



# Best Practices in the Prevention of Bullying

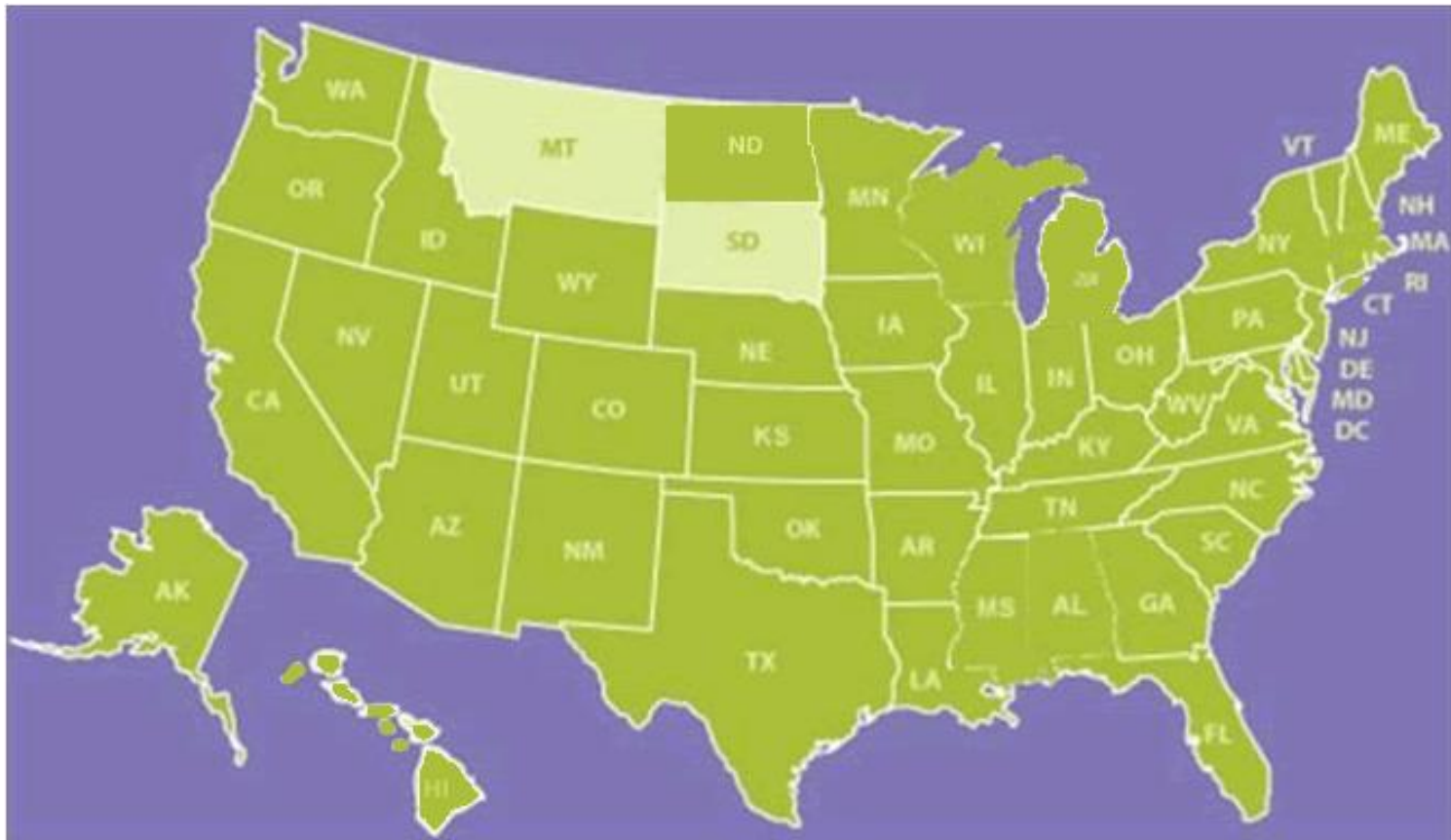
Susan P. Limber, PhD, MLS  
Clemson University



# Overview

- State laws on bullying prevention
- How are schools addressing bullying
- Mis-directions in bullying prevention and intervention
- Best practices in bullying prevention
- An example of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

