

**THE MARIPOSA COUNTY
ANTI-BULLYING PROJECT**

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

2005

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MARIPOSA COUNTY DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE COORDINATING COUNCIL
AND MOUNTAIN CRISIS SERVICES

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mariposa County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council is a community-based team of professionals and community members that share a vision of Mariposa County as the safest place to live in California because children and families embrace alternatives to violence. The MCDVCC responds to the unique needs of Mariposa County through education, support and accountability.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page Number
Introduction	1
Executive Summary	2
Definitions	3
Background	4
Schools Survey Results	5
Grades 4- 8	6
Students of Concern	13
High School	15
District Staff Results	16
Community Interviews	19
Conclusions	21
Resources	22
Appendix	23

INTRODUCTION

The Mariposa County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council (MCDVCC), under the lead of Mountain Crisis Services (the local Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Program) was awarded a prevention grant through the California Alliance Against Domestic Violence. The funding originated from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Delta Project. The goal of this funding is to mobilize the community's coordinated domestic violence response team, or the MCDVCC, to strategically plan for and implement *primary prevention* efforts for domestic violence. The Council explored risk factors within our community that were linked to domestic violence and decided to examine the role of bullying as a contributing factors.

A parallel process was occurring at the time the Council was exploring bullying within the School District. The Mariposa County Unified School District had established an Anti-Bullying Task Force to explore bullying and solutions to bullying within the schools. The MCDVCC's Prevention Subcommittee began meeting with the School District's Anti-Bullying Task Force to coordinate efforts within the schools and the community at large, recognizing it would take a comprehensive effort to change the cultural norms existing around the issue of bullying.

It was determined a needs assessment about bullying was a necessary and important first step. The needs assessment was conducted during the winter and spring of 2005 in the schools and communities of Mariposa County. Youth and adults were surveyed. Key informant interviews were conducted with community leaders. Meetings were held with parent groups, the School District's anti-bullying committee and District administrators.

This document includes an executive summary with key findings, a list of bullying definitions, some background on the history of bullying and aggressive behavior in the County, the complete survey results from students and staff of the School District, the results of the Mariposa County High School's Community Service Club's survey on aggressive behavior, the results of the community interviews, and a list of additional resources. The appendix includes the School District's policy on bullying and copies of the surveys.

This comprehensive needs assessment is intended to inform and guide Mariposa County's efforts to eradicate bullying and subsequent domestic violence.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mariposa County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, Mountain Crisis Services and the Mariposa County Unified School District's anti-bullying committee have been working together this year to determine the nature and extent of the bullying problem in the schools and communities of Mariposa County.

Two surveys were conducted in the spring of 2005 in the MCUSD. The first survey was sent to all elementary schools and the middle school. The grades selected for the survey were 4-8. The second survey was sent to all district employees.

The student survey was developed with the help of the leadership class at Lake Don Pedro School, an advisory class at Mariposa Middle School and the Mariposa Youth Council. The return rate for these surveys was 75%, which is excellent. 598 surveys were returned.

Key student findings include:

- 41% report being bullied within the past year.
- 37% of the incidents reported occurred on the playground.
- 65% report having witnessed someone being bullied this year.
- ** 60% report not seeing people intervene when bullying occurs.
- ** 61% report things get worse when bullying is reported.
- 33% report they have bullied someone.
- 45% report some form of retaliation as the reason for engaging in bullying.
- 24% of the students at Mariposa Middle School report being bullied as well as engaging in bullying others.

The survey sent to all district employees had similar questions and included additional ones. The return rate was 33%. 113 surveys were returned.

Key adult findings include:

- 80% think bullying is a problem in the schools and in the communities.
- 83% report witnessing incidences of bullying in the recent past.
- 40% of these incidents occurred on a playground.
- ** 89% report seeing people intervene when bullying occurs.
- ** 65% report things improve when bullying is reported.
- 27% think creating awareness about the issue is a good idea.
- 25% think in-services on what to do when it happens is a good idea.

In addition to the surveys, key informant interviews were conducted with eleven community members. 77% felt bullying is both a school and community problem and 67% said they had seen it occur in their work place.

