What Parents Need to Know About Bullying!
BY: RON KOPICKO

Bullying is a real or a perceived imbalance of power of one person over another. The bullying behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time. Bullying is behavior that is using power over others through embarrassing information, physical strength, or the bullies’ popularity that is used to harm or control others. Bullying includes making threats, spreading rumors, physical attacks and excluding the bullied person from activities and groups purposefully.

Bullying of children with disabilities is significant, but not well documented. These children are 2 to 3 times more likely to be bullied than nondisabled children. These children with disabilities are already facing great challenges in the academic environment and bullying negatively impacts their education even more. Usually, bullied children try to avoid attending classes or are excessively absent, their grades fall, they are unable to concentrate and they lose interest in school.

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) has made a commitment to our children to guarantee that school districts provide all children with positive and safe environment where they can learn, develop, and participate. School districts are required by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to provide children with disabilities a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Bullying in our schools can interrupt a child’s ability to succeed and reach his or her full academic potential, which constitutes a denial of FAPE.

Parents are the most important advocates that students with disabilities have. It is important that parents know the best way to talk to their children about bullying. Some children will be willing to discuss bullying situations with their parents and some will not. The unwillingness to talk about it is usually through fear, intimidation or that the bullying won’t stop or become worse.

Parents must be willing to listen, without judgment, to the child’s concerns. It is not the child’s responsibility to fix a bullying situation. If a child could do that, the child wouldn’t be asking for help. Remember, the parent’s response is important to the child and to resolve the situation. Parents, as their child’s best advocate, should prepare their child in the ways to address a bullying situation. Teaching a child self-advocacy is teaching the child how to speak up for themselves, take responsibility for themselves, learning their rights and the child knowing how to ask for help. It is important for parents to teach your child how to respond to bullying, which will give the child with a disability a sense of control over the situation. Parents will empower their child with disabilities, by first of all, listening, then teaching the child how to respond and reassuring the child that their opinions and ideas are important. You can learn more about responses to bullying through the federal website, www.stopbullying.gov and the PACER Center website, www.pacer.org/bullying.

NEVADA’S ANTI-BULLYING LAWS  BY ROBIN KINCAID

When families call Nevada PEP and have concerns about bullying, they often ask about the laws that address bullying for Nevada students. Nevada has been actively introducing and passing legislation since 2001 that aims to prevent bullying or address it when it happens. In the 2009 and 2011 Nevada Legislature, the majority of anti-bullying laws were passed.

Nevada laws require school staff to respond to bullying reports which includes notification for parents and authorities in instances where charges could be filed. There are specific timelines that administrators must follow in the investigation process. There is also an appeal process that parents could use if they disagree with the school’s disciplinary decisions. School Safety Teams were established to investigate violations at the school and to prevent, identify and address bullying. Also in the legislation is mandated anti-bullying training for state board members, school district board members, school administrators and school staff.

Schools must report the number of bullying incidents to the Nevada Legislature and whether the incident resulted in suspension or expulsion. In the 2013 legislation session, additional laws were passed that make it illegal to post a video of a bullying incident. All school districts must develop and have available their anti-bullying policy which details their plan on how to prevent bullying through training and methods in order to create a bully-free environment in every school.

How can parents use this information?

1. Contact the school each and every time your child is bullied. Document each incident with the school and ask for the administrator to respond to your concerns.

2. Become familiar with federal and state anti-bullying laws so that you are aware of the schools responsibility and timelines to respond to bullying incidents. Disability harassment is a civil rights issue.

3. Attend one of Nevada PEP’s bullying prevention trainings or webinars to gain strategies and develop a plan to stop the bullying.

For more information on anti-bullying laws, visit Nevada Department of Education Bully Free Zone website at www.bullyfreezone.nv.gov/About/Legal/.

Nevada PEP has archived and live webinars on bullying. Visit our website to view at www.nvpep.org/webinar-archive.html.
NEIGHBORHOOD FAMILY SERVICE CENTER

BY CHARLENE FROST

The System of Care Principles are an important part of each Neighborhood Care Center vision to provide a single location focused on achieving success for children and youth through family driven, coordinated services.

