

Thank you for your interest in the Pacific Violence Prevention Institute (PVPI). The PVPI is an organization whose sole purpose is to identify, reduce, and prevent acts of violence in the community. The PVPI places special emphasis on the prevention of bullying, harassment, and related violence, especially in educational, religious, and corporate communities.

Bullying and harassment has become a pandemic problem in school, as well as *any* organization where young people congregate. Research suggests that as many as 160,000 students skip school every day in order to avoid bullying, harassment, and intimidation (NASP, 2001). In recent interviews of school administrators, *every* administrator interviewed reported a strong correlation between school absences and academic success (Berry, 2005). If students are to achieve their full academic and social potential, bullying and harassment must be prevented.

The PVPI's goal is help your institution develop and sustain an effective violence prevention program; a program that helps to create an atmosphere at your school where acts of violence can be prevented. To follow is an in-depth description of the philosophy of the PVPI, and the theories and methods used by the PVPI to develop and implement effective programs at your school.

Sustainability Through Peer Education

Most of the PVPI's programs are based on a peer education model. Whether programs are intended for students or adults, in most cases those programs will be more effective if they are presented by members of the community that the program targets. In most cases, the staff of the PVPI will not come to your institution and present its programs. Rather, members of our staff will train members of your community as trainers, allowing them to continue to present programs long after we have left.



Not only is this peer education model a highly effective instructional method, but it also will allow your institution, with guidance and consultation from the PVPI, to maintain a sustainable violence prevention program.

Our Philosophy

Many organizations share the goal of preventing bullying and harassment. The focus of many of these programs is training teachers, administrators, and staff to identify *bullies* (students who demonstrate a pattern of behavior that victimizes other students in an attempt to gain power over them) and effectively intervene in their behavior. In addition to this goal, the PVPI's programs focus on training students, teachers, administrators, and staff to intervene in the *bullying behavior* that most students engage in (behavior such as put downs, spreading rumors, offensive jokes, stereotyping, etc.). By taking action to intervene in these "less severe" acts of violence, an atmosphere can be created that makes it difficult for violence to escalate. The following is a description of the philosophy used by the PVPI for all of our violence prevention programs:

Changing Bystanders into Allies

The main goal of the PVPI is to prevent bullying, harassment, and other forms of related violence by changing *bystander behavior* into *ally behavior*.

Bystander: *Someone who witnesses an event but is not directly involved in the event.*

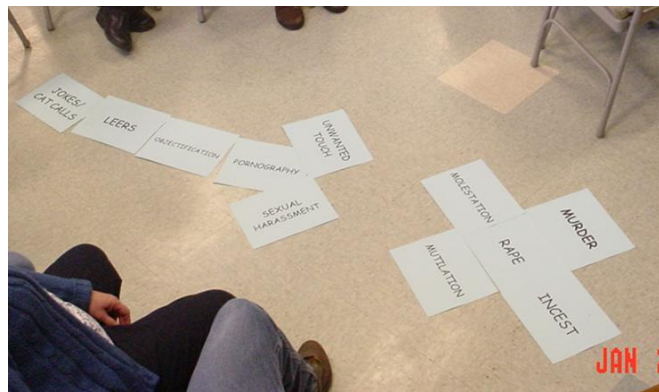
Ally: *A person who acts against an act of violence, oppression, or mistreatment that is not directed at them.*

Research shows that in 85% of bullying, harassment, or school violence episodes there are bystanders present (Craig & Pepler, 1997). Research has also shown that in the majority of cases (57%) when bystander intervenes in an act of bullying, harassment, or related school violence the act will stop within 10 seconds (Craig & Pepler, 1997). This research demonstrates the efficacy of bystander intervention, or in other words, ally behavior.

However, being an effective ally is a skill, and honing that skill requires instruction and practice. Students must be given skills to be effective allies, and must have the opportunity to practice intervening in situations of bullying and harassment in a positive ways. All PVPI programs are designed to give students the skills that they will need to be effective allies in their community. By teaching students the skills that they need to become effective allies, and then continuing to support them in their change from bystander behavior into ally behavior, bullying, harassment, and related school violence can be prevented.

The Violence Continuum

All acts of violence occur in a continuum, meaning that acts of violence that may not seem very severe (i.e. objectification, stereotyping, offensive jokes or comments), are connected to acts of violence that may seem more severe (i.e. unwanted sexual touch, intimidation, physical violence), which are connected to acts of violence that seem to be the most severe (sexual assault, murder, suicide). These ideas hold true for all types of violence, including bullying, harassment, and related school violence. The PVPI's operational definition of violence is:



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Violence: Any act, physical, emotional, or sexual, that causes physical, emotional, or sexual pain to another.

It is very difficult for students to intervene effectively in acts of physical violence. It is much more realistic for students to intervene in the “less severe” acts of bullying and harassment, such as put downs, rumors, offensive jokes or comments. In fact, a recent study conducted by the American Association of University Women found that most students found verbal and emotional violence such as spreading rumors, to be as damaging as or more damaging than physical violence (2004). By encouraging students to practice ally behavior by intervening in these “less severe” acts of verbal and emotional violence, an atmosphere can be created that makes it difficult for violence to escalate.

Removing or Changing the Social Reward



There is no greater influence on one's behavior than one's peers (Berkowitz & Perkins, 1986). Many acts of bullying and harassment are motivated by the perpetrator seeking approval from his/her peers, in other words, seeking a social reward. When a peer practices ally behavior, a message is sent to the perpetrator that bullying and harassment is not acceptable. Since most people's behavior is motivated by seeking approval

from their peer group it is unlikely that they will continue to engage in behavior that is unacceptable to their peers. By encouraging ally behavior we can effectively remove the social reward that is often the goal of bullying and harassment. By removing or changing the social reward we are able to intervene in specific acts of violence, and prevent future acts of violence.

Encouraging Ally Behavior by Building Stronger Communities

As our communities become more diverse, so do our schools. Unfortunately, rather than celebrating diversity, in many cases those who are perceived to be different become the victims of bullying and harassment. Many of the programs designed by the PVPI focus on embracing all types of diversity, and building a stronger community that celebrates everyone's identities. Only by working to create a community that embraces diversity can ally behavior truly be effective.

The members of the staff of the PVPI have an extensive background in community building, celebration of diversity and multiculturalism, and identifying and responding to acts of violence within diverse populations. Some members of the staff are certified trainers for the National Coalition Building Institute, one of the world's leading organizations dedicated to community building and celebration of diversity and multiculturalism. This extensive background allows the PVPI to offer a wide variety of prejudice reduction, diversity awareness, and community building programs, all developed specifically to meet the needs of your community.

Creating Effective Programs

In order to develop the most effective program possible for your institution, the PVPI utilizes the Stages of Change model of behavior change.

The Stages of Change

Like any other behavior change, changing from bystander behavior into ally behavior is a process, which can be illustrated by the Stages of Change Model (1984). This model describes the process that we all go through when making important changes in behavior. The model identifies six stages: Pre-contemplation, Contemplation,

Preparation, Action, Maintenance, and Relapse. In order for any behavior modification program to be effective, it must take into account this process (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1984).

Taking this theory of behavior change into account allows the PVPI to target its audience *developmentally*. For example, we have found that when we begin any prevention program, most students are in the pre-contemplative or contemplative stages of changing from bystander behavior to ally behavior. It is not effective to teach these students skills for becoming effective allies. Rather, a more developmental approach must be taken, first building awareness to facilitate the transition from pre-contemplative and contemplative stages to preparation and action stages. Once these students are in the preparation or action stages, we begin to introduce programs that will teach these students skills to become effective allies.