**Note the significant differences between students and adults on these two questions.

DEFINITIONS - BULLYING

The research literature on bullying defines it in several ways:

- Bullying is a continuum of behavior that involves the attempt to gain power and dominance over another.
- Bullying includes any action or implied action, such as threats, intended to cause fear and distress. The behavior has to be repeated on more than one occasion. The definition must include evidence that those involved intended or felt fear.
- Bullying is a form of social interaction not necessarily long-standing, in which a more dominant individual (the bully) exhibits aggressive behavior that is intended to and does, in fact, cause distress to a less dominant individual (the victim). The aggressive behavior may take the form of a direct physical and/or verbal attack or may be indirect. More than one bully and more than one victim may participate in the interaction.

The survey of the students included the following definitions of bullying:

- Any action that wasn't provoked that can injure or harm another person, physically, mentally or emotionally.
- Mean teasing that goes on a long time.
- Mean acts by a person toward another; cruel, nasty jokes about other person.
- There is an uneven balance of power and it happens over time.

(The students at three student meetings developed these definitions.)

The survey of School District staff included the following definitions of bullying:

- Bullying intentionally causes hurt to the recipient. This hurt can be both physical or psychological.
- It is unprovoked, it occurs repeatedly, and the bully is stronger than the victim or is perceived to be stronger.
- Bullying is a willful, conscious desire to hurt another person. It can be occasional and short-lived, or it can be regular and long-standing.

The Appendix includes the District's policy on bullying which was updated in 2004.

BACKGROUND

In 1995 the Violence Intervention Project, a community group consisting of individuals from Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Services, School District Staff, Child Protective Services and Probation, examined the perception of violence in the schools. It was based on a concern for violence in the schools and the community. They surveyed most of the schools in the School District. To quote from the summary published in 1996:

“Most students felt that violence is a definite problem for themselves and their friends. Violence is primarily associated with angry, impulsive people who come from violent backgrounds and rely on aggression to communicate and solve problems.”

“While staff does not feel personally threatened, there was concern about the level of aggression in schools.”

“There were significant differences in perceptions between students and staff about causes and solutions for aggression. For example, name-calling and put-downs were seen as minor issues by staff but major issues requiring intervention by students.”

The VIP effort to reduce aggressive behavior and to change public perceptions about the problem involved a series of community meetings. These meetings met with some success and brought together a diverse group of community members for discussion and action. Public awareness was raised.

A couple of years ago a serious incident of hazing occurred on a sports field. There were also several serious bullying incidences in the schools. The problem of violent behavior in the schools and community continues to be an issue. The administrators of the School District appointed an anti-bullying task force to examine the problem and develop solutions. The first activity of this committee was to update the District policy on bullying. (see Appendix) The Task Force has been meeting regularly for the past two years to assist administrators, teachers and other staff to develop a common definition, consistent responses to incidences of bullying, and to bring together resources.

In addition a parent advocacy group was recently formed. Mothers Against School Hazing (M.A.S.H.) is working to help parents and students understand the impact hazing and bullying has on the well-being of young people. They meet regularly with interested parents and provide support and information on the topic.

Survey On Bullying / All Students

	Responses	Yes	%	No	%	A	%	B	%	C	%	D	%	E	%	F	%	G	%
1. Have you been bullied this year?	598	245	41%	353	59%														
2. Where did it happen?	411					78	19%	153	37%	63	15%	26	6%	28	7%	23	6%	40	10%
3. Have you witnessed someone being bullied this year?	595	387	65%	208	35%														
4. Do you see people stop bullying when it happens?	579	230	40%	349	60%														
5. What happens when people tell about or try to stop bullies?	610					235	39%	375	61%										
6. Have you ever stood up for someone being bullied?	573	447	78%	126	22%														
7. Have you ever bullied anyone?	603	201	33%	402	67%														
8. Why?	181					80	44%	25	14%	22	12%	22	12%	21	12%	1	1%	10	4%

#2

- a) In the classroom
- b) On the playground
- c) On the bus
- d) At the bus stop
- e) On a sports field
- f) On the streets of Mariposa
- g) Other

#5

- a) Things get better
- b) Things get worse

#8

- a) Retaliation
- b) Fun
- c) Anger
- d) Don't know
- e) Hate/Dislike
- f) Peer Pressure
- g) Other

Survey On Bullying / Cathey's Valley

	Responses	Yes	%	No	%	A	%	B	%	C	%	D	%	E	%	F	%	G	%
1. Have you been bullied this year?	17	3	18%	14	82%														
2. Where did it happen?	3									1	33%	1	33%					1	33%
3. Have you witnessed someone being bullied this year?	16	7	44%	9	56%														
4. Do you see people stop bullying when it happens?	18	12	67%	6	33%														
5. What happens when people tell about or try to stop bullies?	17					8	47%	9	53%										
6. Have you ever stood up for someone being bullied?	17	15	88%	2	12%														
7. Have you ever bullied anyone?	17			17	100%														
8. Why?	4																	4	100%

