

# Nonviolent Communication: A Conceptual Framework for Intervention and Prevention of Bullying



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# Introduction



- **Clinical psychologist**
  - Specialization in adolescents and young adults
- **Associate Director of PRYDE**
  - Clinical training supervisor – Pepperdine University Irvine
- **Private Practice**
  - Computer and video gaming addiction – Harm Reduction Model
    - ✦ PC Moderator™
- **Clinical Orientation – Radical Behaviorist**
  - Behavioral and CBT (ACT)
    - ✦ Parenting by Numbers™ Online Token Economy
  - Nonviolent Communication (NVC)
- **Experience with Bullying and School Violence**
  - OCSD SMART Team 2006-2010
  - Counselor Intern in Elementary and Middle School

# PRYDE



## Pepperdine Resource Youth Diversion and Education

- Pepperdine University Graduate School of Education and Psychology Community Based Clinical Training Program
  - ✦ Training MFT and Psychology Practicum Students and Interns
- Provide Juvenile Diversion counseling and case management services for contract cities and unincorporated areas of Orange County
- Referrals from law enforcement, probation including SMART
- Affiliated programs include school and community based counseling programs including campus clinics throughout So. California

# Agenda



- **Overview of Bullying**
  - Causes / Consequences of Bullying
  - Prevention and Intervention Programs
- **Introduction to Nonviolent Communication (NVC)**
  - Brief history of Marshall Rosenberg and NVC
  - Foundation: observations, feelings, needs and requests
  - Learning NVC
- **Bullying Intervention and Prevention Framework**
  - Structural Components
  - Educational Components
  - Counseling Components

