



# AUMHC Perspectives

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L I V E   L I F E   T O   T H E   F U L L E S T



What does  
"Happiness is..."  
mean to you?



Mental Health  
Support for  
Disaster  
Survivors.

# Bullying: It's affects on mental health and how to deal with it.

By **Lisa M. Rincon**, LCSW, Therapist, Child and Family North, Aurora Mental Health Center

**T**he Journal of the American Medical Association recently reported that one-third of U.S. students experience bullying, either as a target or a perpetrator. Bullying and violence cause 160,000 fearful children to miss one or more school days each month. [1] Only a small percentage of children believe that telling adults will help. Children generally feel that adult intervention is ineffective and will only bring more harassment. [2] Bullying among children is an aggressive behavior that is intentional and involves an imbalance of power. Typically, bullying is repeated over time. There are generally four types of bullying: physical, verbal, relational, and the most recent addition...cyber bullying. Physical bullying usually involves hitting, kicking, punching, pinching, and slapping. Verbal bullying includes insults, teasing, name-calling and/or threats to create a sense of powerlessness in the target. Relational bullying involves the use of social exclusion from a group, prevention from making friends, rejection and slander. Cyber bullying can often be the most damaging because it can take place anonymously. It involves text messages, social networking web page postings of text and/or photographs, and e-mail designed to cause emotional harm to the target. Physical bullying is primarily found among boys and spans the grade levels. Relational, verbal and cyber bullying is seen more in girls and also spans the grade levels. Indirect bullying such as this can be more difficult to detect due to the subtle nature of the manipulation and the ability to target individuals anonymously. [3] How does bullying have a negative affect on



the mental health of a child? In most bullying situations there are three roles played out; the bully, the target, and the bystander(s). Children in each role are

negatively affected by the bullying interaction. The bully continues learned behavior that often covers insecurity, low self-esteem, fear, and anxiety. The target is hurt physically and emotionally by the attack, and the bystanders are learning that the person with the most power in a situation "wins."

## Is my child a bully?

### Here are the characteristics of a bully:

For the most part the profile of a bully is predictable, but often requires a view from a distance from someone other than a family member to assess the characteristics with some objectivity. A bully is impulsive and hot headed, a dominant personality who needs to be in charge. They are easily frustrated, especially if they don't get their way, and they usually lack a sense of empathy with others, including pets. They have difficulty following rules, and they gravitate to friendships with other bullies. Perhaps the most difficult trait to assess is that a bully usually has low self-esteem that can only be compensated by gaining power over another.

## What can I do if I suspect my child is a bully?

Make the consequences for bullying behavior very clear. Praise and reinforce positive behavior; following the rules; solving conflict without using physical force; and positive social behavior. It is important to spend time with your child, not just watching TV, but in conversation. Find out who their friends are and how they spend their unsupervised time. Get involved in

positive social activities such as a club, music, or sports. Talk to teachers, principals, counselors, or clergy about your concerns. Make it known to your child that you are having these conversations so that "everyone is on the same page." Discuss with your child a way in which they can make amends for their bullying behavior, and seek professional help. You're

not the only parent experiencing this problem, and there is a wealth of resources to draw from. Parents often feel personally attacked when they are informed by school personnel that their child is engaging in bullying. Stay calm and remember this is ultimately about the health and well-being of your child, and that the schools have your child's best interests at heart. When it comes to bullying, most schools in Colorado have a "no tolerance" policy; bullying is taken very seriously. Many schools have specific procedures and protocols in place regarding bullying. Find out from school administration what exactly those policies entail so you can address them with your child prior to any incident.



See **Bullying** Page 3

## Here are some rules/tips for parents and caregivers who want to raise non-aggressive, independent, and self-confident children:

- 1. Let your child know they are important.** Praise your child for who they are, and try to give them as much praise as you give redirection. This can be a challenge, but remember that a great way to shape positive behavior is through praise.
- 2. Laugh with your child not at them.** This is a great opportunity for a child to learn the difference between "joking" and "teasing."
- 3. Set limits for your child.** Do not give in to avoid conflict. Children need to learn that conflict is a natural part of life and cannot be avoided. This will help your child learn appropriate conflict resolution.
- 4. Remember that you are the role model for your child.** They learn to solve problems, deal with conflict, and get their needs met through your behavior.
- 5. Spend time together.** Spend 15 to 20 minutes a day with your child engaging in an activity that they enjoy. This quality time will help develop a strong connection between you and your child. This time should not be used watching TV together; this needs to be interactive time with one another in a meaningful way.

