

Academy Forum

Continuing the Message of the Roper Victim Assistance Academy

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #24 - October 2011

Just a Thought

Too many victims of bullying suffer in silence. Learn about the impact bullying can have on a child's physical and emotional well-being, and what steps you can take to advocate for these youth
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Just a thought...

Bullying - Evolving from the playground to the virtual community

Mandy Mundy

It seems every time you turn on the news, there is another story about a child who has been harassed relentlessly at school and reacted negatively by either retaliating against their tormentor, targeting another innocent person, or harming themselves. Each of these stories paints a picture of the torture that a bullying victim endures. The problem with these stories, outside of the obvious impact on the viewer, is that they always talk about how terrible such events are but say nothing about what to do or how things need to change to end bullying and harassment and increase the safety and wellbeing of children.

The Journal of the American Medical Association reported that one out of three students in

grades 6-10 will be a victim of some form of bullying, which translates to over 3 million students each year. Furthermore, it is estimated every day, nearly 16,000 students don't go to school because of the fear they harbor about what will happen to them once they get there. So sadly, most of these children suffer in silence.

There are many reasons why a victim of bullying does not take steps to stop the victimization. One reason they may not tell their parents or another adult figure is because they feel it will only make the situation worse. Many of these children report that if they tell someone, that person will confront the perpetrator which in turn will spur the bully to retaliate. Another reason some children don't come forward is because the witnesses (bystanders) don't stand up for the victim. Teachers may tell the students directly involved to "stop" and does not punish the child who is doing the bullying. This often only empowers the offender and further victimizes the victim. Whereas if a teacher stepped in and told the offender that the observed behavior was unacceptable and will not be tolerated, students would learn what acceptable interrelational behaviors are. In addition, the teacher is modeling positive behavior to other students by intervening and serving as an advocate for the child who is being bullied.

As adults we model behavior all the time for our children. When we get cut off in traffic, how do we respond? Children observe these behaviors and internalize those values and attitudes. As role models to our children as well as every child we come into contact with, it is important that we speak positively when talking to, or about, someone else.



But it is not just us who has the ability to influence children - children also learn from the attitudes and behaviors they see in shows they watch on television or see in the movies. Sadly, some popular television personalities have made a very profitable career as a professional bully.

Today it is even harder to control abusive behavior because of the advent of cell phones and the Internet. Today's teenagers have grown up in a tech-based culture where they can be in contact with the entire world in just a few clicks. This access unfortunately works both ways. Cell phones and social media allows bullies to have around the clock access to victims. For example, there are several applications (e.g., apps) for smart phones (e.g., phones that connect to the Internet) which allows the user to know not only when you are using your phone, but where you are while you are using it through GPS tracking systems. Similarly, there is software available that allows users to

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EDITOR'S CORNER

Hi all!

My how the summer zipped right on by! I hope you all were able to enjoy some time off and did something fun. Before we know it the holidays are going to be here and with that, unfortunately in our business, we get busier. So remember to always take a little time for yourself each week to refresh your body, mind, and soul.

I hope you all look forward to receiving this newsletter and are provided with helpful information that you can use in your job. I encourage you to help us keep everyone informed of important issues, legislative or policy changes, and new resources you come across in your community. If there is a hot topic you are dealing with in your agency, let us know so we can provide assistance. This newsletter is for you, so please don't hesitate to send us your comments or a request - we work very hard to provide you with all the latest information and love to hear from you!

We are currently in need of a few assistant editors, so if you are interested in being part of this newsletter please contact me. It does not take a lot of time, but is very rewarding to see your contributions presented in the finished product each quarter.

I wish each of you all the best this holiday season and hope to see you soon!

Debbie Bradley, C.A., Editor

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Web Links

Although we have a virtual library at our fingertips every time we turn on the computer, we often lose sight of the forest through the trees just trying to navigate the world-wide web. Here are a few sites that relate to this issue's "Just a Thought" ... happy surfing!

