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Gina Marie Silva
California State University, Monterey Bay

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Increasing awareness of the risks of bullying and cyberbullying amongst adolescent girls

Gina Marie Silva

A Capstone project for the Bachelor of Arts in Human Development and Family Studies

Introduction

Many teenage girls may face bullying situations and may be unaware of how to intervene. Without knowing how to intervene, girls may experience poor mental health, low self-esteem, and lack of social skills. Therefore, I created a one- day interactive lesson on how to intervene in bullying situations and on the negative effects of bullying and cyberbullying for a group of older Girl Scouts in grades 7th-12th at the Girl Scouts of California Central Coast Office in Castroville, California.

Needs Statement

Bullying is common among middle school and high school adolescents, and many do not recognize the negative effects of bullying. In addition, cyberbullying has increased and is a new risk factor in today's world and may lead to depression, anxiety, and somatic concerns (Huston, Kelly, & Militello, 2018). In order to decrease the amount of bullying in today's world there needs to be prevention programs that teach adolescents how to decrease the amount of bullying, knowing how to intervene, and promoting bullying prevention. Adolescents may witness bullying on a daily basis when they are at school and online (Menesini, Nocentini, & Palladino 2016). If someone is a victim of bullying, it can lead to suicide to suicide, mental health, and low self-esteem (Carvalho et al., 2019). According to Arseneault et al. (2017), bullying during the ages of 11 to16 can cause vulnerability in children when it comes to forming relationships as well as poor mental health. Being a victim to bullying can cause anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Girls may be more vulnerable to bullying since they are going through pubertal changes and are particularly sensitive to issues of body image. Girls are not always nice to each other and one of the main thing's girls will bully each other about is body image (DeLara, 2019).

Cyberbullying is another concern that adolescents face when they are in middle and high school. According to Gradinger, Strohmeier, and Spiel (2010), cyberbullying is defined as bullying online; either through social media, computers, and/or cell phones. Some cyberbullying situations get to the point where adolescents take their own life (Carvalho et al., 2019). Adolescents that are cyberbullied experience detrimental effects such as, being dissatisfied with who they are, humiliated and exposed, disinterested in life, want to take action through anger or vengeance on the bullies (Gordon, 2019). Also, victims of cyberbullying can start to feel isolated and alone and this can lead to suicide (Gordon, 2019). Menesini, Nocentini, and Palladino (2016) created an intervention program called, "No Trap!" This program focused on bullying and intervention for face-to-face and online bullying. The program developers implemented classroom activities, discussed bystanders and victims, learned about coping and empathy mechanisms and cyberbully decreased over time.

Adolescents need to have the right tools and guidance when it comes to cyberbullying and know how to handle it (Menesini, Nocentini, & Palladino 2016). If adolescents do not know how to handle cyberbullying situations then they may turn to self-harm or acting out (Huston, Kelly, & Militello, 2018).

Adolescents in middle school and high school are suffering the most with bullying because they are finding out who they are and want to be (Menesini, Nocentini, & Palladino, 2016). I will complete a one-day, four-hour long interactive presentation with girls in seventh through twelfth grade through the Girl Scouts in the Central Coast of California region.

<div align="center">Theory</div>

Kohlberg identified three levels of moral reasoning: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional (Crain, 2005). Each level is associated with increasingly complex stages of

moral development and how to conversate in the world as adolescents get older. The adolescent participants are in the Conventional Level of moral development, most likely in stages three good boy, nice girl orientation and stage four the law-and-order orientation. In these stages, they are coping with interpersonal behavior and wanting social approval and obeying authority and conforming to social norms (Crain, 2005). Adolescents at this period of their lives are looking to see if adults or their peers live up to their word and expectations in behaving in a good way (Crain, 2005). Also, in the conventional level, adolescents are wanting to know and see that the person they are communicating with is making an effort to understand them and their feelings (Crain, 2005). Adolescents, as well, are paying more attention to society as a whole and noticing or engaging in real life problems (Crain, 2005). Given that participants are likely in the Conventional Morality level currently, I am hoping that participating in the activities will introduce ways to intervene in different types of bullying situations will provide opportunities to engage in postconventional moral reasoning. For example, adolescents will be learning about social contract orientation and universal-ethical-principle orientation when it comes to bullying and cyberbullying (Crain, 2005). They will start to look at why it is wrong to bully and what the negative outcomes can be due to excessive bullying, consistent with the moral thinking needed for postconventional moral reasoning. Adolescents may also learn about universal principles, which requires high-level moral thinking, in relationship to bullying (Crain, 2005).