# Attention to Bullying





# State Laws on Bullying

- Require that officials establish & enforce policies against bullying in public schools.
- Vary in their definitions and policy requirements and recommendations:
  - Reporting
  - Investigation
  - Discipline for children who bully
  - Training
  - Prevention
  - Counseling



# What Are Schools Doing To Address Bullying?

- Nothing
- Awareness-raising efforts
- Reporting, tracking
- Zero tolerance (student exclusion)
- Social skills training for victims
- Individual & group treatment
- Mediation, conflict resolution programs
- Curricular approaches
- Comprehensive approaches



# Misdirections in Bullying Prevention & Intervention

- Zero tolerance policies (focus on suspension/expulsion)
- Conflict resolution/peer mediation
- Group treatment for children who bully
- Simple, short-term solutions



# Elements of Best Practice In Bullying Prevention & Intervention

# #1: Focus on the Social Environment

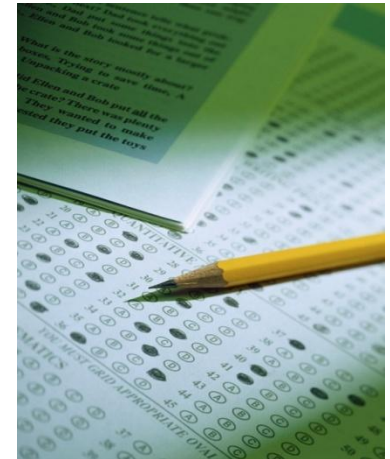
- What is required to reduce bullying in schools is a change in the school climate and in norms for behavior.
- This requires a comprehensive, school-wide effort involving the entire school community





# #2: Assess Bullying at Your School

- Collect data from students  
(and staff and parents)
- Benefits:
  - Findings may help to motivate staff, parents to address issue
  - Findings will help to target specific interventions
  - Will provide important baseline data from which to measure improvement



# #3: Seek Out Support for Bullying Prevention

- Early and enthusiastic support from the principal is critical.
- Commitment from a majority of classroom teachers is important.
- Parents are key partners.





# #4: Train All Staff

- Administrators
- All Teachers
- Health & mental health professionals
- Support Staff
- Custodians
- Bus Drivers
- Lunchroom Supervisors
- Playground aides




# #5: Establish & Enforce School Rules and Policies

- School rules:

- Should guide the behavior of children who bully AND children who witness.
- Should be visible and understood by all.
- Follow up with positive and negative consequences, as appropriate.

- School policies:

- Should address cyber and “traditional” bullying.



# #6: Increase Adult Supervision

- Focus on “hot spots” for bullying that are identified by students.
- All adults in a school community should be vigilant to bullying.



## #7: Intervene Consistently and Appropriately

- Are all adults prepared to intervene appropriately on-the-spot, whenever they observe bullying?
- Do we have a plan for follow-up interventions with children who bully, those who are bullied, parents?

# #8: Focus Classroom Time on Bullying Prevention

- Set aside a small amount of time each week.
- Discuss bullying and relations.
- Use videos, literature, role-playing, artistic expression...
- Integrate bullying prevention throughout the curriculum.



# #9: Coordinate & Integrate Prevention Efforts



- Consider a representative team to coordinate bullying prevention and other efforts:
  - Principal
  - teacher from each grade
  - counselor
  - non-teaching staff (e.g. bus driver)
  - school-based health professional
  - parents
  - community member



# #10: Continue the Effort Over Time

- Bullying prevention should have no “end date.”





# Evaluation of Bullying Prevention Programs

- Ttofi & Farrington (2008, 2009) meta-analysis:
  - Rigorous study (included 30 programs, 59 studies, 200+ participants in each)
  - Conclusions:
    - School-based programs can be effective (20-23% reduction of bullying).
    - There are variations in the effects of different programs.
    - Those “inspired by the work of Dan Olweus worked best.”



