Airings...voices of our youth

Educator's Complete Guide

1   INTRODUCTION TO *AIRINGS…VOICES OF OUR YOUTH*

Airings is rooted in the experiences of families, youth and community members from Bellingham and Whatcom County, Washington. Pam Kuntz has spent months gathering stories and perspectives on bullying that have been shared by community members from Whatcom County. Topics from the interviews cover isolation, social pressure (peer, parent, teacher), drug abuse, bullying, cyber-bullying, social bullying, fear, hope, resilience, "figuring it out," support networks, suicide and so much more.

As choreographer and director, Pam Kuntz has worked with a diverse team of three dance/theater artists, one teenage theatre artist, a sound designer and a video artist in order to present these stories and perspectives through movement, text, sound and visual art. Our hope is that *Airings* will be relevant and engaging to young people because the basis of this performance will be THEIR thoughts, THEIR feelings, THEIR words and THEIR stories.

The unique ability of the performing arts to directly engage the viewer can facilitate a dialogue about the issues that young people face in the formative years of Middle and High School when they are maturing, physically, emotionally, sexually and socially. Further, the performing arts can frame these complex issues in a manner that allows students to feel and relate in a way they have not experienced, providing an opportunity for better understanding and behavior.

2 GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

PRE-PERFORMANCE PREPARATION

For All Students

Live theater provides a different experience than a movie or television show. No two performances are exactly the same. There is a relationship between the performers and the audience. The audience's attention to the performance, their willingness to be open to the ideas portrayed and response to the music, dance and words is an important part of what makes live theater exciting. The best way to enjoy live theater is to come with an open mind, watch, listen and let yourself get involved with the stories in the performance.

It is likely that a number of students may not have had the experience of a live dance performance. Please have them consider the following points about appropriate behavior during the performance in order to maximize the experience for themselves and every other student.

1. Don't Talk During the Show – Of course, it is fine to laugh if something seems funny or even cry if something in the show makes you feel sad. But it is not appropriate to make comments to the dancers/actors, whistle or make noises. This will disrupt the performer's concentration and distract/diminish the experience for others in the audience.
2. Turn Off Your Cell Phone and Don't Send/Receive Text Messages During the Show. Recognize that the light from your cell phone screen and any buzzing/vibration noises are incredibly distracting to those around you.
3. Respect the Space and Comfort of Those Around You.

For Some Students

Educators please be aware that scenes in this dance performance cover topics including isolation, social pressure, drug abuse, and multiple forms of bullying and harassment. These scenes might bring up past negative experiences for students. If you know of a student who might be greatly impacted by the performance, consider arranging an alternative activity in lieu of viewing the performance OR provide a place for more focused debriefing following the performance. Existing bullying prevention resources and procedures at your school can also be utilized to support these students.

POST-PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

We recommend that teachers take time following the performance to facilitate guided discussion and, if they choose, use some of the activities listed in Section 3 "Recommended Activities" to help students to learn more and take action. Below you will find general and scene-specific questions to support discussion. The discussion will serve several purposes:

- To share different perspectives on the experience of seeing the piece
- To make meaning with each other based on the specific school context—what harassment/bullying happens at our school? How are students impacted? What do we need to work on here?
- To help teachers or discussion leaders determine which students are in need of further support following the performance. We recommend you use a process to refer those students to the school counseling office for immediate follow-up. Please see Section 4 "Local Resources & Links" for additional support resources in the community.

For further reference, **Section 5 - Frequently Asked Questions**, **Section 6 - Overview of Self Development, Bullying & Relation to Adverse Childhood Experiences**, and **Section 7 - References and Resources**, provide teachers and counselors with more in-depth discussion of issues that may arise during group discussions.

General Questions

These questions are meant to facilitate post-viewing discussions about the performance. The intention is to have students reflect on and express their overall feelings about what they have seen, how it affected them, and how relevant the topics presented during the performance are to their lives and to their school environment.

1. What did you think of the performance? What scene affected you most? Why?

2. What kinds of pressure, harassment or bullying did you see in the performance? Was this an accurate portrayal of things you have witnessed or experienced?

3. What kinds of problems portrayed in the performance (name-calling, gossip, shunning, physical harassment) exist at your school? Are there other types of negative social behaviors that you didn't see?

4. When you are at school, does it seem to be a safe place where everyone can just be what they are? Why or why not?

5. If you see or know about someone who is being harassed or bullied, what is your response? Why? What do you think it should it be?

6. What is friendship? What do you need from friends when you are the victim of bullying? Are there ways that you can better support friends who are being picked on?

7. If you were being harassed or bullied at school, do you know the school procedures for reporting? Are these procedures working? Can these be improved? How?

8. What role should parents and teachers play in dealing with harassment and bullying?

Scene-Specific Questions

These discussion questions are meant to facilitate dialogue about specific situations portrayed during several of the pieces in the performance. These questions are intended for deeper discussions that may be facilitated through a smaller counseling group or given as an individual student assignment such as journaling. The nature of the questions may create an atmosphere of vulnerability that would need to be appropriately supported and monitored.

The two female dancers in this piece are Cara Congelli and Yuki Matsukura. Evyn Bartlett is the male dancer and Ethan Riggs is the male actor.

Scene 1 - You saw two dancers (Cara and Evyn) moving in unison while a third dancer (Yuki) struggled to keep up. This third dancer performed somewhat of an "outcast" role. This role rotated between Yuki and Evyn. As the piece progressed the dancer in this outcast role became more and more agitated, eventually leading to aggressive interactions when both Yuki and Evyn pushed and/or hit the other. Every time this happened Cara looked away.

