Slide 1

Harassment, Intimidation,
and Bullying and Vulnerable
Populations:
What Parents and
Educators Can Do

A WEBINAR PRESENTED BY
DR. NADIA S. ANSARY, RIDER UNIVERSITY
Hosted by the New Jersey Center for Tourette Syndrome and
Associated Disorders, Inc.

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Overview of presentation

The presentation will cover the following topics:
- **1) Overview of traditional bullying
  and cyberbullying (i.e., definitions, prevalence
  rates, correlates, etc.)**
- **2) Identification of vulnerable groups
  at risk for bullying**
- **3) Recommendations for parents and educators**
- **4) Q & A**

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Background of Presenter

- **I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychology at Rider University**

- **My area of expertise is in Developmental Psychopathology with a concentration in examining populations that are at risk for negative outcomes**

- **My research concerns several areas of youth and young adult development**
  - **Co-authored a manuscript (under review) which arose from work conducted during my time on the New Jersey Commission on Bullying in Schools to address best practices schools can adopt to prevent and address HIB**
  - **Exploring the mental wellbeing of Muslim-Americans post 9/11**
    - **Completed two studies on Muslim youth and harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB)**
    - **Currently conducting an online study of Muslim young adults and bullying at college and the workplace.**

A Human Rights Concern

☐ Bullying is considered a violation of human rights since all children deserve to live free of abuse and ought to be educated in an environment that ensures their safety.

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Traditional Bullying

Definition, Prevalence Rates, Correlates

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Traditional Bullying: Definition

• The most prevalent definition of bullying was developed by Dan Olweus (1999). Bullying is a form of aggression that is characterized by the presence of three unique elements:

• 1) An intent to harm

• 2) Repetition of the harmful or threatening behavior

• 3) A real or perceived power imbalance between the

   target and the child who bullies

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Traditional Bullying: Definition

- It is important to note that there are often differences in the scholarly and legal definitions of bullying.

- Difficulty in interpreting intent to harm

- For the purposes of the presentation, I would like to be clear about the terms used.
  - HIB
  - Careful about labels (target vs. "victim"; child who bullies vs. "the bully")
  - Bystander

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Prevalence Rates: Traditional Bullying

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Prevalence Rates at the *National Level:* Traditional Bullying

- 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

- Assesses youth in grades 9-12 every two years
  - Response to survey question
  - *"Were bullied on school property"*—19.6% of youth
    - No change in rates from 2009 (19.9%), 2011 (20.1%), and 2013 levels

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Prevalence Rates at the
National Level:
Traditional Bullying

- 2011 School Crime Supplement (National Center for Education Statistics)

- Assesses youth ages 12-18 (younger sample than the YRBSS)
  - 27.8% reported being bullied
    - Of those who were bullied: 24.5% Male, 31.4% Female

- Additional breakdown of data by ethnicity, grade, household income, and school characteristics are also available in that report

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Prevalence Rates at the
State Level:
Traditional Bullying

- New Jersey Statistics: Results of the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS)

- Academic Year 2011-2012
  - 12,024 HIB incidents reported

- Academic Year 2012-2013
  - 7,740 incidents

- *Decrease of 36%*

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Prevalence Rates at the
State Level:
Traditional Bullying

New Jersey Statistics: Results of the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS)
(Cerf et al., 2013)

- Most cases were verbal in nature (77%)

- 1:3 incidents occurred in the classroom

- More than ½ of offenders were in middle school

Protected Category Breakdown 2012-2013 (Cerf et al., 2013)

Category	Percent
Race	15%
Religion	2%
Ancestry	4%
Sexual Orientation	12%
Gender	11%
Gender Expression	5%
Mental, Physical, Sensory Disability	9%
Other Distinguishing Characteristics	60%

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Correlates of Bullying

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Targets of Bullying	Children who Bully
• **Depression and anxiety** (Arseneault et al., 2008; Hemphill, et al., 2011; Juvonen & Graham, 2001)	• **Externalizing behavior problems** (e.g., law breaking and substance use) (Hemphill, et al., 2011)
• **Poor Peer Relationships** (Nansel et al., 2001)	• **School Disengagement** (Nansel et al., 2001; Ttofi, Farrington, Lösel, & Loeber, 2011)
• **Poor school performance and school disengagement** (Rigby, 2008)	
• **Risk of Suicide and Suicide** (Rigby & Slee, 1999)	