<div align="center">Consideration of Diversity</div>

My project will be conducted at Girl Scouts of California Central Coast at the Castroville office which will be open to girls from Santa Cruz County, San Benito County, and Monterey County. According to the Girl Scouts' Looker report, the ethnic composition of the Girl Scouts in this area is 1% American Indian, 1% Asian American, 2% Black/African American, 3%

Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 9% Latinas, 3% White, and 1% multiple races. Approximately, 52.7% of the girls in Santa Cruz, San Benito and Monterey County are socioeconomic disadvantaged. I would expect that the participants would reflect this percentage of socioeconomically disadvantaged. Because a component of my project includes cyberbullying, some participants may not have regular access to the technology such as computers or cellphones, relevant to the curriculum. Since I will be conducting this presentation in English, participants will need to be proficient in English in order to participate in activities and group discussions. This project is geared toward middle schoolers starting seventh grade and high school girls. Anyone under that age may have a harder time grasping the information. Also, boys will not fully be able to relate to certain topics that will be discussed during the presentation given that it is the Girl Scouts. Another thing that I will not be focusing on is ethnic-based bullying. The program will be based on bullying and cyberbullying as a whole.

Learning Outcomes

I intend to provide a four- hour long presentation to 7th-12th grade students enrolled in Girl Scouts at the Castroville office.

By the end of the project, participants will:

1. Identify two negative outcomes of bullying and cyberbullying, respectively.

2. Identify three ways to intervene when bullying and cyberbullying occur.

3. Create an anti-bullying campaign.

Methods

First, when the girls walk in, I will have them sign-in and grab a copy of the bullying survey (Appendix A) and a pen and have them work on filling the survey out. Once the girls have completed the survey, I will introduce myself and explain to the Girl Scouts why I am there

and what my presentation is about. Then, I will ask the group to define in their own words what bullying and cyberbullying means. I will write down what their responses are and then I will move on to discuss the results of the survey. I will bring the girls back together and as a group we will discuss what answers the girls indicated for each question. This exercise will allow the girls to be open and honest and build trust to set the scene for the rest of the program. One of the parts of the Girl Scout Law is to be honest and fair. Next, the girls will watch a YouTube video on different facts of bullying https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBGehdfG6rw. Once the video is over the girls will write down one fact that they either, learned, already knew, or was shocked by. I will have a discussion to check for understanding. After that, the girls will write down an incident where they have been bullied on a piece of paper. The girls will read it out loud, crumple up the paper and throw it. This will allow the girls to learn how to talk about the problem and then let it go. After this activity the girls will take a 15-minute break.

When the girls come back from their break, they will watch another YouTube video. This YouTube video is about different types of bullying https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rYTMo6rYvc. Once the video is over, I will pair up the girls and they will come up with a scenario and act it out in front of the group. The girls will have to guess what type of bullying is being acted out. Next, the girls will watch a YouTube video about cyberbullying https://youtu.be/-5PZ_Bh-M6o. Once the video is over the girls will discuss what they learned, already knew, or what shocked them. Then the girls will discuss a time when they have been cyberbullied or if they know someone who has been cyberbullied. Once the conversation is over the girls will make their own list of ways, they can notice cyberbullying and then will share as a group to see what others came up with. I will collect their

list as evidence that they understood the activity. Then, we will break for lunch for 30-45 minutes.