Think about a situation in your life when you were mistreated or you witnessed someone else being mistreated and you saw people "look away."

> How did that feel? Have you ever looked away? Why or why not?
> Why do you think Cara apologized to Yuki and Evyn?
> Why do you think Yuki didn't accept her apology and left the space?

Think about a situation when you were asked to accept someone's apology.

> How did you handle that situation?
> Can you describe anything you would do differently now?

Scene 2 - You heard Queen and David Bowie's famous song "Under Pressure," while Cara and Yuki were playing various roles that were "pressuring" Evyn.

> What pressures did you see the dancers illustrate?
> How have you felt when you gave into pressure, whether it was pressure from your parents, your teachers or your friends?

In the end of this piece Evyn broke out of the grip of pressures. Think of a moment like this when you personally experienced this or you witnessed a moment like this in a friend or acquaintance.

> How did you do that? How did that feel?

Scene 3 - In the piece featuring Evyn in a large skirt, the dancers were exploring ideas concerning gender, sexuality, and body image. At one point Evyn was hit by billowing fabric with waves projected on it.

> Describe what this represented to you.
> Describe a time when you were hit by waves that others created.
> Describe a situation when you created waves that affected someone else.

This piece explored the voices of two female students that addressed the idea of body image. Because of this, male body image was not explored through language or projections.

> Provide examples of both positive and negative male body image in our culture.
> How have you been personally influenced by female or male body image standards in our culture?

Think about the end of the piece when the performer removed the skirt.

    Why do you think the creators of this piece had the performer remove the skirt?

    What did that represent for you?

Scene 4 - In the piece where balls were being thrown at Yuki on the treadmill, the artists were exploring the story of an 8th grader who was called a name on the first day of his 6th grade year, his first day of middle school. From that first name calling that boy went through two years of bullying that left him feeling like he was in his own private Hell. The dancer on the treadmill represented that student.

    What did the treadmill represent in this story?

    Have you ever been on your own "treadmill?"

    Describe your treadmill and why you were on it. Are you still on it? Why? How did you get off?

    What did the person throwing the balls represent in this story?

    Have you ever felt like someone was "throwing" something at you? How did that feel? Did you think you it was fair?

    Have you ever been the "thrower?" Why? Do you believe that was OK?

Scene 5 – This piece described one student's attempt to commit suicide twice. You heard voices saying things like:

"Don't you know we love you?" "Don't you know we care about you?" "Why would you do that?"

Later in that same piece you heard the performers say: "I love you." "I care about you."

The three questions and the two statements seem to be saying the same thing but they are actually quite different.

    Beyond the obvious grammar difference, how else are they different?

    Describe how these two different kinds of statements may make a person feel.

    What statements would you prefer to hear after going through something difficult and scary? Why?

Scene 6 – Reflecting on the last piece, the one featuring the young actor Ethan describing a tight rope in the sky… Picture yourself on a tight rope stretched across the sky, as far as your eyes can see. Look around. You see others on this same rope. You see people falling off this rope. You see people hanging onto this rope. You look down and you see other ropes and you see people walking on these other ropes.

Reflect on your life right now...are you working to stay balanced on your rope; have you fallen off and are now hanging on; are you in a free fall; did you fall off and land on a new one; or did you decide to jump off your rope and fly? Remember that this answer is to address where you are right now, not yesterday or last month, but right now. Describe the reasons you chose this answer.

3 RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

The following vetted websites offer age-appropriate creative activities and extension exercises for teachers including concrete lesson plans for the classroom.   Many more activities and support materials are available at the links listed below.

• National Education Association: http://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/teaching-students-to-prevent-bullying.html

- April Fools! Students in **grades 6-8** reflect on their reactions to practical jokes and compare good jokes with bullying and harassment. http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/04/01/april-fools/
- A Troubling Trend: Discussing Bullying and Antigay Attitudes
  Students in **grades 6-12** discuss recent suicides that have occurred as a result of antigay bullying and complete a campaign to foster safety and acceptance in their own school. http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/10/05/a-troubling-trend-discussing-bullying-and-antigay-attitudes/

• StopBullying.gov: http://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/at-school/educate/index.html#Activities%20to%20Teach%20Students%20About%20Bullying

- Internet or library research, such as looking up types of bullying, how to prevent it, and how kids should respond
- Presentations, such as a speech or role-play on stopping bullying
- Discussions about topics like reporting bullying
- Creative writing, such as a poem speaking out against bullying or a story or skit teaching bystanders how to help
- Artistic works, such as a collage about respect or the effects of bullying

• The PBS Kids website features some unique interactive ways to engage children in topics related to bullying including an advice column, videos, games and a blog.   http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/advice/index.html

• Advocates for Youth has developed lesson plans to assist young people in understanding the negative impact of homophobia on LGBTQ youth and in taking a stand for social justice. Free download at:
http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/storage/advfy/documents/safespace.pdf

• Rachel's Challenge programs provide a sustainable, evidence-based framework for positive climate and culture in our schools. http://rachelschallenge.org/

• Bullying No Way in Australia: http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au/national-day/for-schools/class-activities.html

Classroom discussion starters for Years 10-12
- What is Bullying. http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au/resources/national-day/discussion-starters/what-is-bullying-years-10-12-option-1.pdf
- Building respectful relationships. http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au/resources/national-day/discussion-starters/discussion-starter-yr-10-12-building-respectful-relationships.pdf
- Understanding the misuse of power. http://www.bullyingnoway.gov.au/resources/national-day/discussion-starters/discussion-starter-yr-10-12-misuse-of-power.pdf

