The Safe Schools Coalition

Understanding &
Addressing Anti-Gay
Harassment and Violence
in Schools

Welcome people

Say something credibility-building about yourselves (as trainers) or one another … i.e., credentials (mom, uncle, etc.; X years in teaching or other relevant professional experience; 4-sentence personal story)

Introductions

Suggest ground rules … including *"Let's agree to take risks. Don't not ask a question, just because you can't think of the 'right' or 'sensitive' way to ask it. Let's trust one another's good   intentions and agree to be honest about what we really don't understand or agree with."*
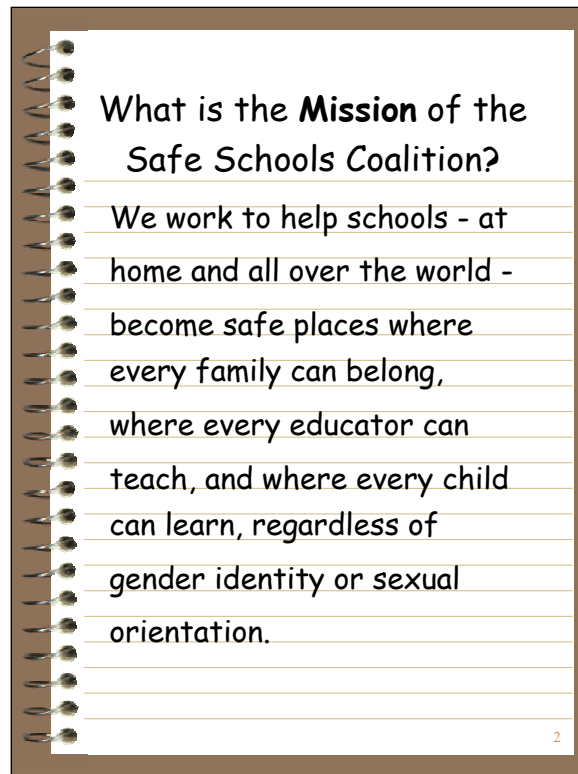
Tell the group your objectives ...

First, explain what you are NOT here to accomplish:

WE AREN'T HERE:

•To change anyone's values regarding homosexuality (we probably couldn't even if we wanted to).

•To make anyone feel guilty about what you may have done or not done in the past to help students feel safe at school.

WE *ARE* HERE:

•To give you (participants) a clearer understanding of the nature of bias-based harassment in   elementary, middle and high schools and of anti-gay harassment & violence in particular.

•To help you (if participants are school employees) better serve the mission and goals of your   school district.

•To consider with you (participants) some concrete, practical things you can personally do about   the problem in your own school.

What is the Mission of the Safe Schools Coalition?

We work to help schools - at home and all over the world - become safe places where every family can belong, where every educator can teach, and where every child can learn, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.
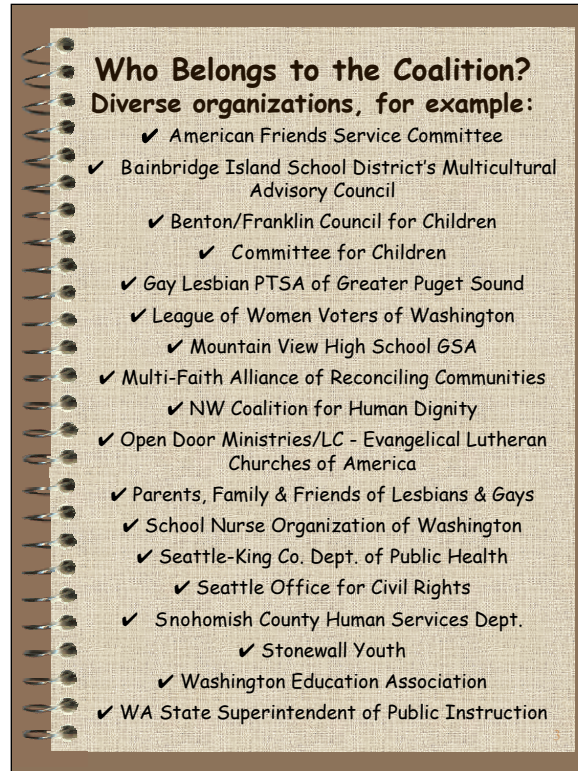
Membership in the Coalition is for Washington State residents and Washington-based or regional organizations. Others are urged to donate, since they can't officially join.

To apply for membership, simply fill out a membership form. Individuals may join just by asking; organizations must be approved for membership at monthly Coalition meetings.

Photocopy the forms from the back of this notebook or download them from our website (see previous transparency). NOTE: The forms in the report itself may be outdated. Use, instead, the ones in your trainers' manual.

Invite people to pick up membership forms in the back of the room (as *handouts*).
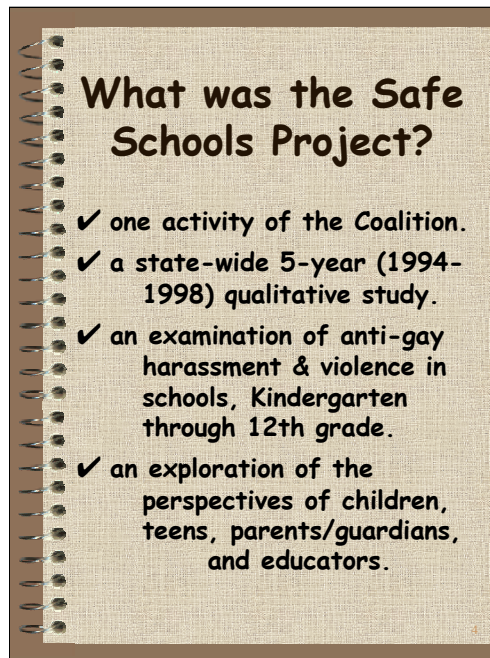
Who Belongs to the Coalition?
Diverse organizations, for example:

- ✔ American Friends Service Committee
- ✔ Bainbridge Island School District's Multicultural Advisory Council
- ✔ Benton/Franklin Council for Children
- ✔ Committee for Children
- ✔ Gay Lesbian PTSA of Greater Puget Sound
- ✔ League of Women Voters of Washington
- ✔ Mountain View High School GSA
- ✔ Multi-Faith Alliance of Reconciling Communities
- ✔ NW Coalition for Human Dignity
- ✔ Open Door Ministries/LC - Evangelical Lutheran Churches of America
- ✔ Parents, Family & Friends of Lesbians & Gays
- ✔ School Nurse Organization of Washington
- ✔ Seattle-King Co. Dept. of Public Health
- ✔ Seattle Office for Civil Rights
- ✔ Snohomish County Human Services Dept.
- ✔ Stonewall Youth
- ✔ Washington Education Association
- ✔ WA State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Point out:

⇨ that there are *statewide organizations* that belong to the Coalition, such as the Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Washington Education Association.