When the girls come back from lunch, I will ask how the girls are doing and if they have questions or comments. I will distribute a True or False survey (See Appendix B) about negative effects of bullying to the girls. I will have them fill it out individually, and, once completed, we will go over each question as a group. This will be a time for me to answer any questions or clarify anything about bullying. Once we have completed going over the survey, I will then start a discussion about bullying in Girl Scouts. I will ask the girls if they feel like Girl Scouts have dealt with bullying before. This will be an open discussion to see what the girls have to say and to allow them to share examples. This also will allow me to see if they have understood the different types of bullying thus far. I will have the girls take a 15-minute break,

When the girls come back from their break, I will discuss ways to intervene. I will break the girls up into groups and have them come up with a list of ways to intervene when bullying is happening. Once they have completed their lists each group will share what they came up with. Next, the girls will discuss a time or times where they either intervened during a bullying situation or saw bullying happen, but did not intervene. I will encourage the girls to explain what happened when they intervened and explain why they did not intervene. After that discussion is over, I will break the girls up into different groups and have them come up with a list of why they think people become bullies. Once the girls have completed their list, I will have them share their lists out to the group. I will ask the girls if they feel like if they were ever the bully and explain why. The last activity I will have the girls do is a Take Action Project. The Take Action Project is a tradition in Girl Scouts. The girls are encouraged to find a problem in the community and think of a way to fix it. Once they have thought of a way to fix it then they create a Take

Action Project and put the plan into action. In this case I have the plan already done and the girls just have to elaborate more on it and then put it out into the public. The girls will create an anti-bullying campaign. I will split them up into groups and they will think of a plan on how to execute it. The girls will decide if they are going to promote it at school, community center, etc. Once they create the project the girls will present it to the group. After they have presented their project, I will ask them to put the plan in action and then report out to me what the results they found. Once I get the evidence back, they will receive their Take Action Badge (See Appendix C).

Finally, I will wrap up the programming by thanking the girls for participating. I will allow the girls to ask any questions and give me feedback on what they would want to see differently or any advice. I will close the programming with doing the Girl Scout friendship circle and then giving them their earned BFF patch (See Appendix D).

Results

Could not complete due to COVID-19

Discussion

Could not complete due to COVID-19

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Appendix A

1. During this school year how often have you seen someone being bullied?
□ Never.
□ Sometimes (1 or 2 times a month).
□ Regularly (1 or 2 times a week)
□ Every day.

2. During this school year how often have you been bullied at school?
□ Never. □ Sometimes (1 or 2 times a month).
□ Regularly (1 or 2 times a week)
□ Every day.

3. How were you bullied?
□ I haven't been bullied.
□ I have been teased and called names.
□ I have been hit, kicked or pushed.
□ Others leave me out of their group.
□ Others have taken my belongings.
□ Others don't sit by me or talk to me.
□ Others say they will hurt me.
□ Others try to hurt me on the way to and from school.
□ Others bully me by phone or text message.

4. How many kids have bullied you?
□ I haven't been bullied.
□ One kid bullies me.
□ Two or more bully me.
□ Lots of kids bully me.

5. During the past year how often did you miss school because you felt unsafe, uncomfortable or nervous at school or on your way to or from school?
□ Never.
□ Sometimes (1 or 2 times a month).
□ Regularly (1 or 2 times a week)
□ Every day.

6. If you have seen bullying at school, what would you do?
□ I haven't seen any bullying.
□ Ignored it as none of my business.
□ Nothing, just watched.

□ Joined in on the fun.
□ Tried to stop the bully or help the victim.
□ Asked for help from an adult or other student.

7. If you have been or are being bullied, why do you think it happens?
□ No one bullies me.
□ I don't know why others bully me.
□ I act or look different.
□ I always do well in class.
□ I'm smaller or weaker.
□ I guess I deserve it.
□ Other reasons:

8. How many times in the past year have you bullied, teased or made fun of someone?
□ Never.
□ Sometimes (1 or 2 times a month).
□ Regularly (1 or 2 times a week)
□ Every day.

9. Why are some kids bullies?
□ I don't know.
□ They are bigger and stronger.
□ They think it is fun.
□ They want to get even for being bullied themselves.
□ They want to "show off" or impress their friends.
□ They fight in their own families.
□ Other reasons:

10. During this past school year how often have you had your property stolen or deliberately damaged, such as your car, clothing, or books?
□ Never.
□ Sometimes (1 or 2 times a month).
□ Regularly (1 or 2 times a week)
□ Every day.

11. How many times in the past year (the last 12 months) have you been afraid of being pushed, shoved, slapped, hit, or kicked by someone on school property?
□ Never.
□ Sometimes (1 or 2 times a month).

□ Regularly (1 or 2 times a week)
□ Every day.