#2

- a) In the classroom
- b) On the playground
- c) On the bus
- d) At the bus stop
- e) On a sports field
- f) On the streets of Mariposa
- g) Other

#5

- a) Things get better
- b) Things get worse

#8

- a) Retaliation
- b) Fun
- c) Anger
- d) Don't know
- e) Hate/Dislike
- f) Peer Pressure
- g) Other

Survey On Bullying / Coulterville-Greeley

	Responses	Yes	%	No	%	A	%	B	%	C	%	D	%	E	%	F	%	G	%
1. Have you been bullied this year?	40	10	25%	30	75%														
2. Where did it happen?	16					4	25%	6	38%	2	13%					1	6%	2	13%
3. Have you witnessed someone being bullied this year?	39	25	64%	14	36%														
4. Do you see people stop bullying when it happens?	40	19	48%	21	53%														
5. What happens when people tell about or try to stop bullies?	40					15	38%	25	63%										
6. Have you ever stood up for someone being bullied?	40	31	78%	9	23%														
7. Have you ever bullied anyone?	40	12	30%	28	70%														
8. Why?	10					6	60%	2	20%			2	20%						

#2

- a) In the classroom
- b) On the playground
- c) On the bus
- d) At the bus stop
- e) On a sports field
- f) On the streets of Mariposa
- g) Other

#5

- a) Things get better
- b) Things get worse

#8

- a) Retaliation
- b) Fun
- c) Anger
- d) Don't know
- e) Hate/Dislike
- f) Peer Pressure
- g) Other

Survey On Bullying / Lake Don Pedro

	Responses	Yes	%	No	%	A	%	B	%	C	%	D	%	E	%	F	%	G	%
1. Have you been bullied this year?	103	43	42%	60	58%														
2. Where did it happen?	73					18	25%	33	45%	3	4%	4	5%	7	10%	1	1%	7	10%
3. Have you witnessed someone being bullied this year?	103	66	64%	37	36%														
4. Do you see people stop bullying when it happens?	99	38	38%	61	62%														
5. What happens when people tell about or try to stop bullies?	106					42	40%	61	58%										
6. Have you ever stood up for someone being bullied?	90	78	87%	12	13%														
7. Have you ever bullied anyone?	102	29	28%	73	72%														
8. Why?	28					15	54%	5	18%	3	11%	4	14%	1	4%				

#2

- a) In the classroom
- b) On the playground
- c) On the bus
- d) At the bus stop
- e) On a sports field
- f) On the streets of Mariposa
- g) Other

#5

- a) Things get better
- b) Things get worse

#8

- a) Retaliation
- b) Fun
- c) Anger
- d) Don't know
- e) Hate/Dislike
- f) Peer Pressure
- g) Other

Survey On Bullying / Mariposa Elementary School

	Responses	Yes	%	No	%	A	%	B	%	C	%	D	%	E	%	F	%	G	%
1. Have you been bullied this year?	126	53	42%	73	58%														
2. Where did it happen?	87					15	17%	30	34%	15	17%	6	7%	5	6%	5	6%	11	13%
3. Have you witnessed someone being bullied this year?	125	66	53%	59	47%														
4. Do you see people stop bullying when it happens?	119	54	45%	65	55%														
5. What happens when people tell about or try to stop bullies?	128					63	49%	65	51%										
6. Have you ever stood up for someone being bullied?	121	91	75%	30	25%														
7. Have you ever bullied anyone?	129	37	29%	92	71%														
8. Why?	30					1	63%	3	10%	4	13%	4	13%						

#2

- a) In the classroom
- b) On the playground
- c) On the bus
- d) At the bus stop
- e) On a sports field
- f) On the streets of Mariposa
- g) Other

#5

- a) Things get better
- b) Things get worse

#8

- a) Retaliation
- b) Fun
- c) Anger
- d) Don't know
- e) Hate/Dislike
- f) Peer Pressure
- g) Other

