**History of Bullying**

Bullying is defined as "actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose" (stopbullying.gov). Bullying has probably been around in some form ever since humans have existed, and has typically always been viewed by adults as "just part of being a kid." However in recent decades, bullying has become more of imposing issue within our society, especially in school-aged children.

Prior to the digital age, bullying occurred generally in a face-to-face manner, usually occurring only at school or around the neighborhood. Although it no doubt got nasty at times, it wasn't seen as a huge deal and did not attract much public attention. This changed on April 20, 1999 at Columbine high School in Denver, Colorado when two teenage boys who had supposedly been bullied murdered twelve classmates and one teacher and then killed themselves. This tragedy sparked the beginning of an anti-bullying movement in our country and raised major awareness for the severity of bullying.

Additionally, entrance into the 21st century opened the door for many technological advancements which have created more bullying opportunities. Suddenly school wasn't the only place kids were being bullied; they could now be attacked online, through social media, and text messaging. This is now referred to as cyber-bullying, and it's now just as common as face-to-face bullying.
Although bullying has always existed, kids have been able to escape bullying by escaping the environment in which they were bullied. But now, due to technology, it is following kids into their homes, making it almost impossible to ignore, forget, or escape. Recently, bullying has gotten so severe that some kids have even resorted to forms of self-injury or even suicide. In November of 2012, 14-yr-old high freshman Courtney Walker of Chesterfield, Virginia was just one of the many victims who unfortunately took her own life (Jaglois, 2012). According to the American Association of Suicidology, "Suicide rates among 10 to 14-year-olds have grown more than 50 percent over the last three decades", and "It is estimated that 160,000 children miss school every day due to fear of attack or intimidation by other students" (makebeatsnotbeatdowns.org).

Right up there with bullying is bystander behavior, which is when an individual witnesses someone being bullied or harassed but does nothing to stop it. It is important to address the bystander effect in anti-bullying campaigns because "more often than not, when someone intervenes, bullying stops within 10 seconds" (www.nobystanders.me). Because of the severity of bullying nowadays, the issue has begun to receive much more media and social attention than ever before, and more and more people are advocating for support of the anti-bullying and bystander movement.

**Important Prior Campaigns**

The recent public attention on bullying has sparked many legislative movements "to help prevent bullying and protect children" (stopbullying.gov). Additionally, a variety of anti-bullying campaigns have been created to raise awareness about all different types of bullying and in the context of many different situations. One of the largest campaigns
online is the STOMP Out Bullying campaign, "a national anti-bullying and cyberbullying program for kids and teens" (looktothestars.org). It was created in 2005 by the nonprofit organization Love Our Children USA and "focuses on reducing and preventing bullying, cyberbullying, sexting and other digital abuse, educating against homophobia, racism and hatred, decreasing school absenteeism, and deterring violence in schools, online and in communities across the country" (looktothestars.org). Their website includes many resources and fact sheets for all ages and aims to prevent all different types of bullying. It also educates individuals on bystander behavior and gives tips on confronting the bully and/or helping the victim get help. Additionally, the site has a ton of celebrity PSA's and videos encouraging audiences to help them end bullying. A lot of these celebs are those who are well-known to teens, such as Disney stars Demi Lovato, Emily Osment, JoJo, and Meghan Martin.

Oprah Winfrey, an extremely powerful and admired talk show host has addressed the issue of bullying several times on the air. In 2009, she did an interview with the mothers of several young boys who recently committed suicide because they were bullied so badly. It was heartbreaking to see how badly bullying can affect not only the victims but also their families and loved ones. In 2013, Olympian Gabby Douglas opened up about her experiences with bullying on the show.

Lady GaGa is another celebrity who acts as an active advocate against bullying. She is seen by many as very avant-garde, different, and even strange, but she embraces this and is thus a perfect candidate to inspire others. In 2011, she founded the Born This Way Foundation "to foster a more accepting society, where differences are embraced and
individuality is celebrated. While not specifically an anti-bullying charity, the Foundation is dedicated to creating a safe community that helps connect young people with the skills and opportunities they need to build a kinder, braver world (bornthiswayfoundation.org). An extension of the organization, the Born Brave Bus goes on tour with the singer and travels nationwide. It "offers programs aimed at youth empowerment" (vh1.com) in addition to "free private and group counseling (as well as games and music) for people 25 and under struggling with bullying and depression before shows" (Shewfelt, 2013).

Gaga also did an interview with Oprah to discuss the Born This Way Foundation, stating her wishes that this campaign will empower youth to create a support system for one-another.

Robert Land Academy is a private all-boys military school that has taken anti-bullying one step further and made it a part of their curriculum. "At the end of the course, each boy signed a pledge promising that he would: (a) not bully; and (b) not be a bystander to bullying, and since then every student at Robert Land Academy has signed the pledge" (www.nobystanders.me). Their website features a video of real students at the school who have experienced bullying and are now taking a stand against it. The site also features a link to the pledge they signed so that anyone can sign it. This is an approach that more schools should take, and hopefully by continuing to raise awareness on bullying, more schools will.

**Audience Analysis**

In order to decide how necessary it was to have a campaign about bullying in schools, a survey was created and sent out to our college-aged peers. Although the survey
was taken when they were in college, the students answered questions specifically about bullying when they were in high school.