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"Bully-Victims" (i.e., those who have been targets and have also acted as bullies)	Bystanders
• **This group has demonstrated the worst psychological adjustment compared to either group alone.** (Nansel et al., 2001)	• **Peers simply viewing bullying attacks may experience increased anxiety** (Nishina & Juvonen, 2005)

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying

- **The participants involved in traditional bullying are also the same parties involved in cyberbullying.**

- **While most of the outcomes that we expect for traditional or offline forms of bullying are typically seen in cases of cyberbullying, it presents a unique challenge to targets, parents of targets, as well as educators for many reasons.**

Cyberbullying

- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have become essential to our day-to-day lives and more importantly to our youths' lives.

- While ICT provides many social and cognitive benefits to developing children, there are also challenges that come with it—i.e., the possibility that ICT can be used to cause harm to others (Cassidy et al., 2013; Dehue, 2013)

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Cyberbullying: Definition

" an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself"

(Smith et al., 2008, p. 376)

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Some examples of cyberbullying
(Cassidy et al., 2013)

Examples:

- Physical damage to property- (e.g., sending a virus or infected file)

- Verbal (e.g., using the internet or cell phone to insult or threaten)
  - Flaming—online fights with obscene language

- Non-verbal (e.g., sending threatening or obscene photos)

- Social (e.g., exclusion from online peer group)

- Indirect bullying
  - Outing—sharing someone's secrets
    - Trickery--obtaining revealing/embarrassing information through deceit and then posting
  - Masquerading / impersonation (e.g., pretending to be someone else)
  - Denigration—posting gossip to ruin reputation
  - Voting on a defamatory polling website

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Cyberbullying: Challenges over and above traditional bullying
(Dehue, 2013; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009)

CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY CYBERBULLYING

- **1) Non-verbal cues are missing from interactions**
  - **This could lead to misinterpretation of ambiguous information as hostile**
  - **It also reduces the feedback from the target received by the individual engaging in the bullying. Depending on characteristics of the person engaged in the bullying, this could either increase or decrease the intensity of the bullying behavior**
    - **For example, it may dampen the response if the "bully" sees the pain of their "victim". While for some seeing the pain of another, can increase the intensity of the bullying behavior (Cassidy et al., 2013)**

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Cyberbullying: Challenges over and above traditional bullying
(Dehue, 2013; Vandebosch & Van Cleemput, 2009)

CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY CYBERBULLYING (con't)

- 2) Anonymity of the perpetrator—the identity of the individual who bullies may not be known so this can increase feelings of helplessness, and/or the feeling that there is no safe place on the internet
    - The individual who bullies could be a complete stranger or, alternatively, someone the child knows
    - Acting anonymously, *can in itself* contribute to the power differential (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2004)

- 3) The internet provides a large audience and targets may not know who has "seen" the incident

- 4) Postings can be visible for long periods of time and can be re-posted easily

- 5) Lack of supervision by adults

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Cyberbullying: Challenges over and above traditional bullying

- Given the fact that online posts can:
    - remain on a website for long periods of time
    - be re-posted
    - be viewed by a large audience
        - A SINGLE ACT COULD BE CONSIDERED BULLYING WHICH IS DIFFERENT THAN THE DEFINITION FOR TRADITIONAL BULLYING (Cassidy et al., 2013)

        - ALSO, GIVEN THE UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS JUST DISCUSSED, ONE COULD EASILY SEE THAT THE EXPERIENCES OF THE TARGET CAN BE INTENSIFIED OVER AND ABOVE WHAT MAY BE SEEN IN TRADITIONAL BULLYING

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Prevalence Rates: Cyberbullying

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Prevalence Rates at the
National Level:
Cyberbullying

- 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

- Assesses youth in grades 9-12 every two years
  - Response to survey question *"Were electronically bullied"*—14.8% of youth
    - A decrease in rates from 2011 (16.2 %)