Survey On Bullying / Mariposa Middle School

	Responses	Yes	%	No	%	A	%	B	%	C	%	D	%	E	%	F	%	G	%
1. Have you been bullied this year?	228	103	45%	125	55%														
2. Where did it happen?	188					36	19%	64	34%	34	18%	13	7%	11	6%	15	8%	15	8%
3. Have you witnessed someone being bullied this year?	228	165	72%	63	28%														
4. Do you see people stop bullying when it happens?	220	72	33%	148	67%														
5. What happens when people tell about or try to stop bullies?	232					75	32%	157	68%										
6. Have you ever stood up for someone being bullied?	222	166	75%	56	25%														
7. Have you ever bullied anyone?	231	101	44%	130	56%														
8. Why?	89					32	36%	15	17%	15	17%	8	9%	13	15%			6	6%

#2

- a) In the classroom
- b) On the playground
- c) On the bus
- d) At the bus stop
- e) On a sports field
- f) On the streets of Mariposa
- g) Other

#5

- a) Things get better
- b) Things get worse

#8

- a) Retaliation
- b) Fun
- c) Anger
- d) Don't know
- e) Hate/Dislike
- f) Peer Pressure
- g) Other

Survey On Bullying / Woodland Elementary School

	Responses	Yes	%	No	%	A	%	B	%	C	%	D	%	E	%	F	%	G	%
1. Have you been bullied this year?	61	26	43%	35	57%														
2. Where did it happen?	36					3	8%	19	53%	8	22%	2	6%	2	6%	1	3%	1	3%
3. Have you witnessed someone being bullied this year?	61	48	79%	13	21%														
4. Do you see people stop bullying when it happens?	59	26	44%	33	56%														
5. What happens when people tell about or try to stop bullies?	65					24	37%	41	63%										
6. Have you ever stood up for someone being bullied?	60	53	88%	7	12%														
7. Have you ever bullied anyone?	59	18	31%	41	69%														
8. Why?	18					8	44%					2	11%	7	39%	1	6%		

#2

- a) In the classroom
- b) On the playground
- c) On the bus
- d) At the bus stop
- e) On a sports field
- f) On the streets of Mariposa
- g) Other

#5

- a) Things get better
- b) Things get worse

#8

- a) Retaliation
- b) Fun
- c) Anger
- d) Don't know
- e) Hate/Dislike
- f) Peer Pressure
- g) Other

Survey On Bullying / Yosemite Valley School

	Responses	Yes	%	No	%	A	%	B	%	C	%	D	%	E	%	F	%	G	%
1. Have you been bullied this year?	23	7	30%	16	70%														
2. Where did it happen?	8					2	25%	1	13%					2	25%			3	38%
3. Have you witnessed someone being bullied this year?	23	10	43%	13	57%														
4. Do you see people stop bullying when it happens?	24	9	38%	15	63%														
5. What happens when people tell about or try to stop bullies?	22					8	36%	14	64%										
6. Have you ever stood up for someone being bullied?	23	13	57%	10	43%														
7. Have you ever bullied anyone?	23	2	9%	21	91%														
8. Why?	2											2							

#2

- a) In the classroom
- b) On the playground
- c) On the bus
- d) At the bus stop
- e) On a sports field
- f) On the streets of Mariposa
- g) Other

#5

- a) Things get better
- b) Things get worse

#8

- a) Retaliation
- b) Fun
- c) Anger
- d) Don't know
- e) Hate/Dislike
- f) Peer Pressure
- g) Other

MARIPOSA MIDDLE SCHOOL - STUDENTS OF CONCERN

24% (55 of 228) of the students at Mariposa Middle School who returned the survey indicated they had been recently bullied and have also engaged in bullying. This is a group of concern. A national research report indicates children who bully tend to have average or above average self-esteem. Other characteristics may include: Impulsive, hot-headed personalities; lack of empathy; difficulty conforming to rules; positive attitudes toward violence. (Olweus, 1993)

These are student answers to the question, "Why do you bully?"

Stole my twinkie in second grade.
He/she was picking on me.
Because he thought he was better than me.
It was only because of stress.
I bully my sister because she is a lot smarter than me.
Because I don't like them.
Because they aggravated and pushed me too far.
To get revenge.
My little sister when we were joking.
I only do it when I'm bored or it's cold outside.
I didn't like their mom.
I'm better than them.
He called my mom fat!
Because it was funny or they were being mean.
I bullied my brother because he was calling me names.
Because I hate them.
It's fun, make me strong, I'll do it again.
Because they were doing it first.
Because I used to be a bad person!
I was just messing around (friends).
'Cause I don't like them.
Because they said they will kill me when I am a cop.
Because it feels good.
'Cause they wouldn't give me a dollar.
Because they were weird looking.
I was mad at him for something.
Because I don't like them.
It's fun.
'Cause they bully other people.
Because they bully me.
was doing it back to someone who did it to me.
Cuz I wanna.