We received 70 responses to our survey during the period the survey was available. When analyzing the results we saw that 60.9% had been the victim of bullying in middle and/or high school and 50.7% admitted to bullying another person even though they knew it was wrong. Additionally, 88.6% of people said that they had personally witnessed another person being bullied. Among that percentage, when asked if they did anything to stop it, 54.3% said they intervened only sometimes while 12% said never. When asked if they thought bullying was an underlying problem in most schools, 91.4% of people said they thought that it was.

From the results of our survey we concluded that while most students feel that bullying is a problem at their schools, most aren’t taking active steps against bullying. This may be because they don't want to get involved or feel that it isn't their business. Our goal in creating a campaign is to make bullying less of a problem in schools by encouraging students to stand up for others and discourage bullying behavior in themselves and their peers.

**Campaign Strategy and Communication Plan**

1. Our target audience is high school students who have experienced bullying in some way shape or form. We feel that high school is a difficult time for many students and many are vulnerable to bullying. Our campaign is designed to reach these students and raise awareness about the effects of bullying and also to teach students resistance skills.
2. We will first send out a survey to high school students to better understand their personal views on bullying. After we send out the survey we will create the Facebook and Twitter pages and begin posting information and statistics on bullying. We will add our videos and posters to the page for young people to add to their personal Facebook page.

3. People can share our twitter messages and timeline coves to show their support for the anti-bullying campaign. This will help to raise awareness and the online atmosphere will make students more comfortable with sharing their opinions and standing up for their beliefs.

4. We will have television commercial modeled after a public service announcement. It will include several facts and statistics on bullying in addition to video footage. This commercial is designed to make an emotional connection to our audience and inspire them to take action against bullying. It ends with our campaign's image of a stop sign that says "stop bullying".

**Theoretical Approaches**

This is a campaign that appeals to people's emotions. Emotions are belief systems that guide how we understand our feelings, and how we organize our response to those feelings (Borchers, 2005). This campaign triggers emotional responses through imagery (visual and mental), statistics, and the history of the subject. With this campaign, an awareness of bullying will become more prominent among people. The information and imagery provided is expected to trigger an emotional response from the audience to make them feel a connection. This connection will hopefully push the audience to take a stand
against this on-going problem and bring it the publicity it truly deserves. The end goals of this campaign are to raise awareness about bullying and to eventually, with this new awareness, put a stop bullying completely.

In order to appeal to the audiences emotions, this campaign will use media to get the message directly to audiences. “Media is the web of message transmission means (channels), sources, and content; includes broadcast signals, media personalities, and the words and images of media content (Borchers 2005, page 101).” It is important that the campaigns information be coherent and consistent. In order to make that possible, this campaign will use visual and verbal symbols. Donis A. Donis said that “color is, in fact, loaded with information and one of the most persuasive visual experiences we all have in common. It is, therefore, an invaluable source for visual communicators (Borcher 2005, page 50).

This campaign is an expressive social movement that is attempting to shed light on the severity of bullying nowadays. By using logos in media ads and on posters, we clearly define bullying to our audience. This will help the campaign appeal to the audience's morals. The campaign uses pathos in the form of statistics. Other successful campaigns have used the credibility of celebrities, and that is a step that our campaign will hopefully one day be able to take.

Logic, proof, and ethics help the campaign persuade audiences that bullying is wrong and needs to be stopped. Within the campaign, a powerful metaphor is used to get an important point across to the audience. The metaphor is within the stop sign image.
Taking a common object that everyone knows means stop and changing it to clearly read "stop bullying" can be something so simple, but something that makes a huge impact.

To establish credibility for the campaign a poll was conducted. A survey was created and shared through social media that asked people for one minute of their time to answer six simple yes or no questions. These survey questions aimed to get an overview of what the audience’s opinion on bullying was and if they had been bullied or were bully’s at any stage in their life. With the results of this poll, the campaign gained credibility using statistical evidence.

Although evidence, persuasive images, statistics and videos provide information to the audience, it is ultimately up to the campaigners to bring it all together and to persuade the audience that what they are campaigning is truly an issue. According to Aristotle there are three types of persuasive speaking situations; deliberative, forensic, and epideictic. With this specific campaign, all three are used. When referencing the Columbine shooting, or the case of Courtney Walker, forensic speech is used to show that this is an issue that has been occurring for a while. Stating that the public hasn't shown much attention to bullying and telling true stories of children who took their own lives from being bullied is focusing on a potential party to blame for the situation being out of control. This is known as epideictic speech. Finally the campaign makes a stand and says that something has be done about bullying, which is deliberative speech.

**Evaluation Plan**

Our goal is to raise awareness about bullying by not only discouraging bullying behavior, but to encourage students to take active action against bullying by standing up
to others and refusing to be a bystander and tolerate bullying behavior of any kind. Our true objective is to better the school atmosphere and create a safer environment for students to learn and become active citizens. To evaluate the success of our campaign we will send out a survey to local high school students before beginning. For this survey we will include the following questions:

1. Have you ever been or are you currently the victim of bullying?
2. Have you ever bullied another person even though you knew it was wrong?
3. Have you ever witnessed another person being physically or verbally bullied?
4. Are you willing to stand up for someone who is being bullied, even if they aren't a close friend of yours?
5. Do you think it is your responsibility as a student to take a stand against bullying by refusing to tolerate bullying behavior?

The anonymous answers of the students will be recorded for future comparison. After running this campaign for a year we will resend the survey to compare the students’ current opinions on bullying. Several of the questions will be modified so that instead of saying "Have you ever…” they would say "In the past year, have you…". We hope to raise awareness about bullying and change students’ opinions to make them more likely to stand up for someone who is being bullied.
References

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