The principles were developed in part to help ensure that families can fully participate in developing a plan for their child including which services will be utilized and who the service providers will be. Services should be child-focused and family-driven, recognizing that the family knows their child better than anyone and that families need to have voice and choice in what services will work best for the child and the entire family; while also allowing those services to be individualized, based on the family’s unique strengths, family culture, and where the family lives. This all requires interagency collaboration and accountability for everyone involved with the family. There are four neighborhood care centers located throughout the Las Vegas valley to help address the needs of obtaining children’s mental health services in the families’ home communities.

Nevada PEP is a full partner and collaborator in the System of Care and always welcomes the opportunity to assist families. Families can learn more about all the services offered by Nevada PEP at 800.216.5188.

Federal Highlight

FEDERAL PARTNERS TEAM UP WITH YOUTH

The Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention, a dedicated group of national representatives, came up with a plan of having youth and adults partner to develop an energetic bullying prevention effort. This group organized a national youth effort to combat bullying and create a culture of kindness and respect for and with our nation’s youth. Youth shared that they would like the federal government to involve them more directly in anti-bullying initiatives. The month of October is National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month and to commemorate it this year, youth organizations and their leaders were encouraged to hold bullying prevention educational and social events across the nation.

The Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention recognized that youth have a critical role in stopping bullying and creating a positive peer culture. The goals for these social and educational events are to empower youth to create change in their local communities, to have meaningful conversations about related issues and to have fun and feel a sense of connectedness around a positive and important effort.

If you want to know more about Federal Partners in Bullying Prevention or about the anti-bullying initiatives go to www.Stopbullying.gov or StopBullying.gov Facebook page.
The Behavioral Health Planning & Advisory Council (BHPAC), previously known as the Mental Health Planning & Advisory Council (MHPC), members are making an effort to put services together for easier access for young adults entering the adult service system. Family of youth soon entering adult services are working with consumers and service providers to help this happen by giving input at subcommittee meetings.

The following priorities under the BHPAC Strategic Plan that have been identified by the Academy Team:

1. Workforce Development (recruit, train, and develop a peer workforce for peer driven behavioral health system of care for individuals and family);

2. Peer Support Services (enhance current treatment and support programs to incorporate peer support throughout the system of care);

3. Peer Leadership Development (create a Peer Leadership Council to drive and guide Peer Support Services in Nevada);

4. Medicaid Eligibility Enrollment (increase Medicaid eligibility enrollment in Nevada of behavioral health services programs through peer supports).

The Academy Team members worked hard and were dedicated in developing a blueprint for Nevada. There is a lot of work to be done to implement this plan.

The BHPAC has 4 subcommittees and is looking for consumers and family members to attend or join. If you are interested, please feel free to contact the Administrative Assistant for the Council at 775.684.4294.

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**Bullying and Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Health Needs**

By Melanie Kaufman, on behalf of Family Ties of Nevada, a Family Voices State Affiliate Organization

Family TIES is helping to raise awareness about the impact of bullying on children with disabilities and special health needs. We believe that all children and youth should feel safe at home, school, and in the community. Educating kids, families, teachers, and communities about students’ special health needs and the dangers associated with certain actions and exposures at school can help keep kids safe.

Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) are “those who have or are at increased risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who also require health and related services of a type or amount beyond that required by children generally” (American Academy of Pediatrics). Children with physical, developmental, intellectual, emotional, and sensory disabilities are more likely to be bullied than their peers.

Any number of factors — physical vulnerability, social skill challenges, intolerant environments, or special accommodations at school — may increase a child’s risk for bullying. Bullying can include making fun of kids because of their allergies or exposing them to the things they are allergic to. In these cases, bullying is not just serious, it can mean life or death.