⇨ and there are *small, local organizations* like the Bainbridge Island School District's Multicultural Advisory Council and the Benton/Franklin Council for Children and Youth in the tri-cities.

⇨ there are *adult groups* (e.g., League of Women Voters), and *teen groups* (e.g., Stonewall Youth), and *family groups* (e.g., the Gay Lesbian PTSA)

Let people know that there is a *complete* list of organizational members, as of January 1999, in the Report. They can also pick up a *handout* (the Safe Schools Coalition brochure) with a more recent listing of members.

What was the Safe Schools Project?

✔ one activity of the Coalition.

✔ a state-wide 5-year (1994-1998) qualitative study.

✔ an examination of anti-gay harassment & violence in schools, Kindergarten through 12th grade.

✔ an exploration of the perspectives of children, teens, parents/guardians, and educators.

The study was conducted for two reasons:

First, in the early 1990's when we provided technical assistance and in-service workshops for administrators, we found that many had trouble believing that this sort of harassment and violence happened in their schools. Teachers didn't; they saw it on a daily basis. But administrators sometimes thought it only happened in big cities like New York or L.A. We decided we needed to document that it was happening here.

Second, nobody had ever studied the phenomenon. It was understood only anecdotally. There had been college campus studies, but never K-12. There had been retrospective studies with GLBT adults recalling their school experiences, but never studies in the present time, K-12. And nobody had examined the perspectives of witnesses, educators, friends and families (as well as the targets themselves.) We decided we needed to try to describe the problem in some depth … to answer questions such as:

- What kinds of things happen in these incidents?
- When and where do these acts of harassment and violence seem to happen?
- Who is targeted? Who is vulnerable?
- How do witnesses respond?
- How are targeted individuals affected?
- Why do people sometimes choose not to report incidents to school authorities?
- How do families and educators respond, when they know about the harassment?

These kinds of questions cannot be answered by most survey research. Only in-depth interviews can really explore these issues.

Explain that you have copies of the most recent Report on the Project, for anyone who would like one.
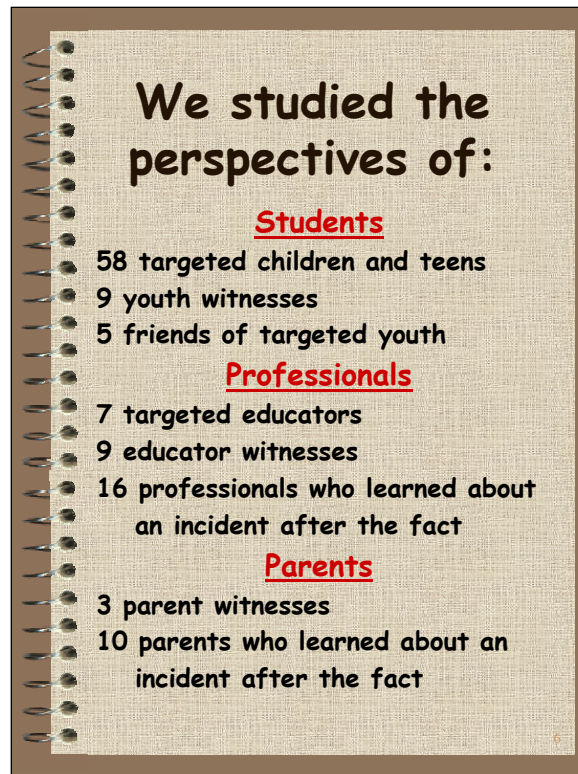
How were the Data Collected?

Initially, **12 face-to-face reports** at one focus group and several support groups, while the instrument was being developed and tested

Then, **105 telephone interviews** (1-800-5B-PROUD … now 1-888-307-9275) conducted by trained counselors … solicited via mass media, posters, and workshops

Explain that, once the research committee had tested the interview protocol, the remaining interviews (105) were conducted by trained counselors from the crisis and information line of Seattle Counseling Services for Sexual Minorities, a state-licensed community mental health agency. In addition to their training as counselors, these interviewers received two hours of training specifically re: administering the survey instrument. **NOTE: The crisis phone to reach the Safe Schools Coalition has changed since the end of the study, but we still take requests for help)**

Thirty-five other interviews turned out not to qualify for the study (see transparency 8)

The sample was self-selected. Therefore:

•the study CAN show us the breadth of the problem,

•but we CANNOT infer from it the proportion of each kind of incident.

•the study CAN teach us where in a school is a possibly risky location,

•but we CANNOT infer which districts are the safest or the least safe.

•the study CAN describe for us some effective and ineffective ways that educators may respond to incidents,

•but we CANNOT infer trends over time in how well they are handling them.

We studied the
perspectives of:

Students
58 targeted children and teens
9 youth witnesses
5 friends of targeted youth

Professionals
7 targeted educators
9 educator witnesses
16 professionals who learned about
   an incident after the fact

Parents
3 parent witnesses
10 parents who learned about an
   incident after the fact

Respondents were solicited in a number of ways. Over the five school years the Project was conducted, the Safe Schools Coalition mailed annual reports and posters to every public school nurse, librarian, principal, social worker and counselor in Washington State (though not to each of these groups every year).

The Coalition made presentations about the Project at professional conferences and human rights events. We held annual press conferences and were interviewed by dozens of television, radio and print journalists.

Some respondents said they learned of the Project from these sources (posters, presentations, media coverage).

Some learned of the Project from the Safe Schools website (**http://www.safeschools-wa.org**) or the Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgender-Questioning Youth Info Line (**206-547-7900; 1-800-425-0192**).