Classroom discussion starters for Years 14 and older
- Watch videos of students sharing STORIES about bullying for 14 Years and older. http://www.takeastandtogether.gov.au/over14/other-things/video.html

• Teaching Tolerance includes specific lesson plans for elementary, middle, and high school students related to promoting tolerance and social justice. Film kits are available for free to be used in classrooms. This is an excellent site for educators interested in classroom materials. The site also offers access to the Teaching Tolerance magazines that include relevant materials. http://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources

• Safe Schools Coalition, located in Washington State, is a public-private partnership, in support of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender, queer and questioning youth, working to help schools become safe places where every family can belong, where every educator can teach, and where every child can learn, regardless of gender, gender identity or sexual orientation. They have compiled Lesson Plans for Elementary, Middle and High School Teachers at: http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/RG-lessonplans.html

4   LOCAL RESOURCES AND LINKS

NAME OF ORGANIZATION	WEBSITE	PHONE	DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES AND FOR WHOM
Communities in Schools of Whatcom County	http://whatcomcounty.ciswa.org/what-we-do/	360-676-6470	Communities in Schools advocates for students by providing access to resources they need to stay in school. Services include school-based mentoring, family engagement, and meeting basic needs.
Northwest Youth Services	http://www.nwys.org	360-734-9862	Northwest Youth Services provides programming and outreach to at-risk, runaway, and homeless youth. The Queer Youth Project is a program designed to support and advocate for at-risk and homeless LGBTQ youth.
Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center	http://whatcomdrc.org	360-676-0122	Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center specializes in creative conflict resolution. Specific youth programs include conflict resolution education, restorative practices, and parent/teen and youth/peer mediations.
Whatcom Family and Community Network	http://wfcn.org	360-738-1196`	Whatcom Family and Community Network engages with community partners to support youth through leadership opportunities, projects, and mentoring. Projects include the Whatcom Prevention Coalition and ACE Prevention Network
Whatcom Peace and Justice Center	http://www.whatcompjc.org	360-734-0217	Whatcom Peace and Justice Center provides workshops and resources on topics such as nonviolence towards oneself and alternatives to violence towards others.

5 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is peer pressure? How do I deal with it?

Adolescents constantly struggle with issues related to conformity and peer pressure. Peer pressure occurs when an individual experiences persuasion (express or implied) to adopt values, attitudes, behaviors and goals of those in the peer group.

Peer pressure is present among persons of all ethnic and racial backgrounds. It influences risky behaviors (drug/alcohol use, smoking, shoplifting, fighting, etc.) and ideas about gender roles and body image stereotypes. Peer pressure peaks during adolescence, but it never disappears. To one degree or another, everyone is affected by peer pressure. Adults feel pressure to conform at work, in the community and in the extended family.

Peer groups have enormous influence with adolescents. The peer group provides a sense of belonging/acceptance. Being part of a peer group "feels good", "makes life easier" and provides for enhanced self-esteem. It should be noted that peer pressure is not always negative. In fact it can be very positive force. For example, students that spend time with academically motivated peers generally attain better academic performance than those that spend time with peers that do not perform as well academically.

For adolescents to mature in a healthy manner, they need to learn how to balance between accepting group beliefs and thinking for oneself. That is, they must learn to make decisions that provide a sensible balance between their own independent thinking, the values internalized from their family upbringing and values derived from their friends, role models and peer group.

How can children cope with unwanted peer pressure – especially regarding participating in risky, illegal or self-destructive activities? Resisting pressure can be hard for many reasons including: fear of rejection, don't want to be teased or made fun of, or uncertainty on how to get out of the situation. Adolescents must be encouraged to stand up for themselves when they are uncertain, concerned or afraid by:

- Learning how to say "No" assertively
- Respecting others that say "No"
- Learning to simply walk away from the situation

Why do some people seem to be regularly picked on?

People that are singled out for repeated harassment are being bullied. Bullying is a different phenomenon from teasing or a one-time attack.

According to Professor Dan Olweus: "A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself."

From this, it should be clear that there are three critical elements to bullying – unequal power, repetition, and harm.

Call it harassment or bullying, it is a form of violence and takes many forms:

• Physical bullying

• Sexual bullying

• Having money or other things taken or damaged

• Threats or being forced to do things

• Verbal bullying

• Social exclusion or isolation

• Bullying through lies and false rumors

• Racial bullying

• Cyber-bullying (via cell phone or the Internet)

Bullying is always hurtful, hostile behavior and it includes not only direct attacks, but also social/relational attacks.

What is cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is a term used to refer to bullying using electronic media. Just like direct confrontation bullying, cyber-bullying is intentional and involves repeated harm perpetrated through electronic media. Cyber-bullying can include threats, insults, defamation and hate-motivated speech. They may publish the personal information and/or photographs of their victims. They may even attempt to assume the identity of a victim in order to publish material in their name that ridicules or belittles them.

Is it true that LGBT students are highly likely to be picked on and harassed?

According to GLSEN's 2013 National School Climate Survey of 7,898 students between the ages of 13 and 21, in the past year:
• 74.1% of LGBT students were verbally harassed (e.g., called names or threatened)
• 36.2% were physically harassed (e.g., pushed or shoved)
• 16.5% were physically assaulted (e.g., punched, kicked, injured with a weapon)
• 49.0% of LGBT students experienced electronic harassment (e.g., via text messages or Facebook postings), often known as cyber-bullying.