SAVE THE DATE!

# The Second City ON TOUR

is coming to you  
Friday, April 29, 2011

Aurora Mental Health Center is pleased to announce that The Second City will be our featured entertainment at our

Annual Spring Benefit Luncheon on April 29, 2011. The Second City, Chicago's famed improvisational comedy troupe, will present their Fair & Unbalanced performance next spring. This unbridled show takes pot shots at politicians, celebrities and even our significant others. No institution escapes the satiric eye of The Second City – from the blowhards

of the Beltway to the Hollywood elite. The Second City's Fair & Unbalanced is an hilarious ride through present day America.

Here's your opportunity to see the next generation of comic legends. The Second City alumni list includes: Alan Arkin, Joan Rivers, Robert Klein, Peter Boyle, Harold Ramis, John Belushi, Dan Aykroyd, Bill Murray, Gilda Radner, Martin Short, John

Candy, Tina Fey, Chris Farley, Mike Myers, Stephen Colbert, Steve Carell and countless others.



Sponsorships and Tables are now available by contacting Heather Jackson at 303.617.2313 or heatherjackson@aumhc.org.

## You are invited to Aurora Mental Health Center's 35th Annual "Living Life to the Fullest" Celebration & 4th Annual Art Contest & Show

Each fall Aurora Mental Health Center has given students the opportunity to energize their minds and talents through their artwork. This year we've asked students to submit their best art piece to our contest based on the theme: "Happiness is \_\_\_\_\_!"

For the fourth straight year, K through 12th grade students, will submit their drawings, paintings, collages or photographs based on this year's theme. There will be four separate grade categories. Winners in each category will be determined by a panel of select judges.

The art contest is an excellent complement to the AuMHC annual celebration bringing the vitality and creativity of youth together with parents, siblings, teachers, administrative staff and many supporters and members of the mental health community. The celebration this year will be Wednesday, October 20, 2010 at the Red Lion Hotel Denver Southeast in Aurora, (Parker Road and I-225).



We will honor all participating students for their excellent artwork and present awards to the winners.

**All artwork entered will be displayed at the Art Show!**

Attendance at the celebration and art contest is free and open to the public. Reception begins at 5:00 pm with the program beginning at 5:45 pm. To attend, please RSVP by Friday, October 15, 2010, by calling 303.617.2300 or e-mail annualcelebration@aumhc.org.

For more information please go to our website at [www.aumhc.org](http://www.aumhc.org).

# Share the Spirit of the Season by Providing a Holiday Food and Gift Basket to Someone in Need.



## How you can help...

- I would like to adopt a family for Thanksgiving, please contact me with more details. (Basket due Nov. 23)  
Requested family size or specification: \_\_\_\_\_  
• By adopting a family for Thanksgiving, I am pledging to purchase the foods for a Thanksgiving meal.
- I would like to adopt a family for December holidays, please contact me with more details. (Basket due Dec. 16)  
Requested family size or specification: \_\_\_\_\_  
• By adopting a family for December holidays, I am pledging to purchase the foods for a holiday meal and one gift per person.
- I would like to organize a toy/food drive.
- No time to shop, but enclosed you will find my donation of:  
\$25\_\_\_ \$50\_\_\_ \$75\_\_\_ \$100\_\_\_ \$\_\_\_\_\_  
to assist Aurora Mental Health Center in providing baskets for needy families.  
**You may also make a secure donation online at [www.aumhc.org](http://www.aumhc.org). Click on "Your Support!"**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Organization Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Clip this out and mail to: Aurora Mental Health Center  
 Heather Jackson  
 11059 E. Bethany Dr., Suite 200  
 Aurora, CO 80014