International Bullying Prevention Association - The mission of the IBPA is to support and enhance quality research

based bullying prevention principles and practices in order to achieve a safe school climate, healthy work environment, good citizenship, and civic responsibility. For more information, you can go to their website at

<http://www.stopbullyingworld.org>

Cyber Bullying Research Center - The CBRC serves as a clearing-house of information concerning the ways adolescents use and misuse technology. This resource can

be used by parents, educators, law enforcement officers, counselors, and others who work directly with youth who are interested in learning how to prevent and respond to cyberbullying. For more information, go to <http://cyberbullying.us>

Bullying Prevention Resource Guide - This website provides information gleaned from lessons learned and accomplished over the past five years by schools, districts, and non-profit organizations that participated in the Bullying Prevention Initiative. The site reviews best practices and case studies that other jurisdictions can draw on. For more information, go to <http://bullyingprevention.org>

Sticks and Stones Names Can Hurt You: De-Mystifying the Classroom Bully - Bullies are raised in the home, but their victims are too frequently created in the classroom. This site debunks ten myths about bullies, and presents the research that helped identify those myths. For more information, go to: http://www.educationworld.com/a_issues/issues102.shtml



Save the Date

Gestalt Play Therapy: The Violet Oaklander Model

November 11-13, 2011, 8:30am - 4:30pm (each day), University of Baltimore, 1420 N. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD

This workshop is intended to develop an understanding of the theoretical foundation and clinical skills in Gestalt play therapy with children and adolescents. This therapeutic approach, best known through the distinguished work of Violet Oaklander, is grounded in current research in child development as well as humanistic, existential principles of human relationships. Each day of this workshop will utilize videos of child sessions, experiential practice sessions, power point assisted didactic presentations as well as group discussions. Participants will be inspired to use this therapeutic approach in restoring the children in their lives to the experience of being fully alive in each moment.

This three day workshop will qualify for 18 CEUs.

Presenter: Dr. Felicia Carroll; Registration Fee: \$450.00;

For more information, please contact Linda Fair at (410) 837-6084, or by email at lfair@ubalt.edu. Limited scholarships available to RVAAM Alumni.



Crisis Committee Meeting, MAVSP

Thursday, November 10th, 2011, 10:00 am, Northern District of BPD

The Crisis Committee is a creation of the Maryland Association of Victim Service Professionals (MAVSP) and its purpose is

to develop procedures and protocols- in essence, a plan of action – to provide victim services in the event of a mass casualty incident in Maryland. The meeting is open to all MAVSP members and any prospective members interested in helping to develop a victim service action plan for a mass casualty incident.

If you have any questions, please contact Robin Haskins at 410-396-1897.

The Office of the State’s Attorney for Baltimore City Witness Intimidation Summit

Tuesday, November 29th, 2011,
1:00-4:30pm, University of Baltimore Law School, 1415 Maryland Ave., Baltimore, MD

This summit will present experts from law enforcement and victim/witness services to discuss the problem of witness intimidation in the criminal justice system. Keynote remarks will be made by Senator Elijah E. Cummings and will be followed by a plenary session and breakout panels that will cover the following topics - when to relocate a witness, best practices in inter-jurisdictional and multi-agency partnerships, the impact of gangs on witnesses, and helping witnesses with unique needs and circumstances.

To RSVP, please go to www.stattorney.org and complete the registration form in the lower left-hand corner. If you have any questions, please contact (410) 396-1897.

Helping Hand Fundraiser

Wednesday, November 30, 2011,
5:00-9:00pm, Fuddruckers at Owings Mills, 11515 Reisterstown Road

Kathy and William Griffin (“Griff”), class of 2008, are asking the RVAAM Alumni for their assistance. Kathy’s sister, Sherrie Lawler, received a kidney transplant three years ago, however the kidney is now failing. She has been unable to retain medical insurance because of this pre-

existing condition, so Kathy and Griff are holding a fundraiser to assist with her medical expenses.

Please come join Kathy and Griff at Fuddruckers for dinner - 20% of the total dinner bill will go towards helping Sherrie get a new kidney transplant. For more information, please feel free to contact Kathy and Griff at (443) 909-6259 or (410) 944-4445

Victim Services Professional Network Annual General Meeting

January 12th, 2012, 12:00 - 2:00pm,
Location TBD

Please hold this date on your calendars! This is the annual general meeting for all RVAAM Alumni where the Executive Board will discuss upcoming trainings and solicit feedback from the general membership on how the VSPN can better meet your needs.