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Prevalence Rates at the
National Level:
Cyberbullying

- 2011 School Crime Supplement: National Center for Education Statistics: School Crime

- Assesses youth ages 12-18 (younger sample than the YRBSS)
  - 9% reported being cyberbullied

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Prevalence Rates at the
State Level:
Cyberbullying

- New Jersey Statistics: Results of the Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting System (EVVRS)(Cerf et al., 2013)

- 14% of youth reported HIB by electronic communication

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Cyberbullying: Correlates

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All the identified correlates for traditional bullying are the same for cyberbullying.

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Targets of Bullying	Children who Bully
• **Depression and anxiety** (Arseneault et al., 2008; Hemphill, et al., 2011; Juvonen & Graham, 2001) • **Poor Peer Relationships** (Nansel et al., 2001) • **Poor school performance and school disengagement** (Rigby, 2008) • **Risk of Suicide and Suicide** (Rigby & Slee, 1999)	• **Externalizing behavior problems** (e.g., law breaking and substance use) (Hemphill, et al., 2011) • **School Disengagement** (Nansel et al., 2001; Ttofi, Farrington, Lösel, & Loeber, 2011)

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"Bully-Victims" (i.e., those who have been targets and have also acted as bullies)	Bystanders
• **This group has demonstrated the worst psychological adjustment compared to either group alone.** (Nansel et al., 2001)	• **Peers simply viewing bullying attacks may experience increased anxiety** (Nishina & Juvonen, 2005)

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Additional Correlates Unique to Cyberbullying

EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT YOUTH WHO ENGAGE IN CYBERBULLYING ALSO REPORT THE FOLLOWING:

- Moral approval of bullying

- Feeling disconnected from school

- Lack of perceived peer support

- Underachievement

  (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013)

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Additional Correlates Unique to Cyberbullying

EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT YOUTH WHO ENGAGE IN CYBERBULLYING ALSO REPORT THE FOLLOWING:
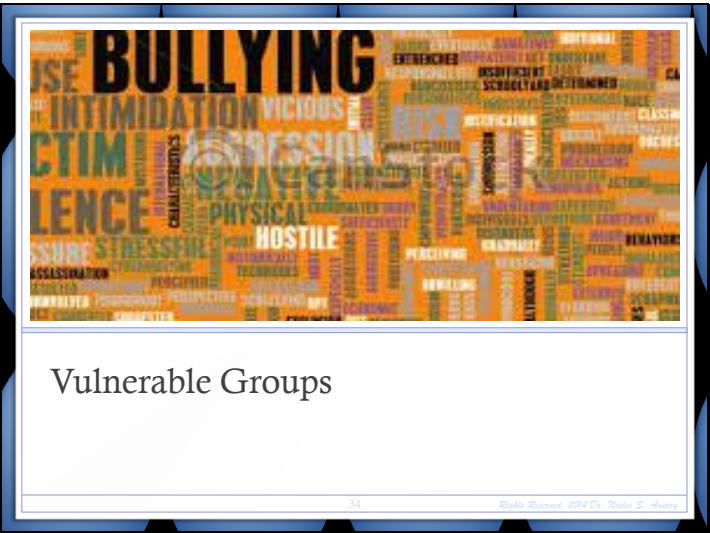
- Problem behaviors (e.g. delinquency and substance use)

- High level of internet usage

- Some evidence of advanced computer skills

- Poor parental monitoring

- Children whose friends engaged in cyberbullying also tended to do the same

  (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013)

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Vulnerable Groups

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Who is at risk for being bullied?

Anything that makes a child different or more vulnerable can be considered a risk factor.

Recall the statistics from the EVVRS?

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Protected Category Breakdown 2012-2013 from EVVRS (Cerf et al., 2013)

Category	Percent
Race	15%
Religion	2%
Ancestry	4%
Sexual Orientation	12%
Gender	11%
Gender Expression	5%
Mental, Physical, Sensory Disability	9%
Other Distinguishing Characteristics	60%

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Protected Categories

- Under the New Jersey Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights
- Also covered under the Law Against Discrimination (LAD)
- Race
- Religion
- Ancestry
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender
- Gender Expression
- Mental, Physical, Sensory Disability
- Other Distinguishing Characteristics

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Who is at risk for being bullied?