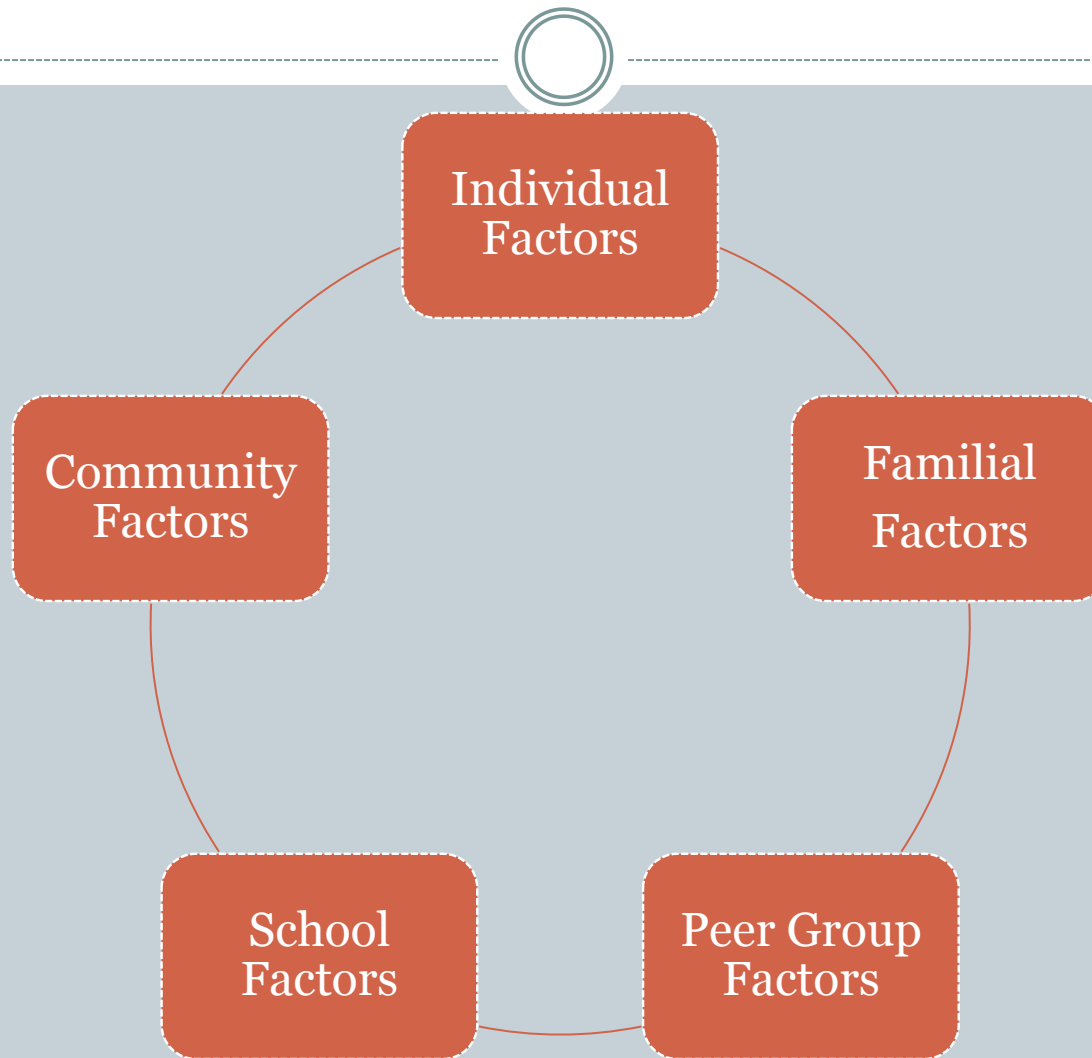
# Definition of Bullying



Aggressive behavior based on an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the target is intentionally harmful and occurs repetitively (Olweus et al., 1999)

Persistent threatening and aggressive behavior directed toward other people, especially those who are smaller or weaker (APA)

# Bullying: Multiple Factors



Social Ecological Model of Bullying (2009) Swearer, Espelage & Napolitano

# Individual Factors



	Bully	Victim
Anxiety		✓
Depression	✓	✓
Conduct Problems	✓	
Social skills deficits		
Anger/Affect Regulation Problems	✓	
Lower empathic concern	✓	
Positive attitude about bullying	✓	

# Familial Factors



- **Bullies are more likely to live with:**
  - Parent pro-aggression attitudes
  - High control, low warmth parenting
  - Anxious/Avoidant attachment to caregivers
  - Corporal punishment
  - Siblings they also frequently victimize
- **Victims are more likely to live with:**
  - Less authoritative parents
  - Low levels of negotiation
  - High degrees of conflict
  - Lower socioeconomic status



# Peer Factors



- Peers select group with similar interests, values.
  - Exclude individuals “threatening” the group cohesion
  - Allies part of protected group
- **Dominance Theory**
  - Aggression serves to establish social status/order
  - Bystanders less willing to aid victim
- **Attraction Theory**
  - Adolescents attracted to peers that model independent (i.e. delinquent) behavior
  - Support also from popularity research
- Transition periods are of increased risk
- Positive peer social support can provide protective factors

# School Factors



## Factors predictive of *greater* bullying behaviors

- Poor monitoring of public spaces
- Informal student-staff/teacher relations
- High conflict school environment

## Factors predictive of *less* bullying behaviors

- Classroom practices and teacher attitudes
  - Teacher warmth
  - Fast and consistent response to classroom aggression
- Schools with emphasis on learning

# Community Factors



- How safe is the community?
- Are schools valued and well supported?
- Are community resources for victims and bullies available?
  - Counseling, parenting programs, youth activities
- After school programs
- School and family partnerships

