



"CAP"- A Foundation for Bullying Prevention

Along with the economy and the weather - bullying is one of the hottest topics of the summer. The State's new "Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights" is propelling schools into a hectic re-organization to bring them into compliance by September, 2011.

Besides tightening policies, reorganizing staffing and improving reporting procedures, the law mandates that schools provide training for all staff. The question is whether these trainings will adequately address the problem.

Most of the bullying prevention trainings now available to schools are targeted at changing the school environment. They focus on policies, reporting and intervention procedures but they generally do not provide staff or students an understanding of victimization.

Peer assault, harassment, and intimidation are not limited to the school community. Studies find that perpetrators and victims often learn their behaviors of abuse and victimization outside of the school environment.

Supporting this theory, a study published this past spring in the *Boston Globe* indicated that child abuse may be a major contributor to the dynamics of bullying and peer victimization.

Students who had been involved in bullying both as a perpetrator and victim were five times as likely to have been abused by an adult and/or witnessed domestic violence in the home than their peers who were not involved in bullying.

Research conducted by leading child abuse expert, Dr. David Finkelhor of the Crimes Against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire, demonstrates the strong link between child maltreatment, peer aggression and bullying as cited in his study "Hidden Forms of Victimization in Elementary

Students Involved in Bullying".

Although there is a strong association between child abuse and bullying, few bullying prevention programs address it. It is much easier to talk about peer abuse and bullying than adult on child abuse and its connections to bullying.

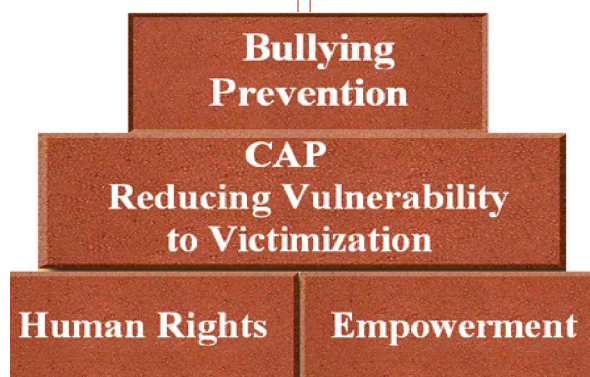
This connection is not a new one for the CAP program, which has been providing workshops on child abuse and bullying prevention in New Jersey since 1985.

CAP trainings are based on a "human rights and empowerment model" which helps all students know that they have the right to be free from abuse. *Knowing these rights is the basis of being empowered to take action and get help for oneself and others.*

NJCAP requires that schools requesting its "No More Bullies, No More Victims" (NMB,NMV) anti-bullying program first participate in the foundational Child Assault Prevention program. This gives staff, parents and students an understanding

of how victimization impacts on children and the basis of its prevention.

A CAP foundation is essential to NMB,NMV and its whole school approach. This foundation puts bullying into a perspective - helping students learn how not to be a victim or a victimizer - whether the abuse is by a peer or an adult in school, home or in the community.



For more information on CAP's
"No More Bullies, No More Victims"
program or other empowerment
programs visit
www.njcap.org