Most respondents said they learned of the Project in a more direct person-to-person way. They reported that a school employee, a family member, or someone from a community agency encouraged them to report what happened.
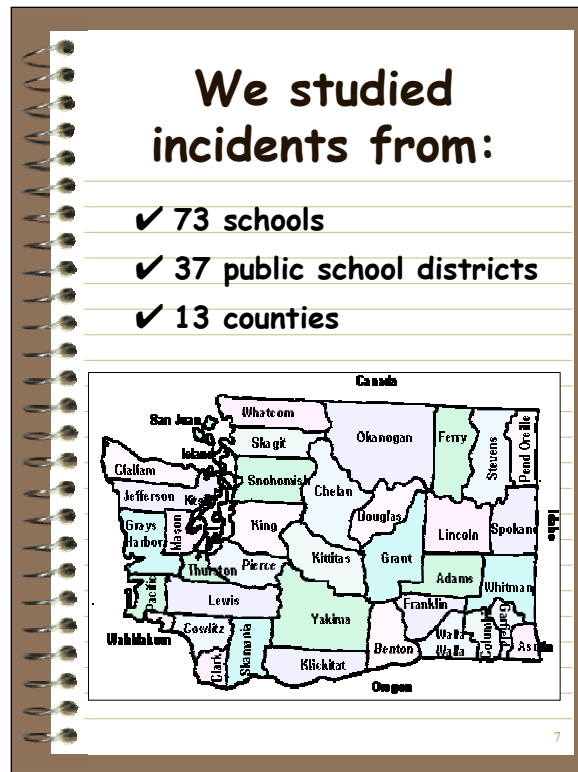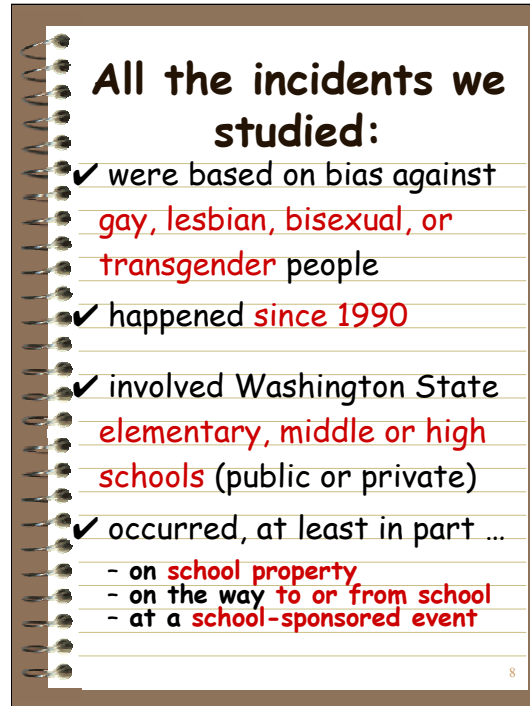
We studied incidents from **73 schools**, including:

- 7 elementary schools,
- 15 junior high and middle schools,
- 40 high schools,
- 9 alternative schools,
- a reservation school, and
- a private school.

And at least **37 public school districts** ("at least" because 11 callers declined to name their school). They included the tiny **Republic** School District in rural Ferry County, in the NE corner of the state (**582 students, K-12**) and the largest district in the state, **Seattle** (**over 47,000 students**) and districts of all sizes in between.

And 13 counties:

- Benton,
- Ferry,
- Jefferson,
- King,
- Kitsap,
- Lewis,
- Pierce,

- Snohomish,
- Spokane,
- Thurston,
- Whatcom,
- Whitman, and
- Yakima

All the incidents we studied:

✔ were based on bias against gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender people

✔ happened since 1990

✔ involved Washington State elementary, middle or high schools (public or private)

✔ occurred, at least in part …
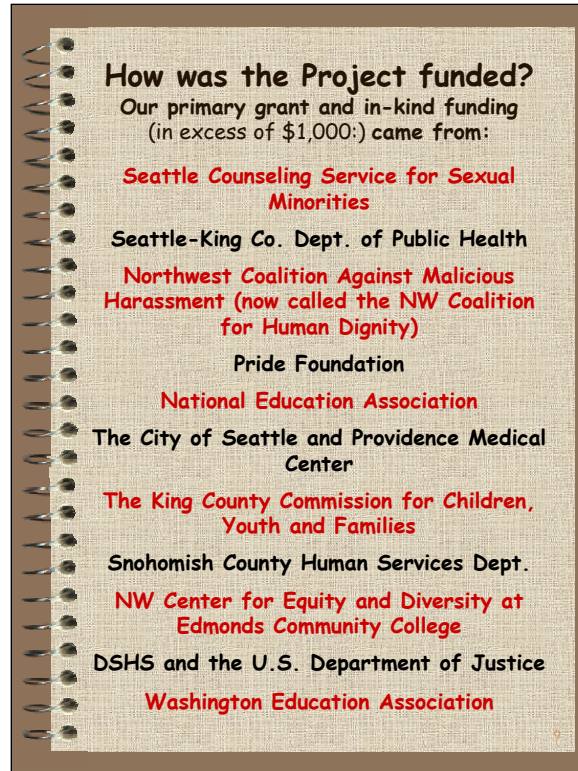 – on school property
  – on the way to or from school
  – at a school-sponsored event

8

To qualify for the study, a report had to meet a number of criteria. Among them:

1. There had to be evidence that the offenders' actions were based in whole or in part on their bias against Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, or Transgender (GLBT) people, ***and***

2. The entire incident or part of the pattern of incidents had to have occurred since 1990, ***and***

3. It had to have happened in conjunction with a Washington State school, ***and***

4. The entire incident or part of the pattern of incidents had to have occurred:
    a. on public or private school property (K-12), ***or***
    b. on the way to or from school (e.g., at the bus stop), ***or***
    c. at an event sponsored by a school (e.g., sporting event, field trip, etc.), ***and***

5. The interview had to be complete enough that members of the research committee could, independently of one another, screen it for internal consistency (e.g., the date-of-birth and the target's age must agree) and verifiable facts, ***and***

6. The interviewer and the research team had to be very confident that the call was legitimate. If either the interviewer or the committee had serious reason to be skeptical about the call's legitimacy, for example if the caller's tone of voice had seemed incongruent with the severity of a recent incident, it was excluded.
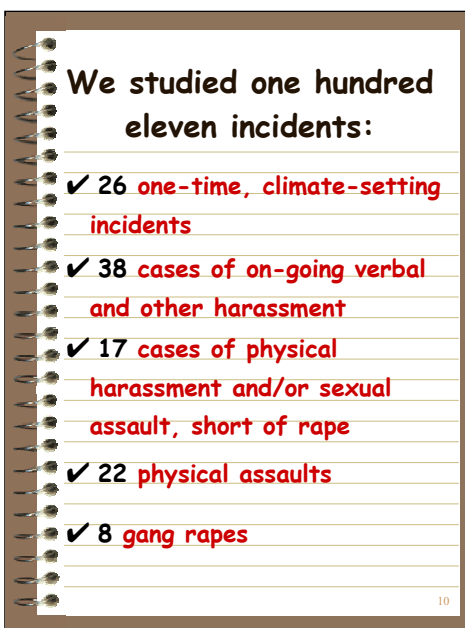
Altogether, 111 reports met those criteria. Another 35 did not. Most of those were simply incomplete, frequently because the caller was too distraught to complete the interview and counseling took precedence over research.

How was the Project funded?

Our primary grant and in-kind funding
(in excess of $1,000:) **came from:**

Seattle Counseling Service for Sexual
Minorities

Seattle-King Co. Dept. of Public Health

Northwest Coalition Against Malicious
Harassment (now called the NW Coalition
for Human Dignity)

Pride Foundation

National Education Association

The City of Seattle and Providence Medical
Center

The King County Commission for Children,
Youth and Families

Snohomish County Human Services Dept.