12. How many times in the past year (the last 12 months) have you been afraid of having your property stolen or deliberately damaged, such as your car, clothing, or books?
□ Never.
□ Sometimes (1 or 2 times a month).
□ Regularly (1 or 2 times a week) KSDE School Counseling Kent Reed, Consultant
□ Every day.

13. How many times in the past year (the last 12 months) have you pushed, shoved, slapped, hit, or kicked someone on school property?
□ Never.
□ Sometimes (1 or 2 times a month).
□ Regularly (1 or 2 times a week)
□ Every day.

14. How many times in the past year (the last 12 months) have you stolen or deliberately damaged property, such as someone's car, clothing, or books?
□ Never.
□ Sometimes (1 or 2 times a month).
□ Regularly (1 or 2 times a week)
□ Every day.

15. What do adults do at school when they see bullying?
□ Nothing, they ignore it.
□ Stop it and tell everyone to leave.
□ Stop it and solve the problem.
□ Other:

16. Has an adult at school talked to your class about bullying?
□ No.
□ Once, and what they said helped me a lot.
□ Once, but they don't really understand what's going on.
□ We talk regularly about bullying.

17. What can adults at school do better to help stop bullying?
□ Supervise the school better.
□ Make rules against bullying and discipline bullies.

☐ Talk about bully prevention in class.
☐ Help students work problems out.
☐ Bullying is not a problem at our school.

18. Have you ever carried a weapon to school?
☐ Never.
☐ Sometimes (1 or 2 times a month).
☐ Regularly (1 or 2 times a week)
☐ Every day.

19. During this school year how often were you in a physical fight?
☐ Never.
☐ Sometimes (1 or 2 times a month).
☐ Regularly (1 or 2 times a week)
☐ Every day.

20. Have you talked to anyone about being bullied?
☐ I have not been bullied.
☐ No.
☐ Yes, a teacher or other adult at school.
☐ Yes, a brother or sister...
☐ Yes, a friend.
☐ Yes, my parents.

Appendix B

Negative effects of bullying

1. Social and school isolation (True or false)
2. Sleep disturbance (True or false)
3. Changes in eating habits (True or false)
4. Low self-esteem (True or false)
5. Symptoms of anxiety (True or false)
6. Higher risk of illness (True or false)
7. Increased truancy risk (True or false)
8. Difficulty maintaining social relationships (True or false)
9. Increased risk of substance abuse (True or false)
10. Chronic depression (True or false)
11. Increased risk of suicidal thoughts, suicide plans, and suicide attempts (True or false)
12. Poor general health (True or false)
13. Difficulty establishing trusting, reciprocal friendships and relationships (True or false)
14. Risk of spousal or child abuse (True or false)
15. Substance abuse (True or false)
16. Less likely to be educated or employed (True or false)
17. Decreased academic achievement—GPA and standardized test scores—and school participation. They are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school. (True or false)
18. A very small number of bullied children might retaliate through extremely violent measures. In 12 of 15 school shooting cases in the 1990s, the shooters had a history of being bullied. (True or false)
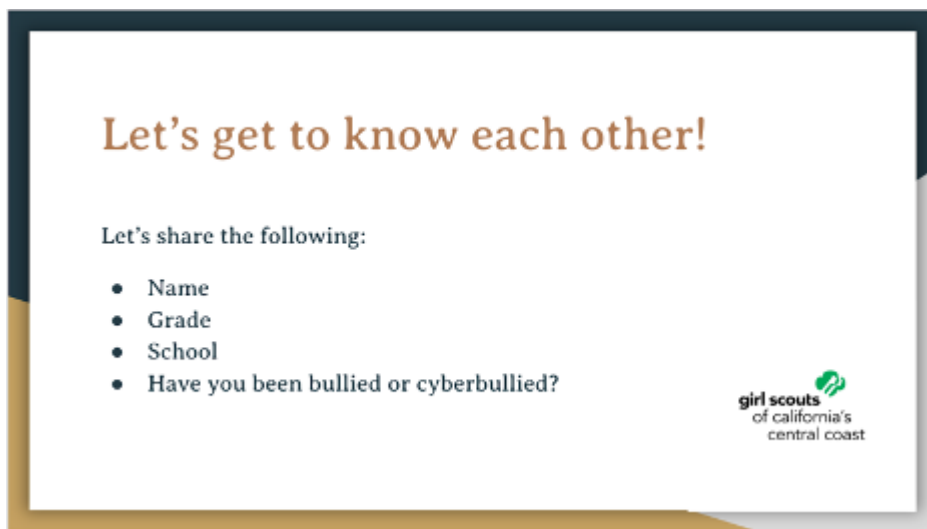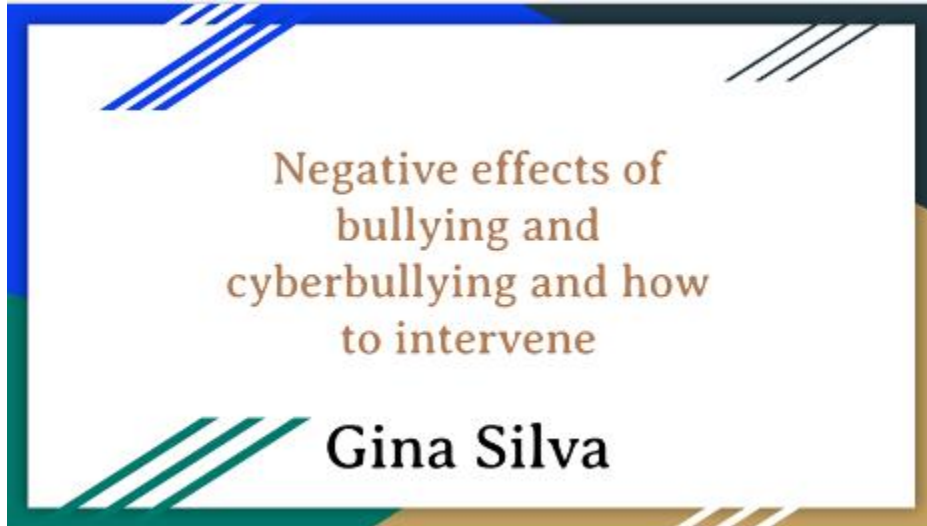
Appendix C