Sadly, it appears that LGBT students have a very high likelihood of being harassed, assaulted and bullied – just for being who they are!

An analysis published in 2011 by the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law suggests that there are more than 8 million adults in the US who are lesbian, gay, or bisexual, comprising 3.5% of the adult population.

Let's put this in context. Approximately 10% of the population is left-handed. However, only 1% has mixed-handedness where hand preference changes depending on task. People with red hair represent only 1-2% of the population. People with green eyes represent only 2% of the population; those with blue eyes are about 8%.

Not long ago, left-handed children were forced to write with their right hands because in many societies, "lefties" were considered unlucky or evil. Modern science has clarified that left-handedness is determined during development. It is hard-wired into the brain before birth.

Sexual orientation is the same!

Do both boys and girls bully?

Yes.

What is the significance of being socially isolated?

One of the consequences of harassment and bullying is that the victim can become socially isolated.

Adolescence is characterized by a strong desire for independence and an increased need for social support from peers.   In fact, for adolescents, psychological health is heavily dependent on the quality of connection with peers.

Not surprisingly, studies have shown that students that report feelings of social isolation had a higher likelihood of depressive symptoms and suicide attempts and lower self-esteem.

Protective factors (including family connectedness, school connectedness, academic achievement) had some positive influence on the relation between psychological health and social isolation, but could not fully offset the negative psychological effects of social isolation. However, a feeling of connection with family is highly protective against suicide attempts in socially isolated adolescents - particularly for girls.

If I see someone being bullied, what is my responsibility?

The majority of students are bystanders or observers of bullying. The peer group/bystanders can be grouped into four categories depending on how they react:

• Assistants – join with the bully and participate in the bullying

• Reinforcers – provide positive feedback by cheering or laughing

• Outsiders – those that watch but don't get involved (the "silent majority")

• Defenders – take the victim's side and try to intervene or comfort them

What are you? Imagine that you were the one who had experienced this harassment. How would you want others to support you?

It is important to realize that bystanders are a powerful majority and can use their social power and personal actions to promote respect for themselves and others. To stop or prevent bullying in your school, consider the following:

- Report bullying to a responsible and caring adult.
- Express disapproval by not joining in the laughter, teasing, or gossip.
- Offer consolation or support to the victim – even if you are not able to intervene. They need to know that other people care!
- Campaign against bullying through school activities

If I was being harassed or bullied, what could I do?

The targeted student or victim needs to understand that bullies rarely stop bullying on their own. A bully's aggressive behavior will likely escalate over time. The victim must tell a responsible, caring adult about the bullying and ask for help. Adults have the responsibility and the means to make the situation stop. The targeted student should avoid the bully, choose safe places to be at school and avoid being alone and vulnerable.

If you, or a person you know, are experiencing harassment due to your gender identity or sexual orientation, you have rights and protection under Washington State Law.

What can parents do about school bullying?

Parents must remain a strong force by establishing and reinforcing the values that guide their children's actions and decisions. As adolescents mature and push for independence, parents must remain actively involved in their children's lives. If parents are aware of bullying problems at school – whether their child is the victim or the bully – they must report their concerns to the school and ask for help to resolve the issue.

Keep in mind the following points:

- Bullying is always inappropriate and can be dangerous even when done as "team building" (common in sports) or as the "price to pay" for joining a group. This behavior, or *hazing,* is illegal.
- Bullying of a sexual nature is *sexual harassment* and is illegal.
- Bullying on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, or sexual orientation is a form of *bias* or *hate.* There is scant difference between hate-motivated behavior and hate crime. Hate crime is illegal.
- Bullying behavior that continues into adulthood is highly associated with violent behavior toward family, friends and strangers.
- A lifetime of negative physical, psychological and social consequences may follow both the victim and the bully unless their negative attitudes and behaviors are redirected in a positive manner.

6 OVERVIEW OF SELF-DEVELOPMENT, BULLYING & RELATION TO ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Adolescent Development

During the adolescent years there are five major developmental shifts that occur:

1. **Changes with respect to their social partners**. Children spend less time with their families and correspondingly more time with their peers. Later, romantic relationships create other shifts in social partners. Of course, the delay/onset of puberty can also result in acceptance/segregation among various peer groups. Since self-esteem is bound to identification with a peer group, physical changes and romantic interactions, adjusting to these shifts in the reference groups (that allow for social experience and development) can result in feelings of uncertainty and loneliness.

2. **Growth of individuation and autonomy**. During adolescence, there is a growing emphasis on establishing autonomy from parental oversight and receiving privileges associated with adults. This is intrinsic to establishing an identity that is distinct from their parents. This process is often unsettling for the individual and the family.

3. **Identity exploration**. During adolescence youth are active in developing a unique self-identity. It is a period of experimenting with different social roles and interacting with different peer groups. New relationships are established while old relationships are adjusted or broken as individuals wrestle between friendships, peer pressures and personal growth. Finding one's identity is challenging, often stressful and can result in much social pain among peers and family members.

4. **Cognitive Maturity and understanding social perspective**. Young children evaluate social interactions solely from the perspective of their own self-interest. As young people progress through their adolescence, their cognitive maturation results in a better understanding of the value of social exchange (how others feel and think) and are therefore more willing to value the relationship over their immediate personal interests. However, learning these lessons can be both frustrating and anxiety provoking.