NW Center for Equity and Diversity at
Edmonds Community College

DSHS and the U.S. Department of Justice

Washington Education Association

In addition to these large contributors, the Project is indebted to many organizations and private individuals for their volunteer efforts and for their smaller-scale -- but absolutely vital -- donations. A more complete list of volunteers and donors is printed in the first few pages of the Report.

Donations to the Coalition are gratefully accepted. ***There are donation forms in the back of the room.***

We studied one hundred eleven incidents:

✔ 26 one-time, climate-setting incidents

✔ 38 cases of on-going verbal and other harassment

✔ 17 cases of physical harassment and/or sexual assault, short of rape

✔ 22 physical assaults

✔ 8 gang rapes

10

Category One ... These one-time incidents entailed things such as name-calling, offensive jokes or gestures, etc. Some were aimed at specific individuals and others were not. One, for example, was called in by a concerned mom who had attended a pep rally at her child's school. The "entertainment" at the pep rally included the slapstick reenactment of a gay-bashing. Many teachers, along with students and alumni, laughed and applauded. Some of these incidents may have seemed relatively trivial to onlookers. The respondents, however, found them disturbing. Some expressed concern that these less overtly violent incidents seem to serve as invitations to more intense harassment, especially when adults perpetrate them or fail to intervene.

Category Two ... In these cases of on-going harassment, someone wrote graffiti about a person, for example, or "outed" them (spread rumors about their sexual orientation), threatened to harm or kill them, or publicly humiliated them on an on-going basis.

Category Three ... In these cases people spit on someone, threw something at them, cornered them, pushed them around, pulled their clothes up or off or down, or attempted to rape them because they were perceived to be gay. (While many of these seventeen incidents would be legally classified as assaults, we reserved the use of that term for category four, below.)

Category Four ... In these assaults, children and teens were hit, kicked, punched, and/or attacked with weapons. Seven young people were treated by a doctor or a nurse (four in hospitals and emergency rooms) for cuts, contusions, cracked ribs and/or broken bones. (not counting those who were raped … see Category 5, below.)

Category Five ... Altogether there were 11 people attacked in these 8 incidents. In each case, the targets were outnumbered by the assailants. In 3 of these 8 rapes, attackers also urinated on the person; in 1 they vomited on the person; in 2 they ejaculated on the person; in 1 they broke a teens hand. In 2 of the 8 rape incidents, the target's partner or good friend was forced to watch.

what we learned re:
WHEN & WHERE
it happens ...
✔ **Every month** of the school year with peaks in Oct. & Jan.
✔ **All over school**, but especially in class-rooms, halls and the locker room or in or near the gym
✔ **Throughout the school day**, with most rapes between 3 & 3:30 p.m.
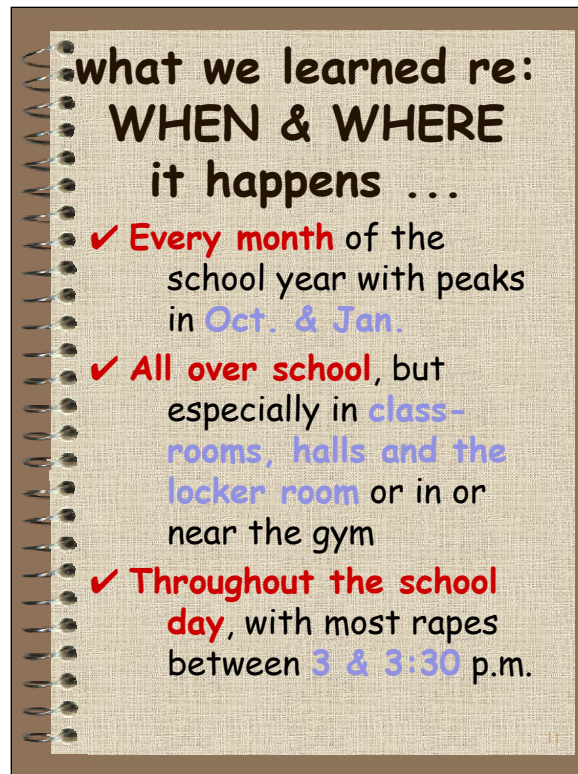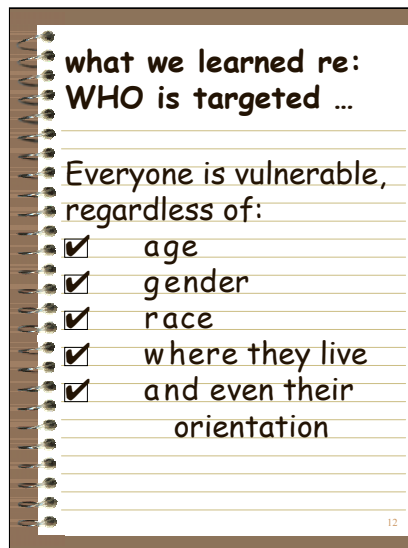
We don't know why there seem to be peaks in these months. Perhaps after summer and winter vacations bullies need to reestablish their dominance. Perhaps there needs to be a more rapid establishment of community on educators' parts, to forestall the process.

The most common *location* for harassment and violence was the classroom. Tied for second were hallways and the gym or locker room. Perhaps teachers and coaches need more training in the importance of forceful intervention.

But some of these incidents also occurred where there may have been less supervision … on school busses and at school bus stops, on playgrounds, at off-campus school–sponsored events such as field trips and ball games, in the parking lot, the auditorium, the library, the cafeteria, the principal's office, and the restroom. Five of the incidents actually occurred off-campus, but they were counted as school-based because the events leading *up* to them, the taunts, the threats and the physical harassment, began at school.

Most rapes occurred after school -- although mostly on school property. Perhaps that is the time when offenders feel there is less risk of being caught. This may point to a need for increased campus security during those hours.

what we learned re:
WHO is targeted …

Everyone is vulnerable,
regardless of:
☑ age
☑ gender
☑ race
☑ where they live
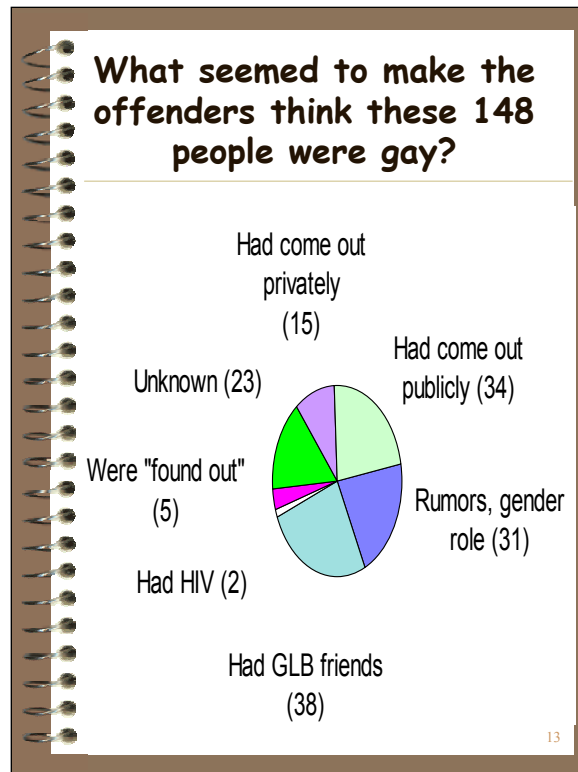☑ and even their
    orientation

Age: Most of the targets were students -- the youngest was six years old -- but we also studied nine cases in which teachers or guest speakers were attacked. So people of any age may be at risk.