2012 RVAAM Academy

June 4th - 8th, 2011 at Bon Secours Spiritual Center, Marriottsville, Maryland

Be sure to check back on the Academy website for the 2012 application in the next few months.

If you have any further questions, please email Dr. Debra Stanley at dstanley@ubalt.edu.



Alumni Updates

It seems like only yesterday when we were all together at the Academy. But in a blink of an eye another year has passed us by. Here’s just a snapshot of some of the special events and

milestones our alums have experienced since we last met...

Look at Our Movers & Shakers!

Diane Champe (Class of 2010) - Diane recently took part in a Congressional briefing on trauma on October 11th in Washington, D.C. During the briefing Diane spoke about her background as an adult survivor of child abuse and suggested legislative initiatives that would be helpful in improving the lives of survivors. Thanks for giving a voice to victims of trauma Diane!

Brian Murray (Class of 2006) - Brian was recently appointed to the Board of Directors of the Baltimore Child Abuse Center. Congratulations Brian, we know you are going to do an amazing job!

Rosemary Raiman (Class of 2004) - Rosemary retired from the Center for Abused Person after 15 years of service as their Victim Advocate/ Administrative Specialist, and now is serving as the Domestic Violence Coordinator for the State’s Attorney’s Office in Charles County. Congratulations Rosemary!

Katie Thornton (Class of 2008) - Katie is celebrating a birthday on November 30th. We wish you a very happy birthday Katie and hope 2012 is a great year for you!

Jennifer Weber-Goode (Class of 2005) - Jen and her husband recently welcomed a third son to their family - Colton Goode. Congratulations Jen, we hope all of you are doing well!

Best Practices

Maryland Bullying Prevention Initiative

While bullying is as old as time, bullying laws and resources are still developing and becoming available for kids and teens across the country. In Maryland there is still scarce availability of help lines and agencies to directly assist with combatting youth bullying.

In efforts to address the issue, the Maryland Association of Elementary School Principals (MAESP) recently partnered with the Hazelden Foundation to implement the statewide MAESP Bullying Prevention Initiative in Maryland. At the heart of this initiative is the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program.

“The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is backed by over 35 years of research and has been successfully implemented all over the world. When implemented with fidelity, many school using the program have seen reductions in bullying behavior by over 50 percent or more,” reported Ann Hooper, the Manager of Business Development at Hazelden Publishing.

In response to the suicides of three boys in Norway in 1980, which were attributed to their being bullied at school, the Norwegian government commissioned Dr. Dan Olweus, a recognized leader and researcher on issues related to bullying, to develop a bullying prevention program. This led to the Olweus Bullying Preven-



tion Program (OBPP) that was designed and implemented successfully in Norway, and was then quickly adopted throughout Scandinavia and the rest of Europe. The goals of the program are to: a) reduce existing bullying problems among students; b) prevent the development of new bullying problems; and c) help facilitate better peer relations in schools.

The program was first introduced to American schools in 1994 and quickly demonstrated positive outcomes. Hazelden is the leading publisher of evidence-based prevention programs and has been publishing the OBPP curriculum for the United States since 2007. Not only has evaluations found that the program has helped to reduce the prevalence of bullying among the student population,

the program has also been found to bring out marked reductions in student reports of general antisocial behavior such as vandalism, fighting, theft, and truancy. Students report marked improvements in the classroom social climate, as reflected by students' reports of improved order and discipline, and more positive social relationships and positive attitudes towards school.

The program takes a holistic approach to bullying solutions with a focus on making changes at the school-level, the classroom level, the individual level, and the community level. As such, parent involvement is promoted at every step of the program. The program asserts that adults should be primarily responsible for helping to solve this problem. Schools using the program are expected to set clear policies and procedures for handling incidents of bullying and all school staff are trained on how to intervene when they witness an act of bullying or are made aware of a bullying situation. In turn, students are taught what bullying is, what the consequences are for engaging in such behavior, and if they are a victim of such behavior, how to get help.