Because they bullied me!
Just playing around.
Because they are mean and deserve it.
Because they were bullying a friend.
They where being sexually explist (sic) about my mom.
Because he kept calling me names and made fun of my eyes.
Because they're butts.
He was yelling at a girl so I took care of it.
Because it's fun to piss people off.
How they look and act!

Summary: These comments reflect students bullied for revenge or retaliation, fun, or due to intolerance of differences.

MARIPOSA COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL AGGRESSION SURVEY**

In December, 2004 three high school students surveyed 424 male and female students at Mariposa County High School. The results of the survey supported their effort to implement an intervention program called Kindness Builds Character. They have received partial funding for the program. The results establish the fact many students at the High School are being victimized by fellow students. The following are statistics from the students' survey.

- 45% of MCHS students surveyed said they had been socially isolated or rejected by their peers.
- 11% said they had been harassed or victimized for their sexual preference.
- 16% said they had been insulted or harassed because of their race.
- 13% said they had been persecuted for their religious beliefs.
- 60% said they had experienced verbal abuse from another student.
- 16% said they had been physically abused by students.
- 47% said teachers were unaware of or ignored aggression that occurred inside the classroom.
- 56% said students had gossiped or spread a rumor about them.
- 14% said they had been victimized or threatened by a student and felt uncomfortable telling a teacher, adult, or parents.
- 54% said they would take the opportunity to talk to peer mentors concerning high school aggression directed against them.

It is of particular interest to note 47% said teachers were unaware of or ignored aggression. This aligns with the student and adult surveys done for this project which indicates students feel adults are not intervening in bullying incidences and when they do, things do not seem to improve. There is a large discrepancy between youth and adult perceptions about aggressive behavior and bullying.

**Tessa Johnson, Katie Hayes and Jennifer Harsha have given permission to reproduce the results as part of this document.

Staff Survey On Bullying

	Responses	Yes	%	No	%	A	%	B	%	C	%	D	%	E	%	F	%	G	%
1. Do you think bullying is a problem in the schools	110	88	80%	22	20%														
2. Do you think bullying is a problem in the communities of Mariposa?	103	81	79%	19	18%														
3. I have witnessed incidences of bullying sometime during the past two years.	113	94	83%	19	17%														
4. These incidences happened:	199					21	11%	34	17%	78	39%	27	14%	27	14%	6	3%	6	3%
5. If you have <u>not</u> witnessed any, have you heard people talk about incidences of bullying recently?	47	47	100%																
6. Where did they happen?	36					1	3%	1	3%	5	14%	4	11%	8	22%	2	6%	15	42%
7. Are you familiar with the school district's policy on bullying?	109	101	93%	8	7%														
8. Do you see people intervene to stop bullying behavior when it happens?	104	93	89%	11	11%														
9. What happens if it is reported?	113	73	65%	40	35%														
10. What do you think the school district/community needs to do to address this issue?	202					34	17%	50	25%	55	27%	41	20%	22	11%				

#4 & #6

- a) On the streets of Mariposa
- b) In a classroom
- c) On a playground
- d) On a community sports field
- e) On a bus or at a bus stop
- f) In a home
- g) Other

#9

- a) Things improve
- b) Things get worse

#10

- a) Workshops / speakers
- b) In-services on what to do when it happens
- c) Create awareness (newspaper stories, etc.)
- d) Implement an anti-bullying curriculum
- e) Community meetings

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM DISTRICT STAFF SURVEYS

“A school district or community can’t change behaviors learned at home especially if parents do not believe there is a problem. We, as adults and parents, are responsible for teaching our children the difference between right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. Of course, just like anything else at school if it is taught it may help influence behaviors but the ultimate responsibility still falls on the parents.”

“Principals need to involve parents; - document then suspend, suspend, suspend! They need to let the parents know that bullies are not allowed on campus.”

“I have had to deal with bullying on the job as well as on a personal level with children. The biggest problem is at the High School. Should be dealt with accordingly and quickly.”

“Consistent information throughout the year being communicated to parents, staff and students.”

“It’s a problem causing parents to take students out of our school system!”

“Change community culture, teach conflict resolution skills at early age.”

“The problem is much less at our school site than in the past. Training for yard duty aides. Possible class room curriculum in tolerance would be great.”

“Provide counseling for bullies.”