Gender: There were about twice as many male targets than female targets in the incidents we studied, but we also learned of enough attacks on girls to conclude that people of both genders are vulnerable.

Race: The person's race also doesn't seem to matter, with respect to being vulnerable to anti-gay harassment or violence. People of White, African-American, Native American, Latino and Asian heritage have reported to the Project that they were targeted. Overall about 1/4 of respondents were people of color, just as 1/4 of public school students in the State are children of color.

Where they live: Living in so-called progressive Seattle doesn't protect a child. Neither does living in allegedly less-violent non-urban areas. Incidents have been reported from large urban districts, suburbs and smaller towns, and rural areas, as well as a tribal school and a Christian school.

And even their orientations: Even a person's actual sexual orientation is apparently not the primary determinant of whether they are targeted. More often than not, these offenders had no direct knowledge of the targeted people's orientations and some targets (at least seven and possibly more) were heterosexual.

What seemed to make the offenders think these 148 people were gay?

Had come out privately (15)

Unknown (23)

Were "found out" (5)

Had HIV (2)

Had GLB friends (38)

Had come out publicly (34)

Rumors, gender role (31)

Clockwise from the top:

15 people had come out privately to a friend or sibling and then their confidence was broken and rumors spread.

34 people had actually come out verbally in a class, or they'd dated someone of their own gender, or they'd worn GLBT symbols, such as a pink triangle.

In 31 cases, assumptions were made and rumors spread apparently because of a person's non-conforming gender-role expression (how he walked, her haircut, the fact that he studied during free time, etc.)

38 people were targeted apparently because they had Gay, Lesbian or Bisexual friends or because they defended GLBT civil rights.

2 were targeted apparently because they had HIV.

5 were "found out." For example their diary was stolen or their locker broken into.

And finally, in many cases, it wasn't clear *what* made the assailants assume the target was gay. In a few cases, it wasn't even clear that the offender *did* assume so; that is, the slur may have been used just as a generic put-down.

Bottom line: Everybody's vulnerable.

what we learned re: WHO offends ...
- ✔ They were of all ages.
- ✔ They were of various races.
- ✔ More were male than female:
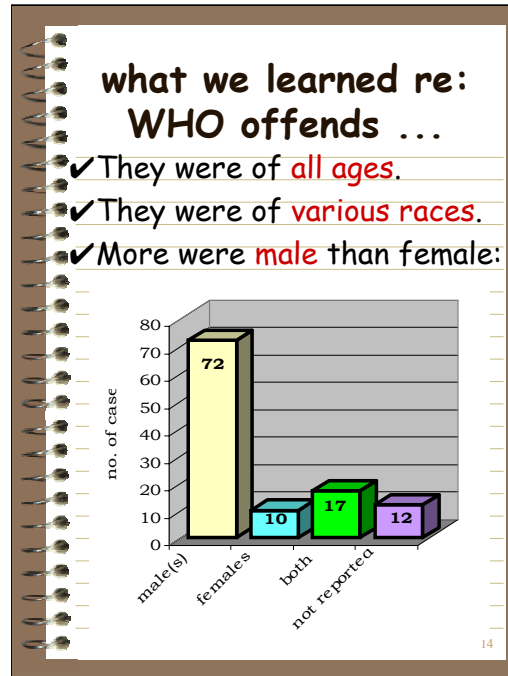
Bullies were as young as first grade. They may not have known the meaning of the slurs they used, but they knew their power to hurt.

And in *fifteen* cases, the respondents perceived *adults* to have been the offenders. A teacher who said, "All gays should be put on an island somewhere." Another who allegedly said all gay people should be shot. A principal who physically restrained a young man and allegedly threatened not to protect him if he was ever harmed because the teen's being gay would make the assault his own fault.

Most offenders were White (four out of five) which is not surprising in a state where 75% of students are White.

And in the majority of cases we studied, the offenders were male. As this graph shows, 72 cases. (10 had female offenders and 17 had offenders of both sexes. And in 12 cases the gender of the offender[s] wasn't reported. For example, a few acts of vandalism had no witnesses, and the offenders were never caught.)

Perhaps this gives the men who work in schools a particular responsibility to teach and to model the value that neither prejudice nor violence is a prerequisite for being a real man.

Offenders outnumbered the people they targeted by about 2½ against 1.
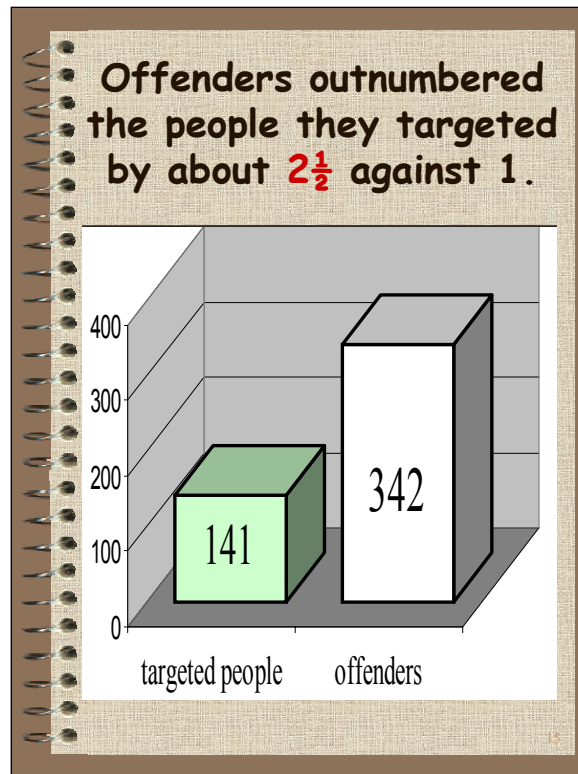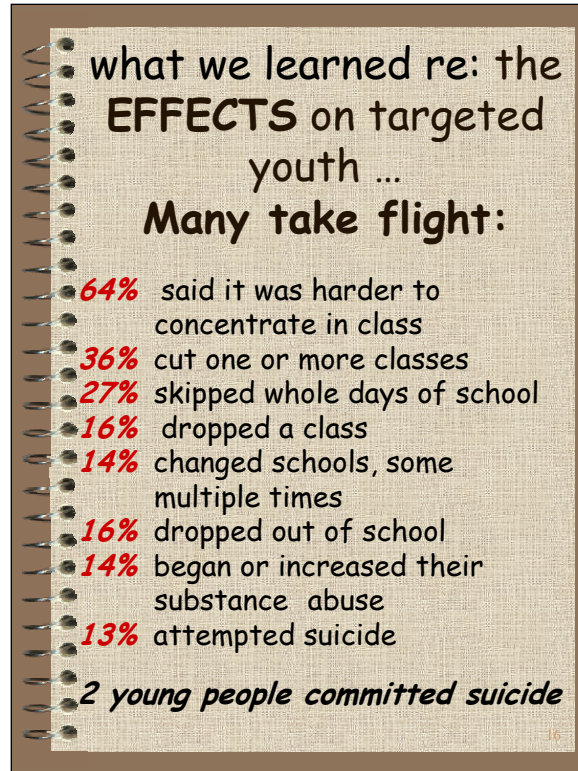
Not counted here are 6 incidents in which the number of offenders wasn't reported (such as vandals who were never caught). Also not counted were 11 incidents that were aimed at no one in particular (for instance, the pep rally's use of gay-bashing as comedy or a teacher's disparaging gay people in general). The "victims" in these incidents are not countable; everyone who observes them is a victim in a sense.