Risk factors associated with being a target:

- Difficulty asserting oneself
- Disability
- Minority status (e.g. ethnic, religious, sexual)
- Low status within the peer group, as well as Isolation in the peer group
- Low SES
- Physically smaller

- Intersection of any of these categories creates exponential risk (for example: An LGBT youth of Hispanic origin, etc.)

COURTESY OF SARAH HEKMATI

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Recommendations for Parents and Educators

Recommendations for Parents

BE INFORMED ABOUT HOW TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND WHAT ARE SCHOOLS' RESPONSIBILTIES!

AND

HAVE A PAPER TRAIL (i.e., Document! Document! Document!)

Bias-Based Bullying and NJ LAD

- Bias-based bullying may be a violation of the Law Against Discrimination (LAD) if the bullying occurs in relation to the target's ethnicity, race, etc.

According to the State of NJ:

- "The LAD applies to all schools, except for schools operated by a bona fide religious or sectarian organization. Except for those religious schools, all public schools, charter schools and private schools are required to comply with the LAD." (State of NJ, n.d.)

- http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/tutorials/LAD-ABR.pdf)

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Bias-Based Bullying and NJ's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights (ABR)

- The ABR also addresses cases of bias based bullying **occurring in public schools**

- NJ law passed in Jan 2011 that required public and charter schools to make policy changes regarding bullying and implementation of an anti-bullying program. These changes were required by these schools as of Sept 2011

- It is considered by many to be the toughest anti-bullying law in the US

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Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights (ABR)

- The law requires:
  - Schools to post an anti-bullying policy on their website
  - To adopt an anti-bullying approach
  - Schools to provide a non-hostile educational environment—much of this relates to the school culture, values, etc.
  - School to have an anti-bullying specialist who is responsible for staff training, investigation, etc.
  - Teachers and staff have the responsibility to report incidents of bullying
  - A set protocol for the school's response when an allegation of bullying is raised.

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Recommendations for Parents

- Parents must communicate with their children!
  - Often targets do not tell their parents they have been bullied due to shame. Parents usually only become aware when the problem has become too much to handle for the child.

- Parents must demand adequate response by the school.

Recommendations for Parents

○ If your child is bullied, you should UNDERTAKE AND DOCUMENT EACH OF THESE STEPS

- 1) contact the teacher immediately about the situation and ensure that adequate steps are being taken to protect the child
- 2) follow up promptly to see what has happened to protect your child
- 3) If you do not receive an adequate response ensuring the child's continued safety, contact the principal.
- 4)In public schools, if you do not receive an adequate response ensuring the child's continued safety, contact the superintendent
- 5) If the bullying persists and the school has not adequately put in place changes to ensure your child's safety, you should contact a lawyer specializing in education.

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Recommendations for Parents

- Know who to speak to at each level:
  - Elementary
  - Middle
  - High School
  - College Level

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Recommendations for Parents

CYBERBULLYING

- Monitoring can be challenging and there is mixed evidence about its efficacy. This is *less likely* to be a result of "monitoring doesn't matter" and more likely to be related to the difficulty in parental monitoring of ICT used by youth. That being said, parents must strive to continuously monitor ICT use as much as they can.

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Recommendations for Parents

CYBERBULLYING

- One of the major challenges for parents, is the gap between generations in understanding and use of ICT. To typify this disconnect Prensky (2001), has coined the terms "digital natives" and "digital immigrants" to characterize children and parents respectively.
- Sanctions--When children expect sanctions from parents or school, they were significantly less likely to report involvement in cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013)

Recommendations for Parents

- **CYBERBULLYING**
- Parents should instruct their children about safe use of ICT.
  - **not to share usernames or passwords**
  - **not to give out personal information in profiles, chat rooms, etc.**
  - **not to respond to threatening messages and to notify an adult immediately**
  - **to shut off the phone or log off if a threatening message is sent via text or IM**
  - **to be careful about sending personal photos of yourself (especially concerning "sexting")**
  - **repeatedly, that once something is posted or sent, it cannot be taken back!**
  - (www.girlshealth.gov)