5. **Physiological changes accompanying growth and puberty**. The growth spurt during adolescent puberty is also accompanied by tremendous hormonal changes as well as dramatic changes in body type associated with the development of secondary sex characteristics. The hormonal changes may be accompanied by mood swings as well as deregulation of circadian rhythms that impact sleep patterns. The psychological adjustment to the transformation to adult body-types, the external pressures to conform to certain body images during a period of identity exploration and individuation may be quite difficult. Premature or delayed onset of puberty may result in further disruption of peer relationships.

Adolescence is characterized by a strong desire for independence and an increased need for social support from peers.   In fact, for adolescents, psychological health is heavily dependent on the quality of connection with peers.

Studies have shown that students that report feelings of social isolation had higher likelihood of depressive symptoms and suicide attempts and low self-esteem. Protective factors (including family connectedness, school connectedness, academic achievement) had some positive influence on the relation between psychological health and social isolation, but could not fully offset the negative psychological effects of social isolation. However, a feeling of connection with family is highly protective against suicide attempts in socially isolated adolescents - particularly for girls. Interestingly, for boys, school connectedness and academic achievement are also highly protective against suicide attempts.

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Peer pressure is present among persons of all ethnic and racial backgrounds. It influences risky behaviors (drug/alcohol use, smoking, shoplifting, fighting, etc.), to gender roles and body image stereotypes. Peer pressure peaks during adolescence, but it never disappears. To one degree or another, everyone is affected by peer pressure. Adults feel pressure to conform at work, in the community and in the extended family.

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How can children cope with unwanted peer pressure – especially regarding participating in risky, illegal or self-destructive activities? Resisting pressure can be hard for many reasons including: fear of rejection, don't want to be teased or made fun of, don't know how to get out of the situation. Adolescents must be encouraged to stand up for themselves when they are uncertain, concerned or afraid by:

- Learning how to say "No" assertively
- Respecting others that say "No"
- Learning to simply walk away from the situation

Overview of Bullying

A useful definition has been proposed by Olweus: "A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons, and he or she has difficulty defending himself or herself."

From this, it should be clear that there are three critical elements to bullying – unequal power, repetition, and harm. The problem of bullying is universal and takes many forms including:

• physical bullying	• threats or being forced to do things
• sexual bullying	• having money or other things taken or damaged
• verbal bullying	• social exclusion or isolation
• racial bullying	• bullying through lies and false rumors

• cyber-bullying (via cell phone or the Internet)

Bullying is a different phenomenon from teasing or a one-time attack. That is not all forms of aggression are bullying. However, bullying is always hurtful and hostile behavior and it includes not only direct attacks but social/relational attacks.

Physical bullying not only includes physical assault (pushing, striking) but also indirect assaults such as damaging clothing or stealing someone's lunch or homework. As children get older, *verbal bullying* (name calling, insults, offensive remarks) becomes more prevalent. Finally *relational bullying* (gossip, shunning) aims to damage the victim's social relationships or status, and when performed on-line, is called cyber-bullying.

Bullying is common and in every school. In a 2015 report of the US Department of Education, 22% of students report being bullied during the school year. http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015056.pdf

Parents and teachers are often unaware of bullying. In a 2010 report for the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, 64 percent of children who were bullied DID NOT report it.
http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2010092_sum.pdf

Victims, Bullies and Bystanders: A victim is anyone who repeatedly suffers and is unable to protect themselves. Most victims are submissive, insecure, have few friends, show their pain and may even blame themselves.

In contrast, someone who repeatedly attacks another person that does not or cannot fight back is a bully. Adults often believe that bullies are insecure or have some sort of mental imbalance.

In fact, most bullies enjoy a high social status – they are respected and feared, yet often liked. Bullies have friends that support their behavior and contribute to the bullying by laughing at the bully's remarks, passing on rumors about the victim and ignoring the victim's distress.

Although, bullies seek victims to reinforce their self-image, they do their bullying publicly in order to reinforce their high status position among their peers. And by choosing victims that are submissive, insecure and rejected by the group, the bully can repeatedly demonstrate their power without fear of being confronted by either the victim or the peer group.

The peer group/bystanders can be grouped into four categories depending on how they react:

• Assistants – join with the bully and participate in the bullying

• Reinforcers – provide positive feedback by cheering or laughing

• Outsiders – the "silent majority" that watch but don't get involved

• Defenders – take the victim's side and try to intervene or comfort them

During the middle school years bullying is known to increase. As children enter middle school, peer acceptance becomes more important while at the same time children are experiencing the psychosocial complications of puberty in terms of personal identity and "fitting into" the group. And this process of peer pressure and social integration continues through high school years.

In terms of social education, students that see bullying occur on a regular basis learn damaging life lessons: Power wins over fairness, Victims deserve their lot in life, Bystanders should never intervene, Adults don't care.

Clearly, bullying is not simply limited to the interactions between the bully and the victim. Current thinking is that bullying is a "group process" and that interventions must be targeted at the school and peer level. Interventions by peers and schools can make a big difference.

In a report in *Social Development*, 57% of bullying situations stop when a peer intervenes on behalf of the young person being bullied. In a 2013 publication by the Congressional Research Report for Members and Committees of Congress, it was noted that school-based bullying prevention programs can decrease the incidence of bullying by up to 25%.

The consequences for the victims' mental health are well documented in terms of anxiety, fear, depression, social isolation, and a diminished self-worth. The disruptions and distractions associated with bullying also result in every student's general education being reduced. In fact, studies have documented that high-achieving schools have less bullying and more positive social behaviors. Bullying in schools undermines the opportunity for all children to have a safe, supportive environment for their social maturation.