# My Bodyguard: Bully/Victim Characteristics



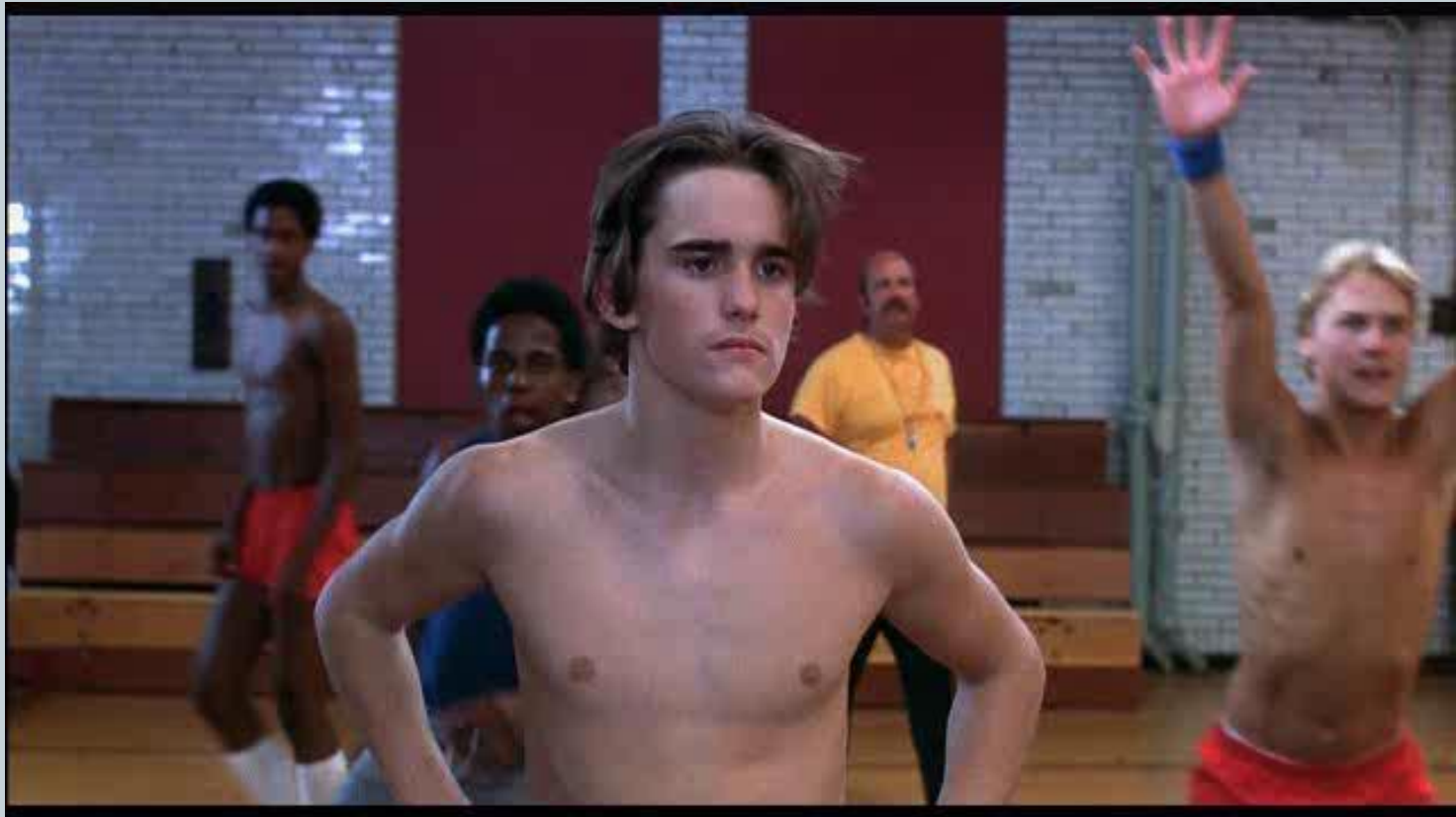
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# My Bodyguard: Associates



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# My Bodyguard: Revenge Through Violence



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# My Bodyguard:Naïve Parents



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# My Bodyguard: Ineffective School Policies



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# My Bodyguard: Retaliation



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# My Bodyguard: Happy Ending



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# Consequences for Bully, Victim and Society



- **Depression, anxiety and other mental illness**
  - Greater suicidal ideation, loneliness, lowered self esteem
- **Increased physical illness**
  - Headaches, stomach problems
- **Lowered school performance**
  - School avoidance, attendance problems
  - Lower grades predicted for bully and victim
- **Bullying is a lifespan problem**
  - Both short term and long term negative consequences
  - Greater aggression and violence predicted in dating and intimate partner relationships (bully)