Recommendations for Parents

Ways of handling cyberbullying

- Immediate responses to cyberbullying include:
  - **Passive strategies** (e.g., do nothing, avoid website)
  - **Active strategies** (e.g., confront, tell to stop, block)
    - Perren and colleagues (2012) found that active strategies *actually exacerbated* the problem

- Even in spite of this early evidence, the literature is still not very clear about effective strategies for immediately handling cyberbullying (Perren et al., 2012)

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Recommendations for Schools

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Fostering a Positive School Climate is at the Foundation of any Effective Anti-Bullying Approach

THIS IS PARTICULARLY SALIENT WHEN CONSIDERING BULLYING & VULNERABLE YOUTH

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Support For Vulnerable Student Groups

- Report and tracking of bullying is critical not just from a legal standpoint but also to identify if certain vulnerable groups of students are being targeted with greater frequency

- Instances of bias-based bullying should also be viewed as catalysts for school climate re-evaluation

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Support For
Vulnerable Student Groups

- Thus…
  - Schools need to be especially careful to provide support to minority youth and youth with disabilities (e.g., sponsoring support programs for their groups; ensuring they are included as active participants in the school's anti-bullying programs).
  - Schools need to be especially careful to provide support to PARENTS of MINORITY YOUTH and YOUTH with DISABILITIES - These parents may be recent immigrants or simply may not understand their rights (e.g., translating HIB- related policies into the most common languages spoken in their community or applying it to their child who has a disability; reaching out to community members who are willing to volunteer , translate, give support, share information and resources, etc.).

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Support For
Vulnerable Student Groups

- All typical strategies for preventing and effectively intervening when HIB occur (e.g., teacher training, monitoring locations known for increased bullying such as hallways, lunch, buses, etc., outlined protocol to be followed when HIB occurs) are especially critical when handling bias-based bullying.

- Training teachers and personnel on how to identify and address HIB in all cases but especially so when bias-based bullying occurs is critical, Training is especially salient in preventing teacher perpetrated events as well as professional development to optimize identification and appropriate management of HIB in the classroom.

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RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR SCHOOLS

CYBERBULLYING

- As cited in Cassidy and colleagues (2013), cyberbullying was found to be related to events begun in school and has been found to impact the school day. Therefore, schools have a responsibility to address this issue. NJ ABR law requires this.

- The recommendations for traditional bullying are also potent in addressing cyberbullying
  - Evidence is relatively clear that fostering a positive school climate is the key to preventing traditional bullying and cyberbullying
  - Cyberbullying must be addressed explicitly in a school's HIB policy
    - When children expect sanctions from parents or school, they were significantly less likely to report involvement in cyberbullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2013)
  - Address traditional bullying and cyberbullying in curriculum
  - Teacher training on traditional bullying and cyberbullying

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Resources about bullying for parents and educators

- US Department of Health and Human Services – Stop Bullying Website http://www.stopbullying.gov/

- New Jersey Coalition for Bullying Awareness and Prevention—Has a hotline http://njbullying.org

- National School Climate Center's 12 Dimensions of School Climate retrieved at http://www.schoolclimate.org/programs/documents/dimensions_chart_pagebars.pdf

- NJDOE Essential Dimensions and Considerations for Safe and Supportive School Conditions retrieved at http://homeroom.state.nj.us/evvrs/HIB_11-15.pdf

- NJDOE Keeping our Kids Safe, Healthy, and in School http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/

- Safe Communities, Safe Schools Fact Sheet retrieved at http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/publications/factsheets/safeschools/FS-SC07.pdf

- SAMSHA – CSAP Prevention Pathways – The ABCs of Bullying http://pathwayscourses.samhsa.gov/bully/bully_1_pg5.htm

- State of New Jersey retrieved at http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/tutorials/ LAD-ABR.pdf)

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Thank you for your time and attention!

- Questions Welcomed!
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