Appendix D

Appendix E

Presentation on the negative effects of bullying and cyberbullying and how to intervene

What is bullying?

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Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems.

What is Cyberbullying?

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- Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content.
- Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.

Let's talk about facts!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zBGehdfG6rw

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Activity time!

- Write down one fact that you either learned, already knew, or that shocked you
- Share out to the group
- Write down a time where you have been bullied
- Read it out aloud
- Then crumple up the paper and throw it!

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Let's take a break!

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Let's talk about different types of bully

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5rYTMo6rYvc

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Activity Time

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- Split up into groups and create a scenario based on one of the types of bullying you learned in the video.
- Once you have practiced, each group will act it out in front of everyone and the group will guess the type of bullying
- Why do you think people bullying others?
- What effects do you think bullying has on people?

Let's talk about Cyberbullying

https://youtu.be/-5PZ_Bh-M6o

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Group time

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- What stood out to you the most?
- Did you already know this information, learned something new, or shocked?
- Tell us about a time you have been cyberbullied or about a friend
- How did you feel?
- If you saw it happening did you step in help why or why not?

Cyberbullying activity

- I will split you up into groups and I want you all to come up with a list of why people cyberbully others.
- What effects do you think cyberbullying has on people?

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LUNCH TIME

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Check-in time

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- How are you all feeling today so far?
- Do you have any questions?
- Do you need to review anything we have gone over?

Negative effects of bullying: True or False Survey

- Please fill out the survey alone.

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Discussion: True or False Survey

- Let's go over each question and answer
- What did you think about the survey?
- Were any of the questions hard to distinguish what could be a negative effect of bullying?

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Do you think there is bullying in Girl Scouts?

- Open discussion

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Let's take a Break

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Ways to intervene in bullying situations

- Break up into groups and come up with a list of ways to intervene
- Share the lists out with the group

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Tell us about a time you have intervened

- Provide examples of times you intervened
- Provide advice that your family, friends, peers, etc have given you
- Provide an example of when you did not intervene and explain why

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Why do you think people become bullies?

- Spilt up in groups and create a list of reasons
- Share it out to the group when completed

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Do you feel like you have ever been a bully?