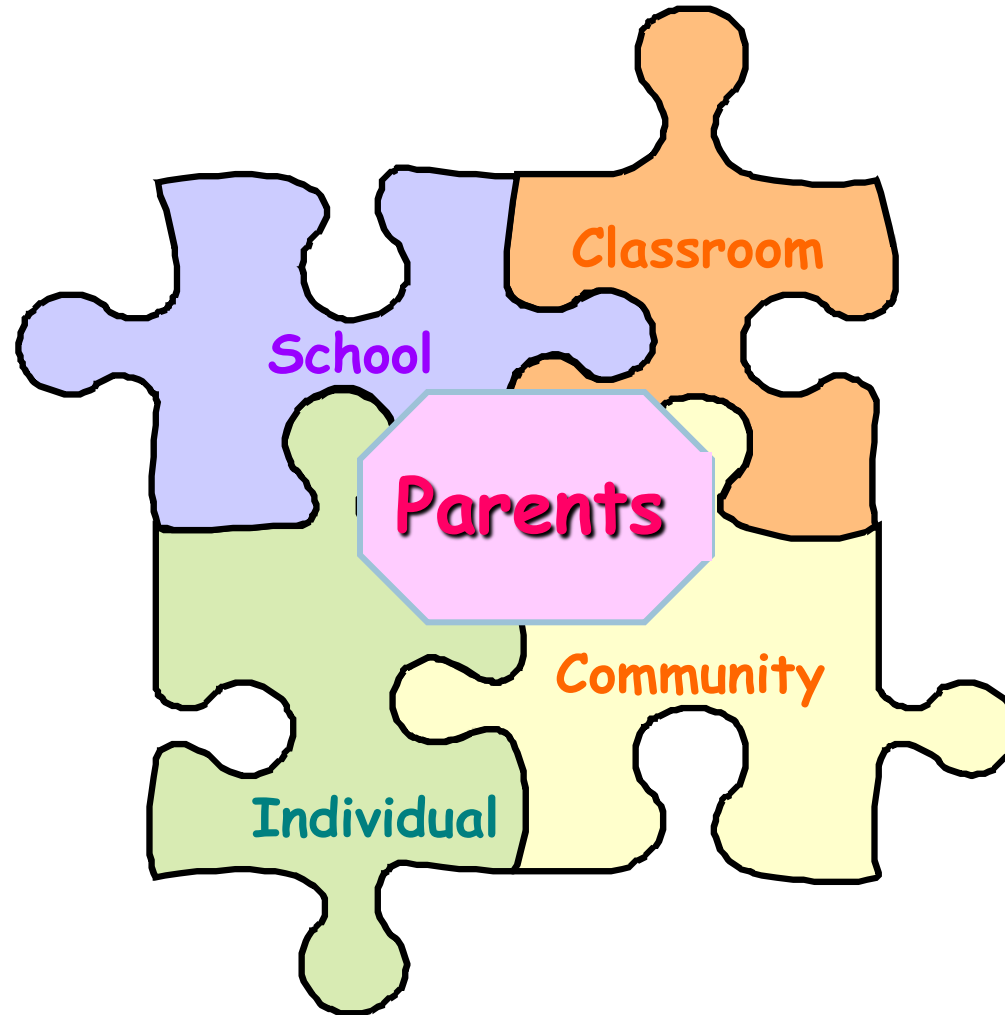
# An Example of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program



# Goals of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

- Reduce existing bullying problems among students
- Prevent the development of new bullying problems
- Achieve better peer relations at school

# OBPP Program Components



# School-Level Components



1. Establish a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee
2. Conduct committee and staff trainings
3. Administer the Olweus Bullying Questionnaire
4. Hold staff discussion groups
5. Introduce the school rules against bullying
6. Review and refine the school's supervisory system
7. Hold a school kick-off event to launch the program
8. Involve parents

# Classroom-Level Components



1. Post and enforce school-wide rules against bullying
2. Hold regular class meetings
3. Hold meetings with students' parents

# Individual-Level Components

1. Supervise students' activities
2. Ensure that all staff intervene on-the-spot when bullying occurs
3. Hold meetings with students involved in bullying
4. Develop individual intervention plans for involved students







# Community-Level Components

- Involve community members on the BPCCC
- Develop partnerships with community members to support your program
- Help spread anti-bullying messages and principles of best practice throughout the community



# For More Information...

- [slimber@clemson.edu](mailto:slimber@clemson.edu)
- [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)
- [www.olweus.org](http://www.olweus.org)