“Some teachers at MCHS either do not notice or participate in some of the bullying - it may not be so prevalent now but there is a big legacy of the “good ole boys” saying things like “Boys, choose your heifer,” when they are to choose partners for dancing during coed P.E. And that’s just the tip of the bucket.”

“I think it will increase among children if there is a major focus upon that particular subject. Rather the focus should be on teamwork and sportsmanship.”

“Many adults/children don’t recognize bullying for what it is. They don’t understand how it can affect a community until it becomes a huge problem, i.e., shooting by children in schools. Children who bully become adults who bully.”

“In an administrator’s office, MMS, last year an adult was verbally abusive to my child. I believe there is bullying being modeled at times by some educators without their conscious realization that it is occurring. We may want to look within before we begin a witch hunt throughout our student population.”

“Thank you for taking this issue seriously!”

“Students need to be aware!!! Start at elementary, so they are aware as they grow. Really focus in the middle school. Sometimes high school is too late!”

“At this time, it seems that there are larger (more serious) issues to address. Sorry. At the heart of the problem: tolerance for one another (acceptance of individual differences)”

“Educate school personnel such as bus drivers, yard supervisors, aides, etc. Visitors to the classrooms would be great. Daycare providers are also great links between kids and parents.”

“Most of the kids who bully have had that behavior entrenched in them by their fathers/grandfathers, etc. It is a community behavior of families that have been here forever. It will be hard to break the cycle since people up here HATE change.”

“If parents bully, the kids will bully.”

“We need to model this as well as deal with it.”

“I think our school deals with the bully problem in an excellent way. We have a set list of consequences and they are followed. Teachers receive an updated bully list frequently.”

“Weekly class meetings - class talks about personal, class and community behavior. Share/practice/model how to actively change interactions that are headed toward bullying. Need parent support.”

“I don’t see bullying as a problem - and I feel too much time and too much emphasis is placed on bullying.”

“Involve parents, let them help make up consequences. Obviously parents need to be more responsible for their children’s actions.”

Summary: In sum, staff comments seem to reflect a general belief parents and school staff must take greater responsibility in teaching and role modeling positive behaviors so youth learn alternatives to bullying. The diversity of comments also reflect the broad spectrum of opinions about the topic found in the Mariposa communities.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS SURVEY

Eleven community members were interviewed during the winter and spring. A few of the people included: a member of the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors, a Probation Officer, an ex-school board member, a member of the Sheriff's Department, a Special Education Director, the County Librarian. Most of them view bullying as a problem in the schools and the communities. It is interesting to note some see bullying as a community norm in Mariposa County.

COMPILED ANSWERS TO SURVEY QUESTIONS**

1. *How do you define bullying?*

Imbalance of power: social, size, numbers, intellect--is continuous.

Taking advantage of someone who is weaker using either verbal or physically abusive behaviors.

Kids picking on what they perceive as weaker individuals.

Demeaning behavior.

Trying to use your influence to get another to do what you in a mean or threatening way.

When one person tries to force another person into a submissive position through words, physical actions, etc.

Children targeting other children and doing such things as pushing, hitting, etc. Being physically superior.

Someone who uses their power either physically or verbally over another person usually in the form of threats.

Repeatedly invading someone else's space, either verbally or physically.

2. *Do you think bullying is a problem in the schools, in the communities?*

77% said yes.

3. *What do you think are the causes, reasons for it?*

Poor self esteem.

Learned behavior in the home.

Lack of understanding of others.

Children who are abused.

Lack of acceptance by peer groups.

4. *Which cause or reason seems to be the most common?*

Dysfunctional relationships at home.

Learned behavior at home.

No self-esteem.

Poor self-worth.

Bullying is a community norm.

5. *Do you see it occur in your work place?* 66% said yes.

6. *Do you hear people talk about incidences of bullying?* 77% said yes.

7. *Which age group seems to experience it the most?*
Middle school age but starts in lower grades.
8. *When parents are informed about an incidence what kind of response do you get from the (A) parents of victims, (B) parents of perpetrators?*
A. Outrage and don't feel we are doing enough.
B. Parents deny it. Start of being defensive and then usually ask what can they do.
Usually pretty responsive.
Try to justify the behavior.
9. *What do you think would help to reduce bullying?*
Education.
Parenting classes.
Work with children on anger management.
Community awareness.
Counseling focus on team building rather than competition in sport activities.
10. *Have you ever been bullied?* 44% said yes.
11. ****Comments:**
"Treat victims appropriately. It is important not reinforce the behaviors of being a victim...give them skills to deal with bullies."
"It is important to know the reasons behind the behavior. Get to the core".
"Need a youth center where children can be safe. Where they feel good about themselves. Competitive sports don't always work for some children."
"Children with visible disabilities are often targets. Just calling a child a resource kid can be a form of bullying. Special education students who are bullies lack social judgment skills. Lack of impulse control is a problem for some special education students who bully."
"I am concerned with labeling. Important to allow boys to be boys. Physical fights are not necessarily bullying. We need to draw lines and use better definitions."
"A district-wide program should be more than something that just targets teachers. A curriculum designed to improve the school climate would be more than one that just relies on having students report incidences of bullying."

