goals. We have made kindness webs with activities to do throughout the day, we have read different stories, and we have also talked about the effects, statistics, and outcomes that bullying can bring. Students have opened up a lot about their family

and friendships going on, and share personal emotions in their Kindness Journal. This has given me the opportunity to work individually as well with each of the different students.

An obstacles I faced in completing this assignment was time management. The classroom I interned in had a very tight schedule of activities throughout the day, so it was hard getting started and finding a time to implement my project. Another obstacle I have faced was working with such a young group of kids. They have a very short attention span, so focusing and staying on track was not always the easy for them. An unexpected outcome/circumstance was hearing some of the issues the young children faced. For example, many students reported struggling with relationships at school and have experienced feeling ostracized. Additionally student reported traumatic events such as deaths in the family, family dysfunction, violence, or divorce, all of which seemed to be have a negative effect such as acting out in class, feeling like an outcast, difficulty focusing, or feeling of sadness.

### **Project Results:**

Outcomes that my mentor and I achieved as a result of of my Capstone project were increased knowledge, skills, and awareness regarding positive and negative behaviors from the children participating in this program. When I started this project, I had an outline of activities, surveys, and expected outcomes I wanted to achieve. An outcome that my mentor and I saw was

a positive change in students interaction with one another and their understanding of kindness.

Students did 15- 30 different activities such as group collaboration, individual reflection, class games, bingo, crossword puzzles, word searches, kindness journals, effects of bullying, coping mechanisms, and individual work with me. Running and implementing these activities also taught me a lot about myself, different teaching methods, and how to lead a class. It made me realize how to change my language in order for students to understand the activities at a fourth grade comprehension level. These activities had such a positive outcome in the class and I hope that Mrs. Garland can continue with these activities throughout her teaching career. Bullying cannot be a quiet issue and has to be on the forefront of how we teach students, communicate, and the bar of expectation regarding behavior amongst peers, or we will suffer the long term consequences of depression, anxiety, undereducated people, unemployment, and overall negative interpersonal adjustment in the next generation.

Outcome measures I used to measure my results were a pre and post survey. I had very good results and students all learned from these activities. After I gave my pre and post survey I gathered up all the results and input them into a google forms. From there, I developed charts and graphs and compared my results at the end. Students reported back on the kindness activities they did and each said they learned something throughout these months.

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**Appendices:**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>	<b>Estimated completion Day</b>
<b>Get to know students</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>January 20</b>
<b>Reading Circles</b>	<b>Leadership, collaboration</b>	<b>January 25-and continuing</b>
<b>Games</b>	<b>Leadership, collaboration</b>	<b>January 25-and continuing</b>
<b>Observe class and see what possible capstone ideas I can do</b>	<b>Leadership, collaboration</b>	<b>January 25-and continuing</b>
<b>Reading Circles</b>	<b>Leadership, collaboration</b>	<b>January 25-and continuing</b>
<b>Cleaning/preparing for activiti</b>	<b>collaboration</b>	<b>January 25-and continuing</b>
<b>Reading Circles</b>	<b>Leadership, collaboration</b>	<b>January 25-and continuing</b>
<b>21 days of Kindness</b>	<b>Leadership, collaboration</b>	<b>January 25-and continuing</b>

<b>Capstone Research</b>	<b>Statistics and research</b>	<b>January 25-and continuing</b>
<b>Possible activities for 21 days</b>	<b>Leadership, collaboration</b>	<b>January 25-and continuing</b>
<b>Research Grants</b>	<b>Professional development</b>	<b>January 25-and continuing</b>
<b>Available Resources</b>	<b>Statistics and research methods</b>	<b>January 25-and continuing</b>
<b>Decide on Capstone/Meeting with mentor</b>	<b>Leadership, collaboration</b>	<b>January 25-and continuing</b>
<b>End of the Year with kids and celebration</b>	<b>Leadership, collaboration,</b>	<b>First week of May</b>
<b>Meeting with mentor</b>	<b>Professional development, leadership</b>	<b>Aug 20th</b>
<b>Capstone Materials</b>	<b>Professional development, leadership</b>	<b>First week of September</b>

<b>Pre-Survey</b>	<b>Professional development, leadership</b>	<b>First week of September</b>
<b>Implementation/ Activities (1 month)</b>	<b>Professional development, leadership</b>	<b>September 25-October 25</b>
<b>Post Survey</b>	<b>Professional development, leadership</b>	<b>Week of October 25</b>
<b>Final week in class</b>	<b>Professional development, leadership</b>	<b>December 5th</b>

### **Pre-Survey**

1. Do you know what it means to be bullied?

Yes

No

Maybe

2. Have you ever been bullied?

Yes

No

Maybe

Never

3. If you have been bullied, where did it take place?

Home

School

Other

4. If you have been bullied, how many times?

0 times

1-5 times

6-10 times

11 or more

5. If you have been bullied, did you tell anyone?

Mom or dad

Teacher

Other

I didn't tell anyone

I have never been bullied

6. If you have been bullied how did it make you feel?

Sad

Very Sad

I don't know

I have never been bullied

8. Do you know what kindness means?

Yes

No

Maybe

9. Do you act kind to your family?

Always

Sometimes

Never

10. Do you act kind to your friends?

Always

Sometimes

Never



11. Do you think you can do random acts of kindness everyday for the next month?

Yes

No

Maybe

Sometimes .

12. Do you want to help stop bullying?

Yes

No

I don't know

### **Post Survey**

1. Are you more aware of bullying taking place at school after this Kindness activity?

Yes

No

Maybe

Sometimes

2. Has anyone bullied you in the last month?

1-5

6-11

12-15

15-or more

I haven't been bullied

3. Will you help a friend if you see them getting bullied?

Yes

No

Maybe

I don't know

4. Did you like all these kindness activities?

It helped a lot

It helped a little bit

It didn't help at all

I don't know

5. These activities made me more aware of what bullying was

Yes

No

Maybe

I don't know

6. I am going to continue to act kind after this activity is over?

All the time

Sometimes

Maybe

Never