- Be open and honest
- This is a safe place
- Why do you think you were a bully?

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Let's put everything together

- What did we learn today?
- What were the 3 videos we watched today about?
- What is the problem I was explaining to you?

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Take action project!

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- Create a "Take action project."
- Anti-bullying campaign
- Decide what you will do to implement this project at school or a community center
- Make an outline of how you will integrated at your school or community center
- Present it to the group
- Then go out into the community and make it happen

Completed - Take action project!

Once you have completed it the Take action project

- Bring back proof you implemented it
- Explain if you think it worked
- I will give you a Take Action Project badge

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Connection between Bullying and Suicide

Media reports often link bullying with suicide. However, most youth who are bullied do not have thoughts of suicide or engage in suicidal behaviors.

Although kids who are bullied are at risk of suicide, bullying alone is not the cause. Many issues contribute to suicide risk, including depression, problems at home, and trauma history. Additionally, specific groups have an increased risk of suicide, including American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian American, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. This risk can be increased further when these kids are not supported by parents, peers, and schools. Bullying can make an unsupportive situation worse.

Wrap up discussion

- What were your thoughts of this program?
- Do you have any questions?
- What would you of liked to see?
- Any comments?

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Closing

Thank you so much for coming!

Let's close with the

Girl Scouts Friendship Circle

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Appendix F
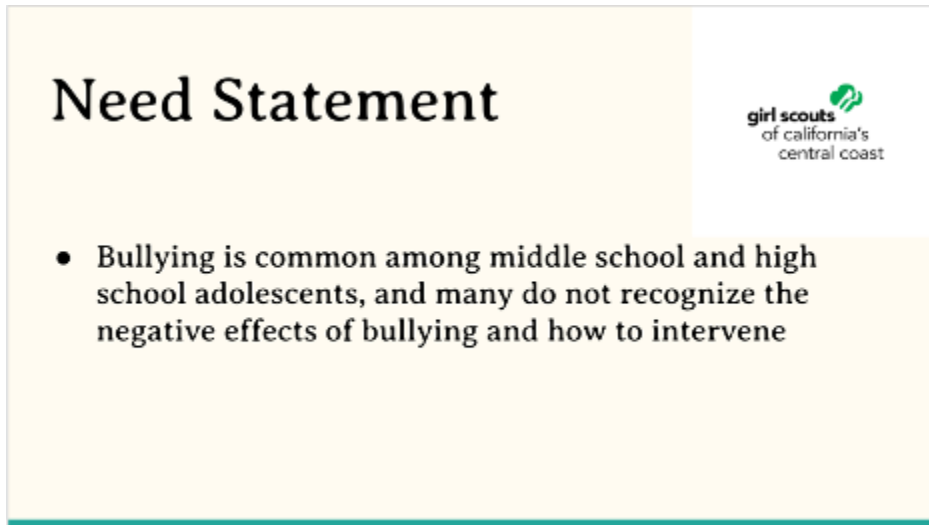
Presentation from Capstone Festival

Theory

Lawrence Kohlberg Stages of Moral Development

- Originally used this theory on boys ages 10-16 to teach them about morality and values
- Developed stages of Moral Development
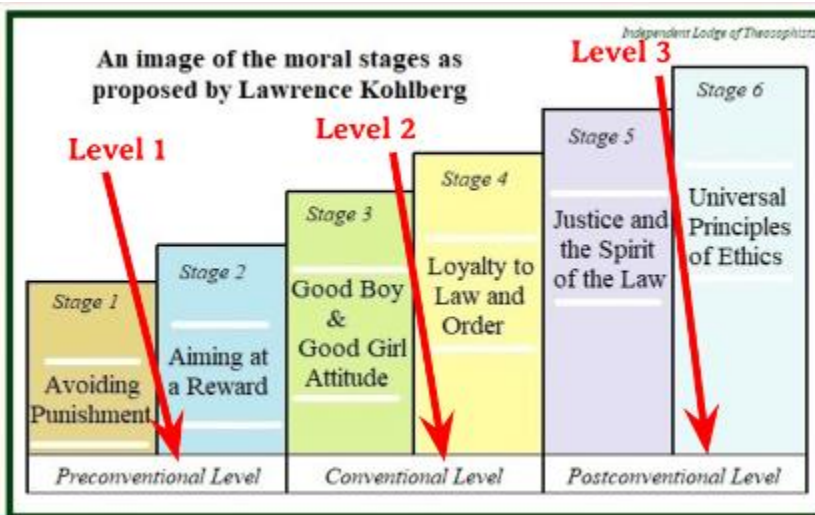
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An image of the moral stages as proposed by Lawrence Kohlberg