# Motivation for Anti-Bullying Efforts



- Improve the quality of student's lives and educational experience
- Reduce school violence
- Improve school attendance
- Academic improvement
- Reduce risk of litigation
- Meet State requirements

# Anti-bullying Programs



- **Many programs commercially available**
  - Less than 1/4 are supported with evidence
  - Can be expensive to fully implement
- **Best known and evaluated world-wide is Olweus™ Bullying Prevention Program**
  - Originated out of Norway
  - Comprehensive – multilevel program (Individual, School, Classroom and Community levels)
  - Well structured and supported (training, etc.)
  - 50% reduction in some studies - US results more modest effect

# Components of Anti-Bullying Program



- **Structural**
  - Staff participation, executive commitment
  - School, classroom rules and consequences
  - Establish bully reporting and handling methods
  - Program finance, management and evaluation
- **Educational**
  - Educate students on rules and consequences
  - Empathy training for students, teachers and staff
  - Anger Management training
  - Parent outreach/training
- **Counseling Interventions for Bully/Victim**
  - Individual and group counseling
  - Conflict Mediation Process

# Life-Enriching Education



- Created by Marshall Rosenberg almost 50 years ago
  - “An education that prepares children to learn throughout their lives, relate well to others and themselves, be creative, flexible and venturesome, and have empathy not only for their immediate kin but for all humankind.” (2003, Rosenberg)
- Implemented in schools throughout the world
  - While results promising and some schools still remain, not a great success
- Failed to catch on: too ambitious
  - Completely change how students are taught and evaluated

# Marshall Rosenberg



- PhD in Psychology in 1961 at University of Wisconsin
  - Studied under Carl Rogers
- Developed his NVC process and was first used in federally funded school projects in the 1960s for mediation and communications skills training
- Founder of the Center of Nonviolent Communications (1984)
  - International peace keeping organization.
- Now has over 200 certified trainers in 35 countries around the world

*"Every criticism, judgment, diagnosis, and expression of anger is the tragic expression of an unmet need."*



# NVC Process



- The Concrete actions we *observe* that affect our well-being
- How we *feel* in relation to what we observe
- The *needs*, values, desires, etc. that create our feelings
- The concrete actions we *request* in order to enrich our lives

# Four Components of NVC



- Observations - When I see (hear) ....
  - No judgment, criticism, put downs, sarcasm, bitterness
- Feelings - I feel ....
  - Sharing honestly about our feelings – no insults or –ed statements
- Needs – Because I am needing....
  - We all have universal human needs
  - Critical to get in touch with our needs
- Requests - And I would like ..... OR would you be willing to .....
  - No demands, must be willing to accept “No”

# Feelings When Needs Are Being Met\*



## **ENGAGED**

absorbed  
alert  
curious  
engrossed  
enchanted  
entranced  
fascinated  
interested  
intrigued  
involved  
spellbound  
stimulated

## **AFFECTIONATE**

compassionate  
friendly  
loving  
open hearted  
sympathetic  
tender  
warm

## **CONFIDENT**

empowered  
open  
proud  
safe  
secure

## **EXCITED**

amazed  
animated  
ardent  
aroused  
astonished  
dazzled  
eager  
energetic  
enthusiastic  
giddy  
invigorated  
lively  
passionate  
surprised  
vibrant

## **EXHILARATED**

blissful  
ecstatic  
elated  
enthralled  
exuberant  
radiant  
rapturous  
thrilled

\*Small sample

# Feelings When Needs Are *Not* Being Met\*



## **AFRAID**

apprehensive  
dread  
foreboding  
frightened  
mistrustful  
panicked  
petrified  
scared  
suspicious  
terrified  
wary  
worried

## **DISCONNECTED**

alienated  
aloof  
apathetic  
bored  
cold  
detached  
distant  
distracted  
indifferent  
numb  
removed  
uninterested  
withdrawn