Bullying in the Context of Adverse Childhood Experiences

Kaiser Permanente and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published a landmark study on Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE Study) Over 17,000 participants from the Kaiser HMO filled out a questionnaire that asked if they had experienced any of the following 10 childhood traumas:

Abuse

1. Physical abuse

2. Sexual abuse

3. Psychological abuse

Neglect

4. Emotional neglect

5. Physical neglect

Family Dysfunction

6. Household substance abuse

7. Parental separation, divorce, abandonment

8. Household mental illness

9. Mother treated violently

10. Incarcerated household member

The participants were "average" Americans – 75% white, 11% Latino, 7.5% percent Asian and Pacific Islander, and 5% were black. 94% had completed high school and 43% had college degrees. They were middle-class and middle-aged, they all had jobs and Kaiser healthcare benefits. The study findings were striking.

First of all, Adverse Childhood Experiences are common.

Abuse

1. Physical abuse   28%

2. Sexual abuse   21%

3. Psychological abuse   11%

Neglect

4. Emotional neglect   15%

5. Physical neglect   10%

Family Dysfunction

6. Household substance abuse   27%

7. Parental separation, divorce, abandonment   23%

8. Household mental illness   17%

9. Mother treated violently   13%

10. Incarcerated household member   6%

Second, ACEs don't happen in isolation and they are often correlated. Two-thirds of the participants had experienced one or more types of adverse childhood experiences. For example, participants that had a drug-dependent father had often experienced physical and emotional abuse.

Third, higher ACE Scores have a strong "dose-dependent" correlation to many social, behavioral and health problems. There is a clear correlation between childhood trauma and adult onset of chronic disease, mental illness, smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, doing time in prison and even work issues (productivity, absenteeism).

Starting at an ACE score of 4, the outcomes become particularly serious. Compared to participants with no ACES, those study participants with 4 or more ACEs were:

Behavioral
2.2X more likely to smoke
2.5X more likely to have had a sexually transmitted disease
4.7X more likely to use illegal drugs
7.4X more likely to be alcoholic
10.3X more likely to have injected drugs
12.2X more likely to have attempted suicide and more than 30X more likely in participants with 7 or more ACEs!

Medical
1.6X higher risk for skeletal fractures
1.6X higher risk for diabetes
1.9X higher risk for cancer
2.4X higher risk for jaundice or hepatitis
2.2X higher risk of cardiovascular disease
2.2X higher risk for stroke

The combination of all these higher risk behaviors and their correlation to increased likelihood of serious disease leads to higher likelihood of early death in this at risk population.

Adverse Childhood Experiences can be connected to social and health problems decades later: As San Francisco pediatrician, Nadine Burke Harris explained to Ira Glass on This American Life, "If you're in a forest and see a bear, a very efficient fight or flight system instantly floods your body with adrenaline and cortisol and shuts off the thinking portion of your brain that would stop to consider other options. This is very helpful if you're in a forest and you need to run from a bear. "The problem is when that bear comes home from the bar every night," she said.

Such children live in a constant "Fight or Flight" mode and respond to the world as a place of constant risk and danger. Physiologically, this can result in deleterious changes to the function of the HPA (hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal) axis.

Normally, the HPA axis plays a central role in regulating many homeostatic systems in the body and controls cortisol levels in a manner consistent with the daily rest-activity cycle. Further, the HPA axis also modulates the immune response, with high levels of cortisol resulting in a suppression of immune and inflammatory reactions.

In the face of acute stress (a bear), the HPA axis is activated causing a spike in cortisol as well as adrenaline and noradrenaline (via sympathetic activation of the adrenal medulla) that facilitate the immediate physiological responses associated with extreme physical activity required during "Fight or Flight".

However, chronic activation of the HPA axis is deleterious and associated with numerous debilitating behavioral and physiological conditions including:

• Depression, apathy, irritability, sleep disturbances, difficulty concentrating and
  memory problems, confusion, mood disorders

• Increased vulnerability to parasites, allergens, certain bacteria and toxins

• Autoimmune diseases, cancer, cardiac disease, obesity, impaired glucose regulation

The body responds to all stresses through the same regulatory HPA axis. For this reason, a higher ACE score is associated with chronically higher levels of HPA activation. In children and young people chronic stress (HPA activation) can alter the development of the brain and neuroendocrine system. This can result in social, emotional and cognitive impairment that leads to adoption of health-risky behaviors with the consequences of disease and disability that culminate in early death, as shown in the following figure.

ACE Studies are Consistent and Reproducible: Between 2009 and 2015, 32 states plus the District of Columbia included ACE questions as part of the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System coordinated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In all these studies across the United States, ACE findings were similar to that of the original study. That is, regardless of the data source, almost two-thirds of surveyed adults report at least one ACE and more than 20% reported three or more ACEs. Further, all these studies consistently demonstrate a graded, dose-response relationship between ACEs and negative health and well-being outcomes.

<u>Back to Bullying</u>: Bullying is an Adverse Childhood Experience. Bullying at school can further compromise children who suffer multiple ACEs in their home situations. For these children, neither home nor school offer emotional support or a safe place.

Chronic victimization results in anxiety, fear and depression that can continue for years afterwards. Victims often come to dislike themselves, distrust their peers and fear going to school. These very feelings result in further loneliness and isolation, greater anxiety and fear, deeper sense of hopelessness and depression and make the victims more vulnerable to further bullying.