- Create a safe environment - Educating kids and teachers about students’ special health needs and the dangers associated with certain actions and exposures can help keep kids safe. IEPs or Section 504 plans can be useful in crafting specialized approaches for preventing and responding to bullying.
- Federal Civil Rights Laws - When bullying is directed at a child because of his or her established disability and it creates a hostile environment at school, bullying behavior may cross the line and become “disability harassment.”
- What Parents Can Do – If you believe a child with special needs is being bullied, be supportive of the child, encourage him or her to describe who was involved and how and where the bullying happened, be aware of signs of bullying, and talk with the child’s teacher.
- Information for this article was adapted from Bullying and Children and Youth with Disabilities and Special Health Needs Tip Sheet: [www.stopbullying.gov/whatisatrisk/considerationsforspecificgroups/youthwithdisabilitiesorspecialhealthneeds](http://www.stopbullying.gov/whatisatrisk/considerationsforspecificgroups/youthwithdisabilitiesorspecialhealthneeds).

*Please visit [www.familytiesnv.org](http://www.familytiesnv.org) to learn more.

Family TIES is the Nevada Family-to-Family Health Information Center and operates the statewide Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Helpline: 866.326.8437.
Upcoming Events

LAS VEGAS/HENDERSON

City of Las Vegas, Adaptive Recreation Division 250 N.E. Avenue Recreational activities for youth of all ages with/without developmental disabilities. Contact: Cindy Moyes 702.229.4902

Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada Call Lindsey or David 702.648.1990 for information on activities and supports or visit the website at www.dosn.org

Nevada PEP Grupo de Apoyo Familiar Reunira el ultimo Miерcoles de cada meses 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM at, 2101 S. Jones Blvd, Ste 120. Llame a Magdalena Ruiz al 702.388.8899

Positive Supports for Children Specific intervention to promote social, emotional behavioral functioning. Contact Christy Buckingham-Martin at 702.367.0306 or email: ps4children@vcoxmail.com

Recreation and Experience Club (R.E.C.) Year-round after school program for young people with disabilities, grades 9th-12th. Contact Sheri Cordray at 702.267.4065

Special Olympics A variety of athletic activities for children with disabilities. Contact Steve Cabrales at 702.474.0690 X205 Maggie Swartz 702.474.0690 x206

RENO/SPARKS

Applied Behavior Technologies (ABT) -ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) therapy for youth with autism. Has social skills training groups for young adults on the spectrum, as well parent support and behavior intervention. Ages 11+ Contact Christine Walsh at 775.354.1380 or visit www.appliedbehavioraltechnologies.com

Asperger’s Support Group Monthly meetings on Tuesdays from 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM Contact John Maes at 775.787.2904 for dates, times and more information.

Heart & Soul Discussion Group For families with children diagnosed with a heart condition. Meetings are the 2nd Friday of each month at, The Children’s Heart Center, 3006 S. Maryland Parkway, from 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM. Contact Kimberley Colagioia at 702.967.3522 or visit the Heart & Soul website for events and activities calendar at www.chfn.org

Nevada PEP Family Support Group We meet the 2nd Wednesday of every month from 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM at, 2101 S. Jones Blvd, Ste 120. Contact a Family Specialist at 702.388.8899

Down Syndrome Network of Northern Nevada Family Support Group Monthly meetings the first Tuesday of every month from 5:45 PM - 7:30 PM. At Nevada Early Intervention Services 2667 Enterprise Rd., Reno, NV 89512. For more information call 775.682.9071 or email dsnninfo@gmail.com

Cerebral Palsy Parent Network Contact Noran Behrens 775.832.6890

Special Olympics Golf Wild Creek Golf Course, 3500 Sullivan Lane, Sparks, NV 89431. Contact Dennis Oliver at 775.657.8406

The Solace Tree Support for families grieving from a personal loss. Call 775.324.7723 or email: info@solacetree.org Visit their website at www.solacetree.org

RURALS

FEAT of the Carson Valley-Minden, Nevada 89423 775.782.4138 Visit www.featcv.org

Ron Woods Family Resource Center Has many different programs for the family and youth focusing on positive action and helping youth identify and understand their thoughts and feelings. Ron Woods Family Support Center, 2621 Northgate Lane Ste 62, Carson City, 89703. Please contact Tracy or Wendy at 775.884.2269
The Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium has been working hard over the past months on multiple projects.