In the other 94 incidents, a total of 141 people were harassed or attacked by a total of at least 342 offenders. (We say "at least" because when the caller said there were 4 or 5 offenders, for instance, we counted them, conservatively, as 4.)

So the ratio of offenders to targets in the incidents reported to the Project is about 2 1/2 against 1. *The most frequently reported scenario is one in which a single child or teen is harassed or attacked by two to ten other students.*
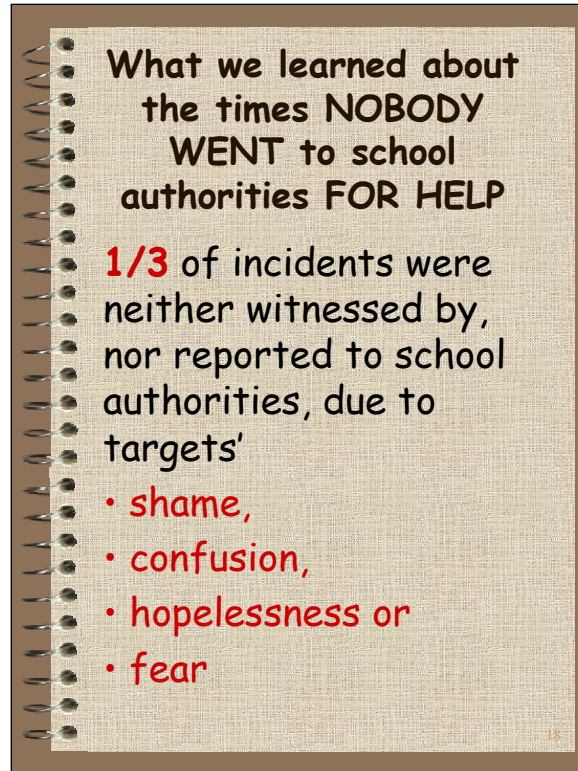
> # what we learned re: the EFFECTS on targeted youth ...
> ## Many take flight:
>
> **64%** said it was harder to concentrate in class
> **36%** cut one or more classes
> **27%** skipped whole days of school
> **16%** dropped a class
> **14%** changed schools, some multiple times
> **16%** dropped out of school
> **14%** began or increased their substance abuse
> **13%** attempted suicide
>
> **2 young people committed suicide**

58 targeted children and teens reported the incident themselves. (Other incidents were reported by witnesses, educators and friends and family members.) When students reported their own incidents, they were asked how the incident or series of incidents had affected them.

These are some of the answers from those 58 young people (except for the completed suicides, which were reported by a young man's mom and another young man's good friend).

All these responses seem to be examples of escape ... or attempts to escape.

what we learned re: ADULTS roles ...

✗ Some were offenders

✗ Some weren't offenders, but added to the target's distress

✗ Some did or said nothing

✗ Some intervened

✗ Some intervened and educated

✗ Some intervened, educated, and supported the target

✗ Some removed the offender(s)

✗ Some disciplined offender(s)

17

• We studied *fifteen* cases in which respondents perceived adults to have been *offenders*. A teacher who said, "All gays should be put on an island somewhere." Another who allegedly said all gay people should be shot. A principal who physically restrained a young man and allegedly threatened not to protect him if he was ever harmed because the teen's being gay would make the assault his own fault.

• In *other* cases, *adults* didn't actually offend against anyone, but *did do something that only made the hurt worse.* One PE teacher allegedly told a h.s. Freshman who had been spit on and kicked out of the locker room by classmates, "Maybe you should do more push-ups." and asked " What's the matter; don't you like girls?"

• In almost *a quarter of the cases* we studied (7 of the 29 with adult witnesses), *no adult did or said anything*.

• But the good news was that in 2/3 of incidents, adults *did* do something:

    • Some at least *intervened* (although telling an offender to "calm down" may have been perceived by the respondent as too mild a response).

    • Some *intervened and educated*, talking about the building's or district's harassment policies, for example, or about prejudice or slander or respect for all people, including gay people.

    • Others did more (*supported the target, removing the offender, disciplining the offender*). <u>See page 21 of the Report for examples.</u>

What we learned about the times NOBODY WENT to school authorities FOR HELP

1/3 of incidents were neither witnessed by, nor reported to school authorities, due to targets'
- shame,
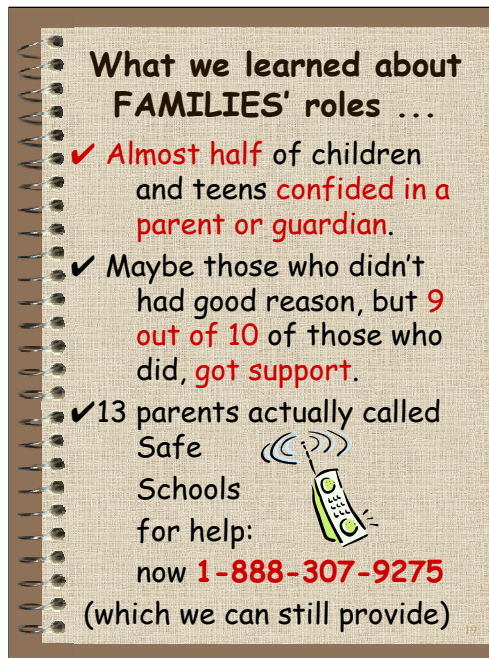- confusion,
- hopelessness or
- fear

The schools cannot do anything about problems they don't know about. This was part of the reason we did this study: *to bring to light incidents that were never reported to school authorities*.