**Does not include all individual answers.

CONCLUSIONS

This needs assessment is intended as a first step to guiding the efforts of the Mariposa County Unified School District and the Mariposa County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, as well as other interested community groups and members. It is our intent to change cultural norms and attitudes that have allowed bullying to continue to be the community problem identified in this document. It is anticipated a comprehensive prevention and intervention plan will help us achieve this goal in the near future.

The MCDVCC would like to acknowledge and thank all of those individuals and groups who were willing to share their time and ideas to help develop and implement this needs assessment:

Student Groups

School District Administration

Student and Staff Survey Participants

Focus Groups Members

Mothers Against School Hazing (M.A.S.H.)

Community Members who were interviewed

California Alliance Against Domestic Violence

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

RESOURCES

References

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at school: What we know and what we can do*.
Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc.

Web Sites

www.StopBullyingNow.hrsa.gov

www.nobullies.com

www.mcgruff.org

www.dontlaugh.org

www.bullyproof.org

Literature Review

A significant review of the literature on bullying is available at the Mountain Crisis Services office in Mariposa.

APPENDIX

1. District Policy
2. Surveys

Students

Prevention of Bullying

The Governing Board believes that all students have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. The district, schools, and community have an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance.

The Mariposa County Unified School District will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. A student shall not intimidate or harass another student through words or actions. Bullying behavior is defined as direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name calling; and social isolation or manipulation.

The Mariposa County Unified School District expects students and/or staff to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee. Staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident. Each complaint of bullying should be promptly investigated. This policy applies to students on school grounds, while they are traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity off-site, during the lunch period whether on or off campus, and during a school-sponsored activity.

To ensure bullying does not occur on school campuses, the Mariposa County Unified School District will provide staff development training in prevention of bullying and cultivate acceptance and understanding in all students and staff to develop each school's ability to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment.

Teachers should discuss this policy with students in ways appropriate to their ages and should assure them that they need not endure any form of bullying. Students who bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.

Each school has adopted the *Standards of Behavior* to be followed by every student while he or she is on school grounds, when traveling to and from school or a school-sponsored activity, and during lunch period, whether on or off campus. The *Standards of Behavior* is sent to each parent and student at the beginning of the school year. This document also includes the *District's Zero Tolerance Policy*.

Adopted: 5-20-04

Students

Prevention of Bullying

The Mariposa County Unified School District will not tolerate behavior that infringes on the safety of any student. A student shall not intimidate or harass another student through words or actions. Bullying behavior is defined as: direct physical contact, such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults, such as teasing or name-calling; and social isolation or manipulation meant to cause harm, intimidate, or cause fear in another person.

Bullying is considered a violation of the *Education Code* and *Penal Code*. It is further defined as harassment and/or intimidation of a student or students by another student or group of students in one or more of the following categories:

- A. Physical bullying is defined as any physical action meant to harm, intimidate or cause fear in another person. Examples include, but are not limited to: Hitting, kicking, spitting, pushing, restraining, slapping, poking, scratching, choking.
- B. Verbal bullying is defined as any verbal or written communication meant to harm, intimidate, or cause fear in another person. Examples include, but are not limited to: Taunting, malicious teasing, name-calling, threatening, sarcasm, the use of racial or ethnic slurs, and derogatory comments regarding a student's perceived sexual orientation, gender preference, and/or lifestyle choices.
- C. Psychological bullying is any action or communication meant to disrespect, harm, intimidate, or cause fear in another person. Examples include, but are not limited to: Spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, or promoting social exclusion, extortion, or intimidation.

Bullying prevention remedies as addressed in Standards of Behavior include, but are not limited to, the following actions and consequences:

- Any student who engages in bullying may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion.
- Students are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the principal or designee.
- Students can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.