Members of the Consortium have been participating in the development of a Mobile Crisis program with the Division of Child and Family Services to respond to the immediate needs of children with Severe Emotional Disturbance. A mobile crisis program has been a service priority over the past decade for the Consortium. This is an important step building more ways for families to find help and support that they need.

The Infrastructure and Coordination Workgroup continues to work with community partners to develop the Service Priorities for 2014. The workgroup is also working with the Clark County School District (CCSD) to improve outcomes for children and adolescents who are returning to school from a psychiatric hospital setting. CCSD hopes to improve communication and coordination among parents, hospitals and schools to make a smoother transition for the youth back to school.

The Public Awareness Workgroup continues to focus on increasing community awareness of the effects of mental illness on children and their families. The Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium is a forum for professionals, community members and parents to come together to encourage interagency collaboration, coordination, and integrated services. Parent and provider partnerships lead to effective solutions for families. The parent and family perspective is invaluable to the Consortium because parents have real life knowledge of what is working, what is not, and have ideas of how improvements can be made.

Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium meetings and workgroup meetings are open to the public. Parents, caregivers and professionals are encouraged to participate. For more information about the Clark County Children’s Mental Health Consortium, please contact Lori Brown at lori.brown@dcfs.nv.gov.

Resource Review

Reproducible Resource Bullying: Identify>Cope>Prevent

World Teachers Press

These are a series of three books written at grade levels: third/fourth, fifth/sixth, and seventh/eighth. These books are a resource for teachers. However, the activities and information is excellent for parents.

The books follow best practices in bullying prevention suggested by Dan Olweus, PhD and Norman B. Anderson PhD. Their best practice research recommendations include defining bullying, helping targets find a voice and creating a culture where bullying is not tolerated. The books contain numerous activities designed to address these recommendations, such as sketching and writing about feelings and practicing social skills. The books also include tips for parents on how to be supportive and a sample “Incident Report.” Together the activities and information teach children ways to respond appropriately in various situations and reinforce a culture where bullying is not tolerated.

The activities in the books are age appropriate and thought provoking. They are user-friendly and are written with the intent to be photo-copied. These books are one of the many resources available for loan through the Las Vegas and Reno lending libraries at Nevada PEP. Come into the office or check out our website www.nvpep.org to learn more.

Family Story

By KELLI WALKER

whether it be daily living skills, get a job or whatever she will do after high school. It is a bit of a challenge trying to figure out what she will do, as she is nonverbal, but it is not impossible. Looking at her strengths, interests and preferences, really getting a “vision for the future,” the future is bright for her, just as it is for anyone else. Working for PEP is really giving me the tools and knowledge I need to help with planning for her future, as well as getting support for her behavioral needs. Attending Positive Behavioral Interventions trainings and talking to other families with children with similar challenges is empowering. We, as parents, have the education, encouragement and empowerment to meet the unique needs for our kids through Nevada PEP.
The Washoe County Children’s Mental Health Consortium (WCCMHC) moved on to regular business after a busy few months with the planning and carrying out the Nevada First Lady’s Children’s Mental Health Summit last April.

The WCCMHC’s major focus since then was the preparation of the fiscal 2014 budget and closing of the 2013 budget. The WCCMHC revised the meeting schedule to allow members time and flexibility to focus on their assignment to the four workgroup’s responsibilities.

WCCMHC approved the purchase of Youth Mental Health First Aid manuals to help adults provide a base level of information and guidance to youth who need help. The manuals will be used in a training session to be provided to interested persons by the State of Nevada in December.

WCCMHC set a goal to revise the consortium’s Annual Plan by January 31, 2014. A subcommittee was formed to review and make recommendations to strengthen the Annual Plan that is designed to help families and youth with mental health challenges. The workgroups continued on their mission to provide continuing information to the WCCMHC that will help children and youth.

GOAL 1 Workgroup: This group continues the work on the Wraparound In Nevada (WIN) to determine the future needs of the collaborative efforts to help children and youth become successful. The success of securing additional personnel helps WIN significantly.

