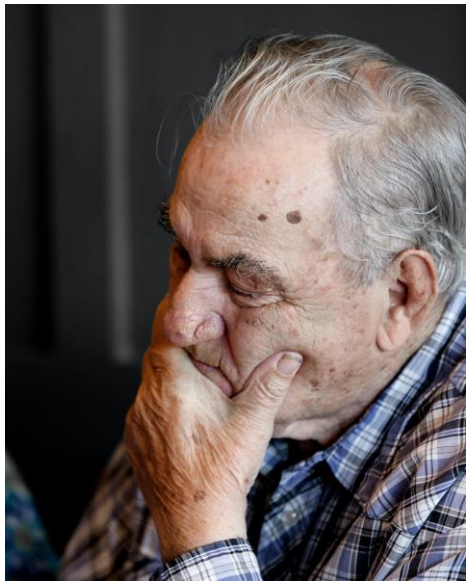
Mental Health America of the MidSouth



Bullying and Older Adults

TOM STARLING, CEO

MENTAL HEALTH AMERICA OF THE MIDSOUTH

Who is Mental Health America?

Who do you call for disease-specific information, referrals, advocacy, support, education, and help? (Not direct services)

Mental Health America

- Nationally founded 1909
- MidSouth Affiliate 1946
- #B4Stage4
- Our symbol is the "bell of hope." It is cast from chains and shackles that imprisoned persons with mental illness in the 1950s.

MHA
Mental Health America
of the MidSouth

#B4Stage4

Our Programs & Initiatives

- Advocacy
- Alzheimer's, Caregiving, & Healthy Aging
- Back Office Support Services (BOSS) program
- Erase the Stigma "Don't Duck Mental Health"
- Mental Health First Aid & QPR
- Mental Health University (professional education)
- MHAC: HelpLine, health fairs, referrals, screenings
- Multicultural Outreach Program (Spanish & more)
- Workplace Wellness
- Zero Suicide

MHA
Mental Health Academy

MHA
Mental Health America
of the MidSouth

#B4Stage4

zero suicide

Academic Definition of Bullying

- Intentional, repetitive, aggressive behavior with an imbalance of power or strength

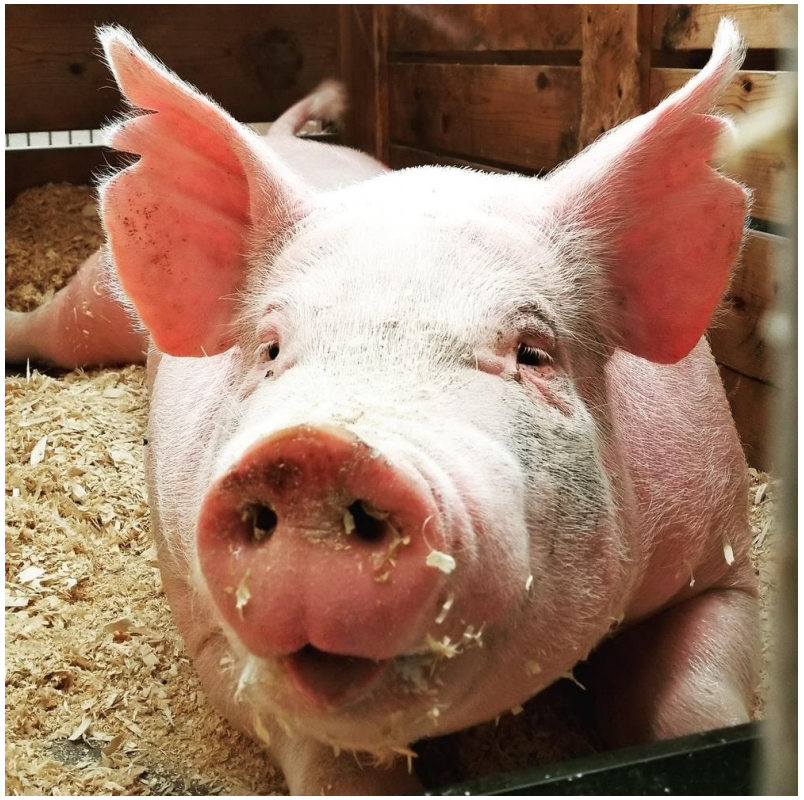
Victims Interviewed about Bullying

- Loud arguments in their home environment
- Name Calling is distressing
- Bossed around by your peers (i.e., who determines what show to watch)
- Negotiating differences – diversity in ethnicities, SES, values, traditions
- Sharing resources – one television, limited chairs, one *People* magazine.
- Being asked for money or cigarettes
- Other people complain!
- Witnessing other people's mental capacity decline

Three Types of Bullying

- Verbal Bullying
- Physical Bullying
- Relational Bullying

Bullying



Characteristics of Bullies

- Seek to control other people
- Threatening or hurting others make them feel in charge
- They feel powerful if they can manipulate others. They feel alive.
- Very narrow window of tolerance for others & differences
- Few positive relationships. (DUH!!!)
- Sense of loss or powerlessness
- Fewer ACEs which may result in Less Empathy

Targets & Impact of Bullying

- Fearfulness: awake at night dwelling on the hammer or oinking
- Deep shame/guilt for the way they responded
- Increased mental health conditions: anxiety, depression

Victims' Reactions

- Some just told the bully to "get a life" and shrugged it off
- Some pet their cat, participated in an activity, or socialized with friends
- Others worried, had nightmares, had increased anxiety/depression

Interviews with Victims

- "He makes me burning mad!"
- "She does it to everyone and it bugs the crap out of me"
- "I just have to dodge him and avoid being harassed. I'm very fragile."

