The Critical Role of Youth Voice in Building a Restorative Culture

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Community Matters Mission

"To wake up the courage of students and adults to create schools that are safe, welcoming and inclusive."

The Student Determinant of Whole School Climate
School Safety: The Changing Landscape

- School Shootings (1995 – 99)
- Violence, Bullying (2000 – 09)

School Safety: The Changing Landscape

- School Shootings (1995 – 99)
- Violence / Bullying (2000 – 09)

(2009 – present)
Cyber-Bullying
Relational Aggression
Indifference

Living in a Disconnected World

"We are living in an unprecedented social experiment. We have systematically changed the patterns and connections that have characterized human life as long as there has been human life."

Wachtel, Dreaming of a New Reality
Intolerance & Incivility

It’s not your typical playground bully anymore...

Younger
Meaner
More Pervasive
Harder to Identify
24/7 On & Off Campus

Other’s Pain as “Entertainment”
More Accepted as Normal

Intervening
Prevent
Intervene
De-escalate

Leveraging the Power & Potential of Students

- See, hear and know things adults don’t
  (In 88% of bullying incidents, peers are present)
- Can effectively intervene in ways adults can’t
- First to arrive on the scene of mistreatment
- Set the tone and social norms on campus
The Dynamic of Bullying & Other Mistreatment

Bystanders = 85%
The Passive Majority

Why Don’t Bystanders Get Involved?

- Fear of retaliation
- Afraid they’ll make things worse
- Worry about losing social status
- Belief that adults won’t listen
- Don’t know what to do or say

Empowering Youth: The Formula

The 3 “P’s”  
(Purpose, Power and Place)

+  

The 3 “E’s”  
(Engage, Equip, and Empower)

=  

The 3 “C’s”  
(Competent, Caring and Contributing)
Criteria for Strong Youth Development Programs

1. Enroll diverse student leaders
2. Equip students with skills
3. Provide staff support and guidance
4. Collect data and measure impact
5. Celebrate successes

Increasing Student Voice
(in both formal & informal settings)

Safe School Ambassadors®

A SAMHSA NREPP Listed, evidenced-based, field-tested program that engages, equips and empowers student bystanders to reduce bullying and other forms of mistreatment.

Developed by
Empowering the Bystanders

- Wake up **Courage**
- Foster **Empathy**
- Teach Skills to Gain **Competence**

...to intervene safely and effectively

“Alpha” Students

- **Clique**
  - Diverse Student Leaders
    - Socially-influential / Others follow their lead & model their behaviors
    - Loyal / Have a tendency to speak up on behalf of others within their clique
    - Outgoing by nature / Highly verbal

Identifying the “Alpha” Leaders

- **Student and Adult Surveys**
Safe School Ambassadors® Program Orientation

- Introduce potential Ambassadors to the program
- Appeal to their self-interest
- Acknowledge their status as social leaders
- Give them the opportunity to CHOOSE

Safe School Ambassadors® Training

- Two Days
- On- or Off-Site
- 30 to 40 Diverse Student Leaders
- 4 to 8 Adults

SSA 2 Day Training Flow

**DAY 1**
1. Foundation & Community Building
2. Understanding the Problem of Mistreatment
3. Ambassador’s Job
4. Actions: Overview & Practice
   1. Balancing
   2. Supporting
   3. Reasoning
   4. Distracting
   5. Directing
   6. Meet with adults

**DAY 2**
6. Welcome & Launch
7. Review
8. More Amb Actions
   1. Listening
   2. Getting Help
9. Actions: Overview & Practice
10. Implementation: Safe School Ambassador Program Operation
11. Closure
12. Meet with adults
5 Types of Mistreatment

1. Exclusion
2. Put-downs
3. Bullying/cyber-bullying
4. Unwanted physical touch
5. Acts against campus

Six Skills for Ambassadors

• Balancing
• Supporting
• Reasoning
• Distracting
• Directing
• Getting Help

Ambassador in Action

Video: De Monte Smith
Ongoing Support & Supervision: Family Group Meetings

• Connect & Inspire
• Regularly-Scheduled
• Deepen Skills
• Debrief Experience
• Collect Data

Safe School Ambassadors® Are Active

A minimum of
2 “Actions” per week
x 40 Ambassadors =
80 Actions per week

34 Weeks x 80 Ambassador Actions =
More than 2,700 Actions per school year
Click the "report" button to record an action log.

Select one or more locations from the list by clicking on the phrase. Then click "Done".

Select one or more Types of Mistreatments from the list by clicking on the phrase. Then click "Done". If you select "Other" a new text field will appear and you can type in a unique reply.
SSA Impact Over Time
Healdsburg Junior High Discipline Data
Safe School Ambassadors 2005-2013

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Safe School Ambassadors®
Are Effective
A two year study by two different universities found statistically significant evidence of positive impact:

**Suspension rates were 33% lower than prior to SSA implementation,**

while suspension rates at demographically matched non-SSA control schools increased 10% in the same period.


Based on the results of the two-year study, the Safe School Ambassadors® Program is now listed in SAMHSA’s National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices

“It’s easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

Frederick Douglass

Additional Youth Voice Services

• Peer to Peer ATOD Prevention Program (PPPP)
• Preventing and Intervening in LGBTQ Harassment and Bullying
• Youth Summits and Leadership Forums
• Preventing and Intervening in Sports Hazing and Harassment
• Camp Kick-Offs and Building Respectful After School Programs

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