A program of:  Aurora  
Mental Health  
Center

Questions: Contact Heather 303.617.2313 or Tawney 303.617.2361

# Mental Health Support for DISASTER SURVIVORS

By **Marlene Husson, LPC**, Director of Children and Family Intensive Services, and Disaster Coordinator for Aurora Mental Health Center, and Mental Health Lead for the Mile High Red Cross

Just the word “disaster” can strike terror in the mind of anyone who has had to live through such an event. Even the definition of the word encompasses the entire spectrum of human experience. A kitchen fire in a one-bedroom apartment can have the same psychological affect on a human being as a tornado, a forest fire, or even the bombing of a federal office building. Survivors of any disaster, regardless of magnitude, can become emotionally overwhelmed, and unless addressed and mitigated, can have a devastating psychological impact.

The Aurora Mental Health Center has its own disaster team that works with the City of Aurora and the State of Colorado to provide mental health services to disaster survivors. Of the 25 members on this team, 12 are also members of the Mile High Red Cross disaster team. These individuals can be called-up by the American Red Cross to deal with disasters anywhere in the United States. Currently, the Red Cross receives a disaster related call every

28 to 30 hours. The disaster team at Aurora Mental Health Center is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Mental health professionals are called-up after every disaster to provide “Psychological First Aid” to survivors. PFA is a set of actions designed to provide immediate support and coping skills to survivors. Their objective is to help people who are overwhelmed and distressed find safety, reassurance, and some comfort in an

effort to alleviate anxiety and stress. Stress is a physical, mental and emotional response to events that cause bodily and mental tension. Without the intervention of mental health professionals, survivors can wander aimlessly and simply not know what to do next. The stress resulting from a disaster can cause emotional and behavioral upheaval in survivors. Some become angry, some cry, some laugh, but almost all are confused and

lost in emotions few have ever experienced. Mental health professionals are trained in a “resilience-based” approach that sees individuals as survivors rather than victims. They assist in helping survivors connect with friends, family, and the community, as well as provide the calm, rational and compassionate human contact that is so essential in the midst of the chaos created by a disaster.

Mental health professionals will even go door-to-door, especially in the aftermath of larger scale disasters of natural or man-made origin to find out how people are coping with the stress of the event.

Our disaster team and the teams of other mental health center’s across the state and the nation are invaluable first responders, and as important to the outcome of a disaster as the fire department, police department, or the National Guard.

Our disaster team members have provided support for the survivors of the Columbine shootings, the Limon tornado, hurricane Katrina, Oklahoma City bombing, countless forest and structural fires, and are now teaching classes to military families on how to deal with deployment.

Our executive director, Randy Stith, Ph.D., calls this a commitment to serving the “Extended Community.” The man-hours, the expertise, and the compassion our center provides to disaster survivors can be measured in thousands of hours. But it is only with the conviction and monetary support from leaders like Dr. Stith that we are able to provide any of these services.



## Bullying Continued

### Is my child being bullied?

#### Characteristics of a bullied child:

Your child begins to withdraw from social activities and you see they have few if any friends. They don’t want to go to school or they avoid some classes or even skip school. They often stay home sick, have frequent headaches, stomachaches or body aches and they avoid eye contact. Your child might bring home damaged possessions or report that things are “lost.” They cry easily, experience mood swings, have poor social skills or are socially anxious and have a hard time making friends. You notice a change in their eating or sleeping habits, and they begin bullying smaller children, siblings, or even pets. Your child might demonstrate only a few of these symptoms, but any of these can be a clear sign that your child may be the victim of a bully.

#### What can I do if my child is being bullied?

Make sure that your child knows that being bullied is not their fault. Let your child know that they don’t have to face bullying alone and discuss ways of responding to a bully. Teach your child that there is strength in just walking away from a confrontation and it is OK to seek help from trusted adults. Then, contact your child’s school administration to discuss their procedures for responding to bullying.

#### What NOT to do if your child is being bullied!

Never advise your child to fight the bully. Fighting is a violation of school policy and there will be consequences regardless of “who started the fight.” Don’t ask your child to solve the bullying between themselves – remember, the bullying situation involves a difference in power. Teaching your child to react in non-threatening and non-violent ways, this will always be the best intervention.



### Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying requires its own discussion in this article because it is often the most egregious form of bullying, and because it can take place anonymously. How do I know if my child is a bully or the victim of a cyber bully? As technology continues to progress, so does access. The number of children who have cell phones, e-mail addresses, and social networking web pages have exploded within the last five years. Even younger children have more access to the Internet than ever before. As a parent of a caregiver, you have an obligation to monitor their use of these outlets just as you would with TV programming, video games and reading material. Know what your child is doing on the Internet. Become a member of social networks like Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter so you can monitor what is being posted or what your child is posting online.

[1] National Education Association, 1993 [2] Charach, Pepler & Ziegler, 1995 [3] U.S. Department of Health & Human Services

### References and Resources on Bullying:

Colorado State Laws on Bullying – Colo. Public Act No. 02-119 (2002)

Olweus, D. (1991). “Bully/Victim problems among schoolchildren: Basic facts and effects of a school based intervention program.” In D. Pepler & K. Rubin (Eds.), “The development and treatment of childhood aggression.” Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Coloroso, B. (2003). “The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander: From preschool to high school – how parents and teachers can help break the cycle of violence.” HarperCollins, NY.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Service [www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov)

In Colorado – CBS4Denver.com

Bullying resources

[www.cbs4denver.com/ihc/interactive.help.center.2.1865259.html](http://www.cbs4denver.com/ihc/interactive.help.center.2.1865259.html)

**Mission Statement**

Aurora Mental Health Center is committed to creating healthy and secure communities by providing the least restrictive service that ensures quality, appropriate, and efficient care.

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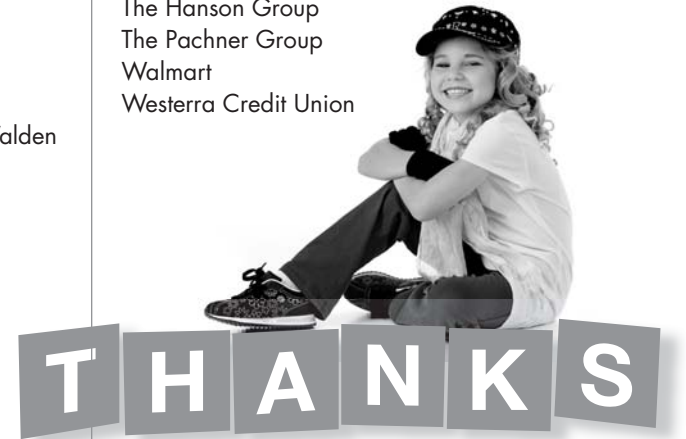
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**If you have any questions please call 303.617.2313. Every dollar makes a difference! Just \$10 a paycheck can help begin the process of healing for a child that has been traumatized!**

Please be sure to designate your workplace donation for the Aurora Mental Health Center. If you have any questions please call 303.617.2313. Every dollar makes a difference! Just \$10 a paycheck can help begin the process of healing for a child that has been traumatized!

**Donating made easier...**

Aurora Mental Health Center is an organization that can be selected this year as a beneficiary of a companies' workplace giving campaign. This means that if Caring Connection, the Partnership for Colorado, the Colorado Combined Campaign, the Denver Employees' Combined Campaign and Combined Federal Campaign or United Way runs a workplace giving campaign at your office, your partner's office or a friend's office, AUMHC may be selected to receive a tax-deductible cash donation automatically from their pay check.

Aurora Mental Health Center is participating in a new initiative that will help raise \$1 million in one day for charities. Help us bring in our share! Our goal is to raise \$10,000!

We need your support on this special day. What's more, all donations given over a 24-hour period on December 8 are eligible for the Colorado Gives Day Incentive Fund, which will increase the value of your donation. Visit our profile at givingfirst.org/aumhc and remember us on December 8!

- 100% of your donation comes to us when you give through givingfirst.org (they pay ALL processing fees)
- Donate any time during a 24 hour period starting at 12 a.m. on December 8 to qualify for the incentive
- You can designate your donation to a specific program (for example: Holiday Baskets, Aurora Veterans Home)

**Mark the date!** Help us meet our goal on December 8, 2010

**COLORADO GIVES DAY**

**12.08.10**