Is Bullying Happening Here?

- Self-isolation
- People avoid certain activities
- Take a long, circuitous route to get to communal areas.
- Vague complaints about others: “They don’t like me.”
- Depressed mood

Identifying a Bully

- They don't self-identify
- They intimidate staff or visitors
- They tell others what to do in a bossy, disrespectful manner
- Criticize others with a complete lack of empathy
- Make repeated complaints about others picking on them. They'll pound on the desk about everyone picking on me and what are you going to do about it?

Interventions

Three-Tiered Approach

1. Bully level
2. Victim level
3. Organizational level

Civility Training

- Help tenants embrace the civility behaviors:
  - Pay attention
  - Listening
  - Being agreeable
  - Apologizing, etc.
- Build hype over 6-7 weeks with value signs throughout facility
- Civility training based on attributes all value
- Sign commitment letters or resolutions
- Monthly meetings based on "What is hindering us from achieving our desired environment and fulfilling our social contract"
  - Not focused on bullies or who is the problem

Up Standards by Eleanor Barbera (NY)

- This is bystander intervention training
  - How to stand up when you see someone being bullied
  - Defines bullying, the cycle of bullying
  - LOTS of role playing!
  - It's primarily redirection and distraction

Resident Recognition by Eleanor Barbera

- Reward and encourage positive behavior!
- Residents list positive behaviors and values you hold. Then a small group actively looks for values in action.
- Monthly ceremony to recognize everyone caught exhibiting positive behaviors.
- Reinforce positive behaviors and MODELING positive actions that are rewarded.

Pro-Social Activities

- Make tenants so busy doing good that they don't have time to bully.
- Engage these busy-bodies in positive work
- Reduces depression and increase self-esteem by getting them to do rewarding work

Addressing the Bully

- Set boundaries and limits
- Offer appropriate outlet to vent frustrations
- Help bullies learn about social cues
- Help bullies expand their circle of friends

Helping Victims of Bullying

- Assertiveness training (Molly Nece's YouTube trainings)
- Anger management classes to diffuse their internalization
- Teach them to use "I-statements" – " I feel hurt, frustrated, and embarrassed when you disrespect me."

Thank you

Tom Starling, EdD

Mental Health America of the MidSouth (Nashville)

tstarling@mhamidsouth.org

Referral Sources – MHA @ 615-269-5355

- **TN Mental Health Consumers Assn**: promotes recovery and community through peer support, education, and advocacy; 45 Peer Support Centers in TN
  - tmhca-tn.org
- **NAMI Tennessee**: provides support groups and connects families
  - namitn.org
- **Tennessee Suicide Prevention Network**: strong, statewide volunteer organization that implements the state's suicide prevention plan tspn.org
- **TAMHO**: the trade association for community mental health centers
  - tamho.org
- **MidSouthMentalHealth.org** and **MemphsAddictionHelp.org**

Referral Sources – MHA @ 615-269-5355

- **Nashville Psychotherapy Institute:** Online directory helps find Middle TN therapists based on probable diagnosis, primary language, zip code location, insurance, etc.nashvillepsychotherapyinstitute.org
- **TAADAS** – everything addictions! REDLINE: 800-889-9789 Taadas.org
- **TDMHSAS** – Peer services for persons needing housing, employment, education, training, or general assistance (800)-560-5767
- **My Health Care Home –** www.myHCHtn.org to find (Middle) Tennessee charitable clinics.
- **Vanderbilt Disability Pathways** – Statewide searchable database tnparthfinder.org
- **Recovery Within Reach** - website explores recovery from mental illness, co-occurring, and substance use. You will find resources, **housing**, art, peer stories, links to help Recoverywithinreach.org

Referral Sources – MHA @ 615-269-5355

- **Crisis Text Line -** Text 741741 from anywhere in the U.S. to text with a trained Crisis Counselor.
- **Mobile Crisis -** Call 855-CRISIS-1 which is also 855-274-7471
- **Warm Line** - (865) 584-4424
- **2-1-1** or **AuntBertha.com** are a broad, readily available directories.
- **KidCentral Website** - kidcentraltn.com/
- **Prescription Discounts** – milligramrx.com; familywise.com
- **Mental Health America of the MidSouth-** (615) 269-5355 mhamidsouth.org or mhaET.com