## **PAIN**

agony  
anguished  
bereaved  
devastated  
grief  
heartbroken  
hurt  
lonely  
miserable  
regretful  
remorseful

## **SAD**

depressed  
dejected  
despair  
despondent  
disappointed  
discouraged  
disheartened  
forlorn  
gloomy  
heavy hearted  
hopeless  
melancholy  
unhappy  
wretched

\*Small sample

# Universal Human Needs\*



## **CONNECTION**

acceptance  
affection  
appreciation  
belonging  
cooperation  
communication  
closeness  
community  
companionship  
compassion  
consideration  
consistency  
empathy  
inclusion  
intimacy  
love

## **HONESTY**

authenticity  
integrity  
presence

## **PLAY**

joy  
humor

## **PEACE**

beauty  
communion  
ease  
equality  
harmony  
inspiration  
order

## **MEANING**

awareness  
celebration of life  
challenge  
clarity  
competence  
consciousness  
contribution  
creativity  
discovery  
efficacy  
effectiveness  
growth  
hope  
learning  
mourning  
participation

## **PHYSICAL | WELL-BEING**

air  
food  
movement/exercise  
rest/sleep  
sexual expression  
safety  
shelter  
touch  
water

\*Small sample

# Expressing honestly



- O – Observation (no judgment, criticism, put downs, sarcasm, bitterness)  
When I see (hear) ....
- F – Feelings (sharing honestly about our feelings – no insults or –ed statements)  
I feel ....
- N – Needs (we all have needs)  
Because I am needing....
- R – Request (no demands, must be willing to accept “No”)  
And I would like ..... OR would you be willing to .....

# Receiving empathically



- O – Observation (no judgment, criticism, put downs, sarcasm, bitterness)  
When you see (hear) ....
- F – Feelings (sharing honestly about our feelings – no insults or –ed statements)  
Do you feel .... ?
- N – Needs (we all have needs)  
Because you are needing....
- R – Request (no demands, must be willing to accept “No”)  
And would like ..... (specific action)