GOAL 2 & GOAL 3 Workgroups: These workgroups have joined together and become one. The goal of this workgroup is to focus on bullying and suicide prevention. A significant effort to support the Nevada Office of Suicide Prevention has brought focus to youth suicide. The collaborative effort between the State of Nevada and WCCMHC results in the implementing of the Youth Mental Health First Aid training in December.

GOAL 4 Workgroup: This group continues its work on a logic model in conjunction with the University of Nevada –Reno. This group meets the 2nd Friday of every month and is open to any members and the public who are interested in helping youth in transition to adulthood gain the skills needed for independent living.

WCCMHC invites families and youth to join us at our monthly meetings and workshops. The Consortium meeting are held the 3rd Thursday of alternating months from 3 to 5 PM. The Consortium is always looking for interested people to participate. The meetings are held at the Washoe County Complex on 9th Street and Wells in Reno. For more information, contact Retta Dermody or Ron Kopicko at 775.448.9950.

Collaboration Highlight

By STEPHANIE HOULE

In honor of National Bullying Prevention Month, Nevada PEP partnered with ten schools across the state to raise awareness about bullying. PEP provided “Our School is a School Against Bullying” banners and bullying prevention bookmarks and other materials to Bonner, Elmcrest, Lunt, Mendoza, Numa, Paradise, and Cannan Elementary Schools, as well as Hyde Park and Vaughn Middle Schools. These materials helped schools teach children about bullying and create a school-culture that values diversity and respect. In addition, schools were encouraged to unite against bullying on October 9th by wearing orange and performing the Unity Day dance. During the month of October, PEP also offered eight “Is Your Child a Target of Bullying?” training and webinar workshops to parents and professionals throughout Nevada. Nevada PEP is dedicated to putting an end to bullying in our communities. Visit www.nvpep.org to learn more about Nevada PEP’s Bullying Awareness School Collaboration Project!

Nevada Commission on Behavioral Health

By Karen Taycher

The Nevada Commission on Behavioral Health is a 10-member legislatively created body designed to provide policy guidance and oversight of Nevada’s public system of integrated care and treatment of adults and children with mental health needs and substance abuse. The service delivery system is administered by state agencies in Nevada through the Division of Public and Behavioral Health and the Division of Child and Family Services. The Commission also promotes and assures the protection of the rights of all clients in this system.

Nevada’s public mental health system for children and adults is defined in Nevada Revised Statutes NRS 232 and 433. The Commission is appointed by the Governor. The Commission is required to report to the Governor and Legislature using an annual “communication,” usually a letter or report that is sent in February of each year.

Due to the passage of AB 488, mental health and public health have merged to become the Division of Public and Behavioral Health (DPBH). Previously, Developmental Services was also included, but now is consolidated into the Division of Aging and Disability Services.

The reorganization is currently in progress, you can access information from the Mental Health and Developmental Services website at http://mhdr.state.nv.us/. You can access the Division of Child and Family Services, for children’s mental health services at http://www.dcfs.state.nv.us/. The Division of Aging and Disability Services website can be accessed at http://aging.state.nv.us/index.htm.

*Information retrieved from the above websites.
Rural Mental Health Consortium
BY RETTA DERMODY

Goal 1 of the Rural Children’s Mental Health Consortium’s (RCMHC) 10-year plan is to determine and promote awareness of the specific challenges families of children with mental health and behavioral disorders face in Nevada’s Rural Region. Steps to reach this goal are:

1. Establish and maintain connection through community outreach.

2. Advocate for specific mental health services on three levels: community, county, and state coalitions.

3. Promote improvement of mental health services by assisting communities in advocacy within internal state agencies.

4. Identify stakeholders who are in a position to facilitate changes in each community.

To meet this goal, RCMHC members and partners have continued to reach out to rural communities by conducting family and professional trainings, as well as participating in community health fairs promoting community-based and family driven services. Nevada PEP has conducted trainings to families and community members in 10 rural counties and 3 Nevada Tribes. The trainings have focused on Skills for Effective Advocacy, Positive Behavioral Interventions, Bullying Awareness, and Individualized Education Program Process. Stakeholders helped PEP advertise and provided the locations to conduct the trainings. While in the rural communities, PEP Family Specialists were able to meet with families and provide them with support at school and Child and Family Team meetings.