It is sad to realize that victims of bullying, those most needing the opportunity to socially interact with and learn from friends and peers, are the very people that are being prevented from having critical developmental socialization and personal growth experiences – by bullies. And, sadly, the consequences of chronic bullying can even be fatal. Bully-victim situations are involved in the majority of childhood suicides, assaults, and homicides.

What Can We Do?

According to Edith Grotberg, PhD:
"To overcome adversities, children draw from three sources of resilience features labeled: I HAVE, I AM, I CAN. What they draw from each of the three sources may be described as follows:

I HAVE
- People around me I trust and who love me, no matter what
- People who set limits for me so I know when to stop before there is danger or trouble
- People who show me how to do things right by the way they do things
- People who want me to learn to do things on my own
- People who help me when I am sick, in danger or need to learn

I AM
- A person people can like and love
- Glad to do nice things for others and show my concern
- Respectful of myself and others
- Willing to be responsible for what I do
- Sure things will be all right

I CAN

- Talk to others about things that frighten me or bother me
- Find ways to solve problems that I face
- Control myself when I feel like doing something not right or dangerous
- Figure out when it is a good time to talk to someone or to take action
- Find someone to help me when I need it

A resilient child does not need all of these features to be resilient, but one is not enough. Resilience results from a combination of these features.

By this reasoning, it is clear that resilient youth are also respectful, caring and ethical.

The Role of Parents and Teachers/Schools

Role of Parents: Harvard University's Making Caring Common Project has recommended a set of "guideposts" for raising caring, respectful and ethical children. Their recommendations are supported by extensive research and the work that numerous organizations have conducted over decades with families across America. Below are their 7 Guideposts to raising caring, respectful, and ethical children:

> 1. Work to develop caring, loving relationships with your kids.
> **Why:** Children learn caring and respect when they are treated that way. When our children feel loved, they also become attached to us. That attachment makes them more receptive to our values and teaching.
>
> **How:** Loving our children takes many forms, such as tending to their physical and emotional needs, providing a stable and secure family environment, showing affection, respecting their individual personalities, taking a genuine interest in their lives, talking about things that matter, and affirming their efforts and achievements.

2. Be a strong moral role model and mentor

Why: Children learn ethical values and behaviors by watching our actions and the actions of other adults they respect. Children will listen to our teaching when we walk the talk.

How: Pay close attention to whether you are practicing honesty, fairness, and caring yourself and modeling skills like solving conflicts peacefully and managing anger and other difficult emotions effectively. But, nobody is perfect all the time. That is why it's important to model for children humility, self-awareness, and honesty by acknowledging and working on our mistakes and flaws. Children will only want to become like us if they trust and respect us.

3. Make caring for others a priority and set high ethical expectations

Why: It's very important that children hear from their parents and caretakers that caring about others is a top priority and that it is just as important as their own happiness.

How: A big part of prioritizing caring is holding children to high ethical expectations, such as honoring their commitments, doing the right thing even when it is hard, standing up for important principles of fairness and justice, and insisting that they're respectful, even if it makes them unhappy and even if their peers or others aren't behaving that way.

4. Provide opportunities for children to practice caring and gratitude

Why: Children need practice caring for others and being grateful—it's important for them to express appreciation for the many people who contribute to their lives. Studies show that people who engage in the habit of expressing gratitude are more likely to be helpful, generous, compassionate, and forgiving—and they're also more likely to be happy and healthy.

How: Learning to be grateful and caring is in certain respects like learning to play a sport or an instrument. Daily repetition—whether it's helping a friend with homework, pitching in around the house, having a classroom job, or routinely reflecting on what we appreciate about others—and increasing challenges make caring and gratitude second nature and develop children's caregiving capacities. Involving children in making plans to improve family life teaches perspective-taking and problem-solving skills and gives them an authentic responsibility: becoming co-creators of a happy family.

5. Expand your child's circle of concern

Why: Almost all children empathize with and care about a small circle of families and friends. Our challenge is help children learn to have empathy and care about someone outside that circle, such as a new child in class, someone who doesn't speak their language or the school custodian.

How: It is important that children learn to zoom in, listening closely and attending to those in their immediate circle, and to zoom out, taking in the big picture and considering the range of people they interact with every day. Children also need to consider how their decisions impact a community. Breaking a school rule, for example, can make it easier for others to break rules.

6. Promote children's ability to be ethical thinkers and positive change-makers in their communities

Why: Children are naturally interested in ethical questions and grappling with these ethical questions can help them figure out, for example, what fairness is, what they owe others, and what to do when they have conflicting loyalties. Children are also often interested in taking leadership roles to improve their communities. Many of the most impressive programs to build caring and respect and stop bullying have been started by children and youth.

How: You can help children become ethical thinkers and leaders by listening to and helping them think through their own ethical dilemmas, such as, "Should I invite a new neighbor to my birthday party when my best friend doesn't like her?" At the same time, you can provide opportunities for your children to fight injustice and strengthen their communities.

7. Help children develop self-control and manage feelings effectively

Why: Often the ability to care for others is overwhelmed by anger, shame, envy, or other negative feelings.

How: We can teach children that all feelings are OK, but some ways of dealing with them are not useful. Children need our help learning to cope with feelings in productive ways.

Role of Teachers/Schools: Every school has their own process for handling harassment and bullying. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Preventing and responding to school bullying is the responsibility of every school administrator, teacher, school staff member, student, and parent. The entire school community must recognize the responsibility to create a climate in which bullying is not tolerated."

