

A Somatic Approach to Bullying

Yoga, Mindfulness and
Superhero Stories to the Rescue



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Agenda



- Bullying Statistics and Research
- Ignite Intelligence through Breath, Stillness and Listening
- Bullying Inquiry
- Somatic Approaches
- Power of Our Stories and Imagination

Bullying Statistics



- In a 2011 nationwide survey, 20% of high school students reported being bullied on school property. CDC Youth risk behavior surveillance (2011)
- An estimated 16% of high school students reported in 2011 that they were bullied electronically in the 12 months before the survey. CDC Youth risk behavior surveillance (2011)
- During the 2009-2010 school year, 23% of public schools reported that bullying occurred among students on a daily or weekly basis. A higher percentage of middle school students reported being bullying than high school students. Robers S, Kemp J, Truman J. Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2012

Bullying-Related Research



- A growing body of research shows that students who are exposed to physical or emotional bullying experience a significantly increased risk of anxiety, depression, confusion, lowered self-esteem and suicide. US Dept of Health & Human Services
- Targeting Bullies with Anti-Bullying Programs having an opposite effect? Journal of Criminology (2013)
- Mindfulness programs help to reduce stress, reduce reactivity, improve self confidence Numerous citations
- MBSEL Program shows Decrease in Bullying Behavior Inner Explorer program research

Bullying-Related Research



Classroom Yoga Intervention - High poverty, Detroit-area elementary school

- Decrease in stress and improvement in student attention and on-task behavior
- Students' behavior improved both in the classroom and outside of school.
- Students reported enjoyment of yoga and unprompted use of yoga techniques for anger, aggression and the need to regulate
- Academic achievement also increased, but was not significant relative to the comparison group.

* Wayne State University, 2014

Connection Through Breath



Bullying Inquiry



- Think of a time when you witnessed or experienced bullying?
- What are you noticing now in your body?
- What does your intuition tell you about the roots of bullying?
- Share with neighbor and then group share?
- What does the posture of victimization look like?

The Posture of Victimization



The authors secretly filmed 12 people walking – 8 women and 4 men, some of whom had been attacked before. Then, they showed the footage to a group of inmates, some of whom exhibited traits commonly associated with psychopathy – manipulateness, a lack of empathy, superficial friendliness – and asked them whom would make a good victim.

These “victim ratings” were then compared against each person’s actual history of victimization. The people picked as “likely victims” were usually the ones who had been victimized in the past. These people were often said to have “walked like an easy target” – slowly, asynchronously, with short strides.

- Psychopathy and Victim Selection, Journal of Interpersonal Violence

Activating Mountain



Strength Theme Lesson Plan



- Breathing with the Hoberman Sphere
- Pulse Count with Challenge
- Warrior Flow
- Archetype game
- Seated Twist
- Mindful Moment Card

Healing Power of Story



“We possess two distinct forms of self-awareness: one that keeps track of the self across time and one that registers the self in the present moment. The first, our autobiographical self, creates connections among experiences and assembles them into a coherent story. Our narratives change with the telling, as our perspective changes and as we incorporate new input.

The other, moment-to-moment awareness, is based primarily in physical sensations, but if we feel safe and are not rushed, we can find words to communicate that experience as well.

Only the system devoted to self-awareness, which is based in the medial prefrontal cortex, can change the emotional brain.”

The Body Keeps the Score, Bessel Van Der Kolk

Healing Power of Story



“Remember on this one thing, said Badger. The stories people tell have a way of taking care of them. If stories come to you, care for them. And learn to give them away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive. That is why we put these stories in each other's memories. This is how people care for themselves.”

-Barry Lopez, *Crow and Weasel*

We All Want to Be Good!



- “I don’t want to be a bully” Video

Engaging Imagination

“Imagination is more important than knowledge.
For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand,
while imagination embraces the entire world,
and all there ever will be to know and understand.”

-Einstein



Warriors from Our Youth Today

Nahko Bear – Great Spirit



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0M7nETLOsKQ>

Thank You!

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