Disciplinary actions against a student for violation of *Education Code* sections that address bullying, intimidation, and/or harassment shall be administered in accordance with the District Board Policy 5144 and Administrative Regulations 5144.1, 5144.2, and the *Standards of Behavior Handbook*. Local law enforcement will be notified of all violations for investigation and prosecution pursuant to Penal Code sections including, but not limited to 240, 242, 245, 415, and 422.

If the complainant student or the parent of the student believes that the investigation or complaint was not resolved appropriately, the student or the parent of the student should contact the principal or the school office. The school system prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

The procedures of interviewing in bullying behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

- All staff, students, and parents will receive a summary of the policy prohibiting bullying at the beginning of the school year, as part of the student handbook and/or information packet, as part of new student orientation, and as part of the school system's notification to parents.
- The school will make reasonable efforts to keep confidential a report of bullying and the results of the investigation.
- Staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur.
- Schools are required to develop a process to provide support, intervention and counseling for students who feel they are victims of bullying.
- Schools are required to develop a process to involve parents in correcting behavior of students involved as perpetrators and victims of bullying.
- People witnessing or experiencing bullying are encouraged to report the incident; such reporting will not reflect on the victim or witnesses in any way.
- Law enforcement agencies will be involved in school bullying incidents at the direction of the site principal.

Adopted: 5-20-04

STUDENT SURVEY ON BULLYING

Some definitions of bullying: Any action that wasn't provoked that can injure or harm another person, physically, mentally, or emotionally. Mean teasing that goes on a long time. Mean acts by a person toward another; cruel, nasty jokes about another person. There is an uneven balance of power and it happens over time.

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. HAVE YOU BEEN BULLIED THIS YEAR? YES ___ NO ___

2. WHERE DID IT HAPPEN?

 IN THE CLASSROOM _____
 ON THE PLAYGROUND _____
 ON THE BUS _____
 AT THE BUS STOP _____
 ON A SPORTS FIELD _____
 ON THE STREETS OF MARIPOSA _____
 OTHER? _____

3. HAVE YOU WITNESSED SOMEONE BEING BULLIED THIS YEAR?
 YES ___ NO _____

4. DO YOU SEE PEOPLE STOP BULLYING WHEN IT HAPPENS?
 YES ___ NO _____

5. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN PEOPLE TELL ABOUT OR TRY TO STOP BULLIES?
 THINGS GET BETTER _____
 THINGS GET WORSE _____

6. HAVE YOU EVER STOOD UP FOR SOMEONE BEING BULLIED?
 YES ___ NO _____

7. HAVE YOU EVER BULLIED ANYONE? YES _____ NO _____

8. WHY? _____

(Thank you for taking time to answer this survey. All answers are confidential.)

MARIPOSA COUNTY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF SURVEY ON BULLYING

1. DO YOU THINK BULLYING IS A PROBLEM IN THE SCHOOLS?
YES _____ NO _____

2. DO YOU THINK BULLYING IS A PROBLEM IN THE COMMUNITIES OF MARIPOSA?
YES _____ NO _____

3. I HAVE WITNESSED INCIDENCES OF BULLYING SOMETIME DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS.
YES _____ NO _____

4. THESE INCIDENCES HAPPENED:

ON THE STREETS OF MARIPOSA _____
IN A CLASSROOM _____
ON A PLAYGROUND _____
ON A COMMUNITY SPORTS FIELD _____
ON A BUS OR AT A BUS STOP _____
IN A HOME _____
OTHER _____

5. IF YOU HAVE NOT WITNESSED ANY INCIDENCES, HAVE YOU HEARD PEOPLE TALK ABOUT INCIDENCES OF BULLYING RECENTLY?
YES _____ NO _____

6. WHERE DID THEY HAPPEN? _____

7. ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S POLICY ON BULLYING? YES _____ NO _____

8. DO YOU SEE PEOPLE STOP BULLYING BEHAVIOR WHEN IT HAPPENS?
YES _____ NO _____

9. WHAT HAPPENS IF IT IS REPORTED?
THINGS IMPROVE _____ BEHAVIOR CONTINUES _____

10. WHAT DO YOU THINK THE SCHOOL DISTRICT/COMMUNITY NEEDS TO DO TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE?
WORKSHOPS / SPEAKERS ON TOPIC _____
CREATE AWARENESS (NEWSPAPER STORIES, ETC.) _____
IMPLEMENT AN ANTI-BULLYING CURRICULUM _____
COMMUNITY MEETINGS _____

COMMENTS: _____