RCMHC would like to invite families and community stakeholders to attend our monthly meetings. The Consortium meets the second Tuesday of each month. For more information, please call Retta Dermody at 775.448.9950 or 800.216.5188.

My 15 year old son has an IEP under Serious Emotional Disorder. He is in high school and has a hard time reading social cues. I just found out that he has been being bullied at school. How can I help insure he is safe?

Under the Individuals Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), your son is entitled to a Free Appropriate Public Education. Additionally, according to a “Dear Colleague Letter” issued by Office for Civil Rights (OCR), student misconduct that falls under the anti-bullying policy also triggers responsibilities under one or more of the anti-discrimination statutes enforced by OCR. Writing down any incidents that happen with date, time and who is involved will help you have a concise, accurate timeline of events. You may request a meeting, in writing, with the school administration or you could request an IEP meeting with the team.

The IEP can be a helpful tool in bullying prevention. Here are a few options that some students benefit from when included in their IEP. Encourage student to let you know which adults that he feels comfortable with. If he feels unsafe or bullied, he can go to one of them for assistance or to talk. Allow him to leave a few minutes early from class to avoid the crowded hallways. Ask for additional adult support at unstructured times. Ask for support for staff to increase understanding of your child’s disability and vulnerabilities. Consider what strategies that might be effective to help address the bullying.

To learn more about Bullying Prevention, visit our website at www.nvpep.org for trainings and information on PEP Run Walk Roll Bullying Awareness. Adapted from “The IEP and Bullying” from Pacer Center.
Annual Membership Information

Annual membership dues are $25.00 per family, organization or professional.

Please provide the following information

NAME

PROFESSION

ADDRESS

CITY       STATE       ZIP

PHONE

Email

CHILD’S NAME

DATE OF BIRTH

☐ I am a parent/caregiver.
☐ I am a professional working with children.
☐ I am a concerned member of the community.
☐ Enclosed is a tax deductible donation in the amount of $__________ to help support the efforts of Nevada PEP.
☐ I would like to be a member of Nevada PEP, please waive the annual dues.
☐ I would like to volunteer.
☐ I would like to receive the monthly E-POST.

Your donation to Nevada PEP, Inc. may be tax deductible, please consult your tax advisor. #88-0301113

Please make checks payable to: Nevada PEP NEVADA

2101 S. Jones Blvd.
Suite 120
Las Vegas, NV 89146

Nevada PEP is a participating agency for:

- United Way of Southern Nevada
  Designated gift # 2192
- United Way of Nevada & the Sierra
  Designated gift # 27052
- MGM Mirage Voice Foundation
  Designated gift # 120685
- Combined Federal Campaign #29441

Mission Statement

To increase the opportunities for home, community, and school success for children with disabilities, including those who are at risk or who have serious emotional disturbances, their families and their service providers, through education, encouragement and empowerment activities.

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VISIT US ONLINE AT WWW.NVPEP.ORG

Volunteer Opportunity

BY DIANE LOMBARDO

Would you be at all interested in making a positive difference in the lives of others and empowering yourself at the same time? If you answered “yes” to this question, I would highly suggest that you volunteer at Nevada PEP. Opportunities are plentiful in both statewide offices. Simply pick up the phone or visit our website and schedule a VIP volunteer orientation today. The volunteer coordinator will give you a tour of the PEP facility, introduce you to the great staff, and match you with rewarding projects that will enhance the lives of others while giving you a genuine sense of accomplishment.

*If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering at Nevada PEP, contact Dina Lombardo in Las Vegas at 702.388.8899. In our Reno, NV office, contact Samantha King at 775.448.3950.

Everyone has heard about the tragic affects of bullying. By contrast, volunteering is a healthy activity, focusing on helpfulness, generosity, and kindness. We all deserve to feel good about ourselves. Volunteering is an excellent way to sharpen our skills, meet new people, to become involved, supporting and bringing out the very best in each other.