Level 1

Level 2

Level 3

Independent Lodge of Theosophists

Stage 1 — Avoiding Punishment

Stage 2 — Aiming at a Reward

Stage 3 — Good Boy & Good Girl Attitude

Stage 4 — Loyalty to Law and Order

Stage 5 — Justice and the Spirit of the Law

Stage 6 — Universal Principles of Ethics

Preconventional Level | Conventional Level | Postconventional Level

Learning Outcomes

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By the end of the project, participants will:

1. Identify two negative outcomes of bullying and cyberbullying, respectively

2. Identify three ways to intervene when bullying and cyberbullying occur

3. Create an anti-bullying campaign

Project information

Who: 7th-12th grade adolescent girls

Where: Girl Scouts of California Central Coast

What: Four hour long presentation about bullying and cyberbullying and ways to intervene

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Methods

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- Introduction: Bullying Survey
- Lesson 1: Watch video on facts of bullying
- Lesson 2: Watch video on different types of bullying
- Lesson 3: Watch video on cyberbullying
- Lesson 4: True or False survey
- Lesson 5: Ways to intervene when bullying occurs
- Lesson 6: Take action project

Methods

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One Day Four Hour Presentation

- Participants will first fill out an a survey about bullying
- Create their own definition of bullying and then report out as a group
- Discuss the results from survey as a group to earn trust with the group to be open and honest

1. During this school year how often have you seen someone being bullied?
□ Never.
□ Sometimes (1 or 2 times a month).
□ Regularly (1 or 2 times a week)
□ Every day.

2. During this school year how often have you been bullied at school?
□ Never. □ Sometimes (1 or 2 times a month).
□ Regularly (1 or 2 times a week)
□ Every day.

3. How were you bullied?
□ I haven't been bullied.
□ I have been teased and called names.
□ I have been hit, kicked or pushed.
□ Others leave me out of their group.
□ Others have taken my belongings.
□ Others don't sit by me or talk to me.
□ Others say they will hurt me.
□ Others try to hurt me on the way to and from school.
□ Others bully me by phone or text message.

Lesson 1

- Watch a video about facts of bullying - then they will write down an incident in where they have been bullied, read it out loud, and crumple the paper up and throw it.

- Participants will share 1 fact that either surprised them, already knew, or what they learned.

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Lesson 2

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- Watch a video about different types of bullying:
  ○ Cyber, Physical, Social, and Verbal

- Participants will break up into pairs and come up with a scenario of a type of bullying they saw and then act it out. The group will have to guess which type of bullying they are describing.

Lesson 3

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- Watch a video about cyberbullying

- Participants will discuss what they learned from the video and report out if they have been cyberbullied before or if they know someone who has.

- Participants will make a list of ways you can notice cyberbullying and how to stop it.

Lesson 4

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- Participants will take a True or False survey about negative effects of bullying.

- As a group we will all discuss what they thought was True or False and go through each one.

- Participants will discuss if they think Girl Scouts has bullying a problem and if so, discuss examples that they have seen.

Negative effects of bullying

1. Social and school isolation (True or false)
2. Sleep disturbance (True or false)
3. Changes in eating habits (True or false)
4. Low self-esteem (True or false)

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Lesson 5

- Participants will break into groups and create a list of different ways to intervene when bullying is happening.

- Participants will share if they have ever intervened during a bullying situation why or why not?

- Participants will break up into groups and create a list of why they feel people bully others.

Lesson 6

Take action project: This is an important Girl Scout Tradition

- Participants will break up into groups and create an anti-bullying campaign

- Come up with a plan to execute the project

- Participants will create an anti-bullying pledge that they will sign and have a copy to take home

Badges they will earn

Results

Could not complete due to COVID-19

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Discussion

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Thank you! Any questions?

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