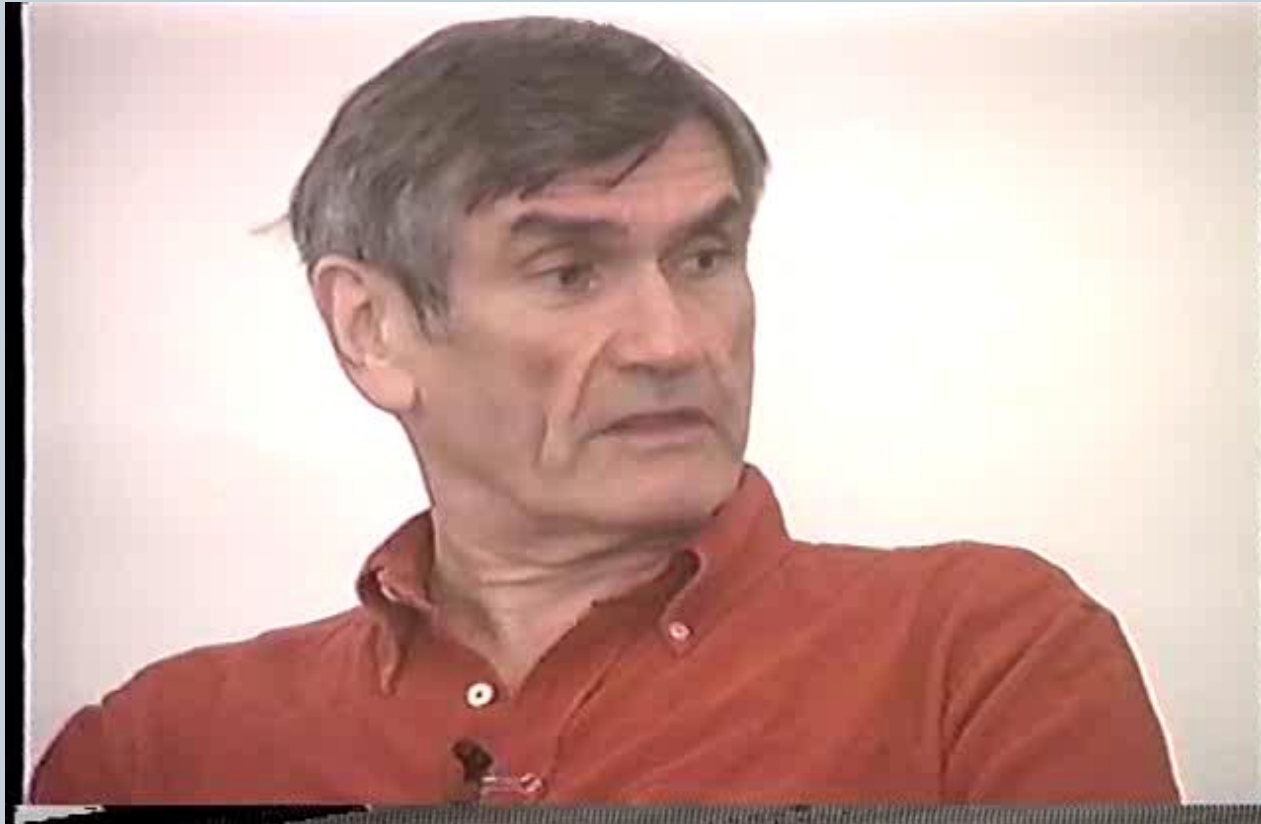
# The Language of NVC



- **Taught as a new language**
  - Helps others hear us more accurately
  - Can start teaching at any age (earlier the better)
  - Proficiency improves over time
- **Teaches self awareness and mindfulness**
  - Roots of feelings are needs, awareness of needs brings greater personal responsibility
- **Teaches responsibility for our choices**
- **Tools such a Giraffe and Jackal Puppets used**
  - Empathic vs. unhelpful critical thoughts
  - Distancing/defusion (ACT) from thoughts
- **Helps an individual to apply self empathy**
  - Helps with anger management



# Marshall Rosenberg Training Clip



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# Training



- Books
- Workbooks
- Videos
- Audio tapes/Cds
- NVC Practice Groups
- NVC Training Programs
- NVC Certified Trainers

# Bullying Intervention and Prevention Framework



- **Structural**
  - Staff participation, executive commitment
  - School, classroom rules and consequences
  - Establish bully reporting and handling methods
  - Program finance, management and evaluation
- **Educational**
  - Inform and reinforce rules and consequences
  - Empathy training for students, teachers and staff\*
  - Anger management training\*
  - Parent outreach/training\*
- **Counseling Interventions for Bully/Victim**
  - Individual and group counseling\*
  - Conflict Mediation\*

\*NVC training as universal language of empathy

# NVC as Empathy Training



- Empathy training will directly enhance empathic concern
- Age/culture appropriate workbooks are already available or can be developed
- Limited class time spent on training
  - Take home assignments involve parents
  - Videos, online activities
- Workshops and activities
  - Upper graders can be trainers for the younger students
- Mandatory participation required for bullies in lieu of suspension or expulsion
- Individual and group counseling includes NVC coaching

# References



- Rosenberg, M. (1999) *Nonviolent Communication a Language of Compassion*
- Rosenberg, M. (2003) *Raising Children Compassionately*
- Rosenberg, M. (2003) *Life Enriching Education: Nonviolent Communications Helps Schools Improve Performance, Reduce Conflict and Enhance Relationships*
- Swearer, S., Espelage, D. , Napolitano S. (2009) *Bullying Prevention and Intervention: Realistic Strategies for Schools . The Guilford Practical Intervention in Schools Series*

# Resources



- California Department of Education: Bullying Publications & Resources
  - <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/se/bullyres.asp>
- Center for Nonviolent Communication
  - <http://www.cnvc.org/>
- StopBullying.gov
  - <http://www.stopbullying.gov/>
- Bullying Prevention Resource Guide: Colorado Trust
  - <http://www.bullyingprevention.org/>

# Questions



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