Special Consideration of Bullying Prevention

Bullying is any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths toward another individual that involve(s) an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict lasting harm or distress on the targeted individual including physical, psychological, social, or educational.[1] Bullying can be a direct attack—teasing, taunting, threatening, stalking, name-calling, hitting, making threats, coercion, and stealing—or subtler through malicious gossiping, spreading false and/or harmful rumors, embarrassing someone in public, telling others not to be friends with someone, ignoring someone, and intentional exclusion.

Cyberbullying is bullying using electronic technology, which includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, video game systems, MP3 and tablets. It can occur through SMS, text, apps, or online social media sites, forums, or gaming when sending, posting or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can also be sharing personal or private information about someone causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behavior.[2]

Bullying is not limited by age, gender, or education level. Both bullying and cyberbullying result in victims becoming socially rejected and isolated. Some victims of bullying have attempted suicide rather than continue to endure such harassment and abuse. Research findings consistently demonstrate that specific populations are at increased risk of being bullied by their peers. Weight-based bullying -obese, overweight, or underweight youth- is identified as the most common reason for victimization at 41%. Sexual and gender minority youth followed as the second most common reason at 38%. Students with disabilities are the third group at 10%. They are twice as likely to be identified as bullying youth vs students without disabilities. Students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are almost four times as likely to be victimized by bullying as students without ADHD; relational bullying and ostracism are particularly prevalent in this group. Students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) are at particularly high risk for victimization from bullying.[3] Unless individuals with risk factors have friends or are well-accepted by their peers, there is an increase likelihood for them to be bullied.[4]

In Job Corps, students affected by bullying or harassment may have increased visits to the Health and Wellness Center, poor performance, or disciplinary issues. Even absences without leave (AWOLs) may be a sign of bullying and/or harassment on center. Unfortunately, much of

[1] Gladden, R.M., Vivolo-Kantor, A.M., Hamburger, M.E., & Lumpkin, C.D. *Bullying Surveillance Among Youths: Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements, Version 1.0.* Atlanta, GA; National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and U.S. Department of Education; 2014. https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-definitions-final-a.pdf

[2] What is Cyberbullying? National Crime Prevention Council. https://stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/

[3] Rashmi Shetgiri, Dorothy L. Espelage, Leslie Carroll (2015) Bullying and Special Populations, *Practical Strategies for Clinical Management of Bullying.* Part of the series **Springer Briefs in Public Health** 17-26.

[4] Juvonen, J., & Graham, S. (2014) Bullying in schools: The power of bullies and the plight of victims, Annual Review of Psychology, 65:159-85.

bullying and harassment behavior goes unreported by students. Staff may not be aware or may overlook isolated instances of bullying, rather than intervening.

What Centers Can Do

- Acknowledge the existence of bullying on your center.

- Develop an anti-bullying policy and outline consequences for bullying behavior exhibited by students and staff.

- Openly discuss the issue of bullying in student assemblies and staff meetings.

- Provide training on bullying prevention for staff and students. On the Job Corps Health and Wellness website under *Safety Net*, there is a "Bullying Prevention" section that includes an interactive six-module training which addresses bystanders along with many resources and helpful template for developing a center anti-bullying policy. https://supportservices.jobcorps.gov/health/Pages/SafetyNet.aspx

- Create a positive inclusive culture on center and utilize resources currently available. The Career Success Standards has the following trainings to assist: "Multicultural Awareness" and "Workplace Relationships and Ethics." All students and staff should attend these trainings on center.

- Create a support group for any targeted groups.

- Staff witnessing bullying should take it seriously and intervene immediately. Refer students being bullied to counseling for support. Refer perpetrators of bullying to appropriate disciplinary processes. Develop consequences for staff who do not report or intervene in bullying behavior.