However, it is important to realize that harassment and bullying are highly under-reported for a number of reasons:

- Fear of making the situation worse – fear of retaliation, don't want to be a "snitch"
- Belief that the harassment is not a big deal, that they are accustomed to it, that school harassment is "normal".
- Concerns about teachers reactions – not believed, fear of being blamed/disciplined, lack of faith teachers will do anything
- They intend to deal with it themselves – not often in a productive manner

Take all reports of harassment and bullying seriously.

The victim needs to understand that they did the right thing by reporting. Ask questions, determine the student's safety, be supportive and ACT.   Commit to identify solutions and follow-up until the situation is resolved. All students have a right to a safe environment for learning and personal growth. For this reason, most schools have a zero-tolerance policy for bullying in schools.

The bully needs to understand the consequences of their actions. However, threats of detention/suspension/expulsion are not a solution. Bullies will only change their behavior when they learn alternative positive behaviors. This will take time and substantial feedback and follow-up.

Review your policies and procedures in light of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website at: http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/bullyingresearch/index.html

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Websites and Hotline:

• Adverse Childhood Experience in Minnesota: http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/program/ace/

• American Psychological Association http://www.apa.org/topics/bullying/

• Centers for Disease Control on ACEs: http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/about.html

• Centers for Disease Control on Bullying: http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/bullyingresearch/index.html

• Common Sense Media: https://www.commonsensemedia.org/ Highly recommended site related to cyber-bullying. It is a one stop website for educational materials and information for families. The For Educators tab includes a plethora of teaching resources on digital citizenship including video clips tailored for elementary, middle, and high school students

• Comprehensive information and tools for classroom: stopbullying.gov

• Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, GLSEN: http://www.glsen.org/

• Information about legal protection based on sexual orientation in Washington State: http://www.k12.wa.us/Safetycenter/BullyingHarassment/default.aspx

• Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center: http://marccenter.webs.com/ One of the most comprehensive websites on bullying. A research-based anti-bullying curriculum is available for free. Includes materials organized for use with K-5 and 6-12. The site features the work of Dr. Elizabeth Englander. Reference/resource page available at: http://marccenter.webs.com/marc-research

• Olweus Bullying Prevention Program: http://olweus.sites.clemson.edu This site provides information about a comprehensive, evidence based bullying prevention program. This would be a good resource for educators interested in implementing a school wide bullying prevention program that is research based.

• National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. 1-800-273-TALK

• Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center with comprehensive information and tools for classroom: http://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/info-facts.asp

• Scholastic Books has a section devoted to bullying prevention including materials for parents and educators. http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/parent-child/anti-bullying-resources-parents-teachers-and-kids

• Suicide Awareness Voices of Education. http://www.save.org/

• Washington State OSPI http://www.k12.wa.us/safetycenter/BullyingHarassment/default.aspx An important resource for Washington State educators. This is an all-encompassing site directing parents and educators to resources, toolkits, and legislation and policies. Training materials include toolkits and bullying training scripts.

8 ABOUT KUNTZ AND COMPANY

Kuntz and Company was formed in 2005 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, professional dance/theatre company. Our mission is to tell the stories of our community through the arts with the intention of gaining a better understanding of the human condition.

In the last 10 years, we have completed 17 significant community based dance/theatre pieces. These works include *Hide and Seek (2014)*, a piece about how children are cared for, or not cared for, through the eyes of the child, family, and system in collaboration with the Brigid Collins Family Support Center, *Hello My Name is You (2013)*, a piece exploring Asperger's Syndrome, *The Family Project (2012)*, a piece exploring the many sides of Family with the involvement of over 20 families, *Shimmer (2011)*, a collaboration with the Whatcom Museum, *Stories from Jim and Jo (2010)*, a piece exploring Parkinson's Disease and MS, *Conversations (2008)*, an inter-generational dialog, *That One Curve (2006)*, a piece about women and body image, and *The Mom Project (2005)*, a work exploring motherhood. Other topics include the prison system, parenting, health, and death/dying.

Throughout the creative process Kuntz and Company involves a wide range of professional artists including photographers, composers, and physical artists as well as community organizations that specialize in the topics we explore. Choosing subjects of universal interest, our work enhances familiar human stories as they make the less familiar fields of dance and theatre more accessible to the community.

About Pam Kuntz

Pam Kuntz danced in New York, Boston and Montana before moving to Bellingham, WA in 1999 to teach at Western Washington University. Pam strives to guide her students to explore their own creative voice, discover habits and make choices. Along with teaching at Western, Pam also teaches a class in the community for people living with Parkinson's disease and other neurological disorders. She is dedicated to arts education for children and worked closely with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for Washington State by helping create assessments for both children (CBPAs) and educators (WEST-E). Pam was a founding member of Bellingham Repertory Dance.

Pam is the founder, Artistic and Executive Director of Kuntz and Company where she works with professional artists and community members to share their stories through the arts. Pam has received funding from The National Endowment for the Arts, The Washington State Arts Commission, the City of Bellingham, and others. Pam is proud to be a 2015 Artist Trust Fellow, a 2012 Artist Trust GAP recipient, a 2012 Peace Builder recipient, a 2011 Ken Gass Community Building Award, and a 2016 and 2007 Bellingham Mayor's Arts Award recipient. Pam's choreography has been recognized by the American College Dance Festival, her screendances "Ellis won't be dancing today" and "Parkinson's Dreams about Me" both received screenings and special recognition in film festivals. Pam Kuntz received her BFA form the University of Montana and her MFA from the Boston Conservatory.

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