Today OBPP is being used in over 6,000 schools nationwide and over 1,000 adults have been trained how to implement the program. Furthermore, 14 states, including Maryland, have created a statewide partnership with OBPP.

For more information about the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, you can call the Maryland Bullying Prevention Initiative at (800) 257-7810 or visit the OBPP website at www.olweus.org

** Essay contributed by Bridgette Harwood*

Just a Thought (Cont.)

read text messages, see numbers that are being called, view pictures on a victim's phone, and even listen in on conversations without even being in close proximity to the victim. Facebook, and other social media outlets, presents its own set of

challenges. First, creating a Facebook page requires nothing more than an email account. So many perpetrators have used this medium to further traumatize their victims by posting hurtful comments or images of their victim. Unfortunately what many individuals may not realize is that Facebook does not delete any content that is posted online and stores all information in its own database. Today many colleges and employers use Facebook to investigate potential candidates to help in the hiring and/or admission decision.

Assisting victims of bullying is often trying and difficult. Often the victim is reluctant to disclose all of the events because it may be very embarrassing. Letting a child know that it is not their fault and that you believe them is an important step to helping a child who has come forward. Knowing that they have an ally is important because stopping the harassment may take some time. Some other ways to assist a victim of bullying is to have them document the events that have taken place, and if the bullying involves any technology (e.g., text messages, emails, Facebook posts, etc.), have them print it out and save as evidence.

Remember, the more individuals stand up for a victim, the more likely bullies will begin to get the message. The reality is, if we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem. Being bullied does not have to be a right of passage that a child has to go through. If adults demonstrate civil behavior as well as empathy and compassion for others, children will be more likely to model similar behavior. As Abraham Lincoln once said, “No man stands so tall as when he stoops to help a child.”

Mandy Mundy is the Director of Education and Training at the Network of Victims Assistance in Bucks County, PA

The 20 / 20

Each newsletter we pose twenty questions to one of our members to get an inside look at who they are ... this month get to know Linda Fair, a graduate of the 2006 Academy

My favorite movie is ...
“Lean on Me” with Morgan Freeman

Compassion and cultural competency. In contrast, the quality I like the least is incivility.

The Disney character that best captures my personality is ... Nala, the wife of Simba the Lion King. She is strong and patient, and serves as the “voice of reasoning”

My favorite book is ...
“The Bridges of Madison County” because it is indicative of true love

If I could go anywhere in the world for vacation, it would have to be ...

On a safari expedition in Africa

My favorite thing to do to help unwind after a rough day is ...

Relax with family and friends - eat crabs, listen to music and watch a DVD

My favorite professional sports team is ... the Baltimore Ravens

If I had to pick whether I'm a morning person or a night-owl, I'd have to say I'm ...
Definitely a morning person! It's the best time of my day

The quality I appreciate the most in another person is ...

My favorite season of the year is .. I love Autumn - the colorful leaves and the breezy winds are very serene to me

If I could see anyone in concert, it would have to be ... I am embarrassed to say I've never attended a Frankie Beverly & Maze concert, but I will!

The occupation, other than the one I have now, I would really like to have is I want to be a licensed clinical social worker. I like counseling and want to help people realize their goals

The occupation I would never want is ... a computer technician!

The occupation I would love to work in is ... an attorney who specializes in child advocacy and juvenile law

My most memorable birthday was ... I recently hit the big 5-0; it was emotional but very celebratory

My favorite piece of clothing is ... I live to accessorize! So give me scarves, jewelry, hats, etc.!!

My favorite treat is ... I love jelly beans

Something I think I do well is ... I believe I am an attentive listener

The three adjectives that best describe my personality are ... genuine, caring, and empathetic

My favorite sound is ... acoustic instruments, the guitar is my favorite

One of my goals for 2011 is ... to travel more

Alumni Directory

The 2011 Alumni Directory, which includes the addition of the most recent Academy class members, will soon be available for distribution. However, we still would like your help to keep the Alumni Directory up to date! If any of your personal and/or professional information changes, please contact Debbie Bradley via email at bradleyd@harfordsheriff.org or by phone at (410) 836-5490.

Editorial Board

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Watch for the next edition of the Academy Forum in January 2012