The specific fears that children and teens told us got in the way of their asking for help were that:

- **they wouldn't be believed, or**

- **they would be blamed, or**

- **nothing would be done, or**

- **retribution would occur, or**

- **someone else (a friend, for instance) would be endangered.**

If young people fear these things, *what can we do to reduce these fears*, so they'll feel safer telling us when they are in trouble?

What we learned about FAMILIES' roles ...
- ✔ Almost half of children and teens confided in a parent or guardian.
- ✔ Maybe those who didn't had good reason, but 9 out of 10 of those who did, got support.
- ✔ 13 parents actually called Safe Schools for help: now 1-888-307-9275 (which we can still provide)

We would like to see <u>more</u> than half of young people feel safe enough at home to share their distress.

What can families do to let their children know they can be trusted in times of trouble? How can they communicate that they would want to protect and love their child no matter what his or her sexual orientation?

What can schools (counselors, nurses, etc.) do to help families weather a child's "coming out"?

Note that a Safe Schools volunteer intervention specialist can help a young person to talk with his/her family if requested.

When families do blame or reject their children, as a few of the families in our study did, what can the schools provide, if anything to help a child survive the blame and rejection?

Note that calling the Safe Schools hotline is one way to access resources such as family counseling and emergency shelter. Local crisis lines (listed in the front of the phone book) can help, too.

When a family wants to help a child who is being harassed at school, what can they do? *How can the parents or guardians help?* See the new Safe Schools Resource Guide for a *"A Family's Guide To Handling Anti-Gay Harassment***"** and *"A Student's Guide To Surviving Anti-Gay Harassment and Physical or Sexual Assault."*

The stories speak for themselves.

Category 1 = one-time, climate setting incidents

Category 2 = on-going verbal & other harassment

Category 3 = physical harassment and/or sexual assault, short of rape

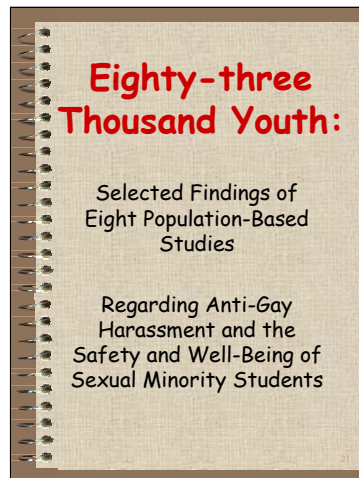Category 4 = physical assaults

Category 5 = gang rapes
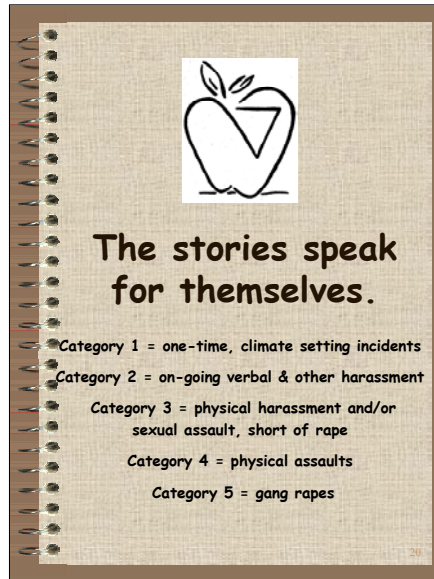
Category
1 = blue cards
2 = pink cards
3 = green cards
4 = white cards
5 = yellow cards

Note: At 2 story cards per participant, you will need all 113 cards (111 stories, plus 2 extra versions of story 91) if you have 56 participants. If you have fewer than 56 participants, you may wish to choose the most relevant cards. For instance in a group of PE teachers and coaches, the locker room and gym cases would be important. At a middle school workshop, the middle school stories would be most relevant. See the index on page 75 of the report for help choosing incidents, before you begin a workshop. *Each color is a different category of story, so make sure you include some cards of each color.*

1) Explain that you are going to pass out descriptions of actual incidents reported to the Project and ask volunteers to read a few aloud.

2) ***Acknowledge that certain language in the narratives may offend some readers. It is language heard daily in our schools. The stories have been described here without censorship or softening of the sometimes brutal facts.***

3) Explain that it is OK for people to choose not to read one aloud if it is too difficult.

4) Pass around story cards (or have people pick up cards you already distributed to their tables) and give people a couple of minutes to read their card or cards silently.

5) Have volunteers read aloud one or two stories from each Category.

6) Stop at least once in the middle and once at the end of the "read-around," so that people can have two or three minutes to share their reactions with a neighbor.

7) Discuss people's reactions, but especially what they ***liked*** about adults' responses (or peers' responses if this is a youth audience) or how they ***would have liked*** adults (or peers) to respond.

Be sure to collect your story cards right away; otherwise some will get "lost."

Eighty-three Thousand Youth:

Selected Findings of Eight Population-Based Studies

Regarding Anti-Gay Harassment and the Safety and Well-Being of Sexual Minority Students
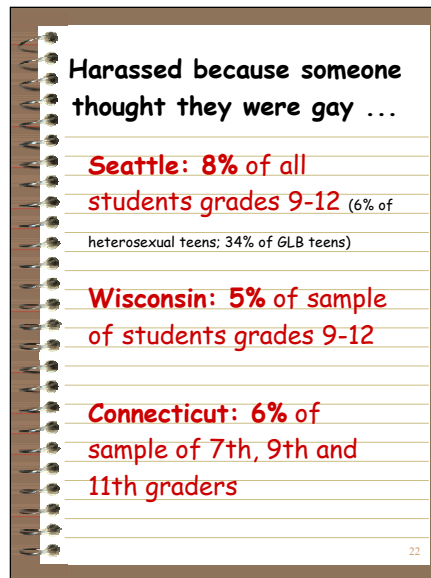
When we began the Safe Schools Project in 1994, there was very little reliable data about the particular needs of gay, lesbian and bisexual high school students and the problem of anti-gay harassment in schools. Today, a growing body of quantitative research explores those issues. Altogether, eight quantitative studies we know of have surveyed a total of 83,042 middle and high school students around the United States.

Three of the studies asked whether respondents had been bullied because someone thought they were gay or lesbian. Six studies (one of those and five others) asked about sexual orientation or something related (such as gender of partners).

Five of the studies are part of the national *Youth Risk Behavior Survey* (YRBS) coordinated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Five local jurisdictions (2 urban school districts -- *Seattle* and *San Francisco* -- and 3 states -- *Vermont, Massachusetts and Wisconsin*) included in their 1995 and/or 1997 YRBS's items regarding respondents' sexual orientations, the gender(s) of their sexual partners, and/or whether they have experienced orientation-based harassment.

Three other large-scale, population-based studies besides the YRBS's contribute to our understanding of gay, lesbian and bisexual issues in schools: the 1987 *Adolescent Health Survey*, conducted by the University of Minnesota; the 1991 *National American Indian Adolescent Health Survey*; and the 1998 *Voice of Connecticut Youth* survey.
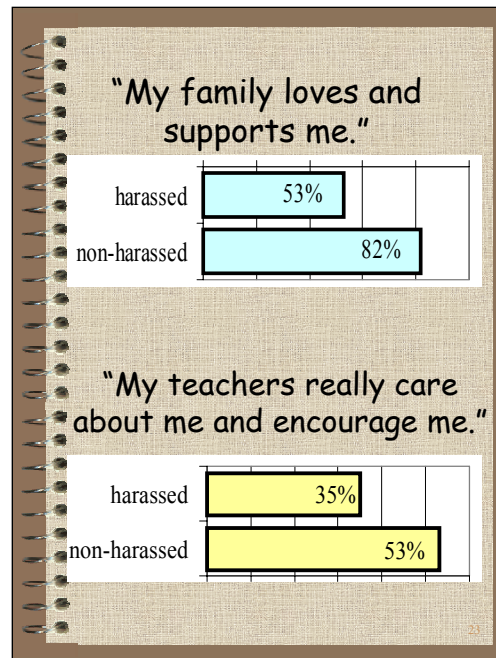
Harassed because someone thought they were gay ...

Seattle: 8% of all students grades 9-12 (6% of heterosexual teens; 34% of GLB teens)

Wisconsin: 5% of sample of students grades 9-12

Connecticut: 6% of sample of 7th, 9th and 11th graders

Seattle, Connecticut, and Wisconsin were the studies which asked about *orientation-based harassment*.

Eight percent of Seattle respondents (34% of those who identified as gay, lesbian or bisexual and 6% of those who reported that they were heterosexual) *said they had been the targets of offensive comments or attacks because of their (perceived) sexual orientations*. It is worth noting that, while sexual minority students were much more likely than heterosexual students to report having experienced anti-gay harassment or violence, their actual numbers are much smaller. Hence, in fact, four out of five of those who report having been bullied in this way are actually heterosexual.

In Wisconsin, 5% of students said they had been "threatened or hurt because someone thought [they] were gay, lesbian or bisexual." Some proportion of that five percent is undoubtedly heterosexual, just as approximately four out of five of Seattle youth who had experienced anti-gay harassment reported that they were actually heterosexual, but Wisconsin youth were not asked their actual orientations.
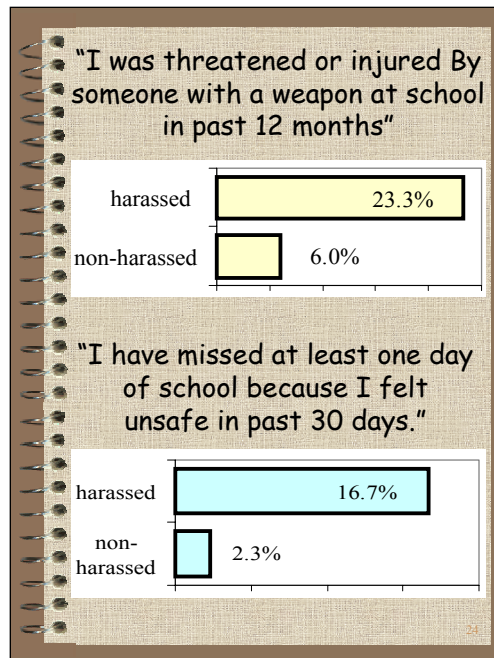
In Connecticut, 6.3% of students said they had been "made fun of because of [their] sexual orientation" at least once in the past year. About 8% of young women and 5% of young men reported having experienced this form of harassment in the past year. Twelve and 13-year olds were more likely than 14 to 17-year olds to report having been bullied in this way in the past year (7-8% vs. 5%), with thirteen year-old-girls reporting the highest rates of any age/gender (over 10%).

"My family loves and supports me."

harassed — 53%
non-harassed — 82%

"My teachers really care about me and encourage me."

harassed — 35%
non-harassed — 53%

Wisconsin asked about a number of attitudes and beliefs that other researchers have identified to be developmental assets. In general, researchers have found that the more of these so-called "assets" youth have, the less likely they are to engage in self-destructive behaviors.
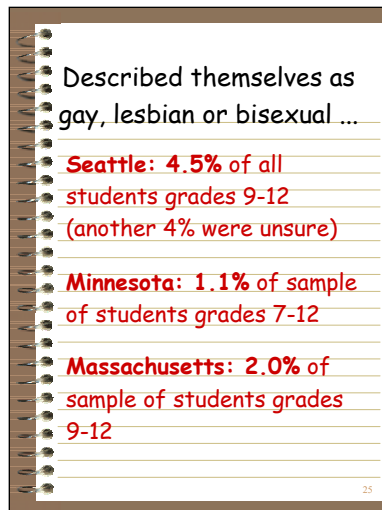
Students who reported having experienced anti-gay harassment were significantly less likely to report some of these protective factors. For instance, as these graphs show:

- Only about half of harassed youth felt supported by their families (whereas more than eight out of ten non-harassed youth reported family support).

- Only about a third of harassed youth felt cared about and encouraged by their teachers (whereas more than half out of ten non-harassed youth reported family support).

"I was threatened or injured By someone with a weapon at school in past 12 months"

harassed	23.3%
non-harassed	6.0%

"I have missed at least one day of school because I felt unsafe in past 30 days."

harassed	16.7%
non-harassed	2.3%

In **Wisconsin**, those who said they had experienced anti-gay harassment were:

- almost 4 times as likely as non-harassed youth to say they had been ***threatened with or injured by someone with a weapon at school*** in the past 12 months,

- 7 times as likely as non-harassed youth to report having ***missed at least one day of school*** in the past month ***out of fear*** for their safety.

Described themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual ...

Seattle: 4.5% of all students grades 9-12 (another 4% were unsure)

Minnesota: 1.1% of sample of students grades 7-12

Massachusetts: 2.0% of sample of students grades 9-12

25

Note that these figures are apparently related to some extent to the age of students surveyed. Minnesota had the youngest sample and the fewest respondents identifying as GLB.

And as in all survey research, it is possible that socially stigmatized matters such as this are under-reported, even though respondents were assured the survey would be confidential.

Still, *if 1.1 to 4.5% of students were gay, lesbian or bisexual, that would be a total of …*

9 to 36 students in Colfax (a district of 802 students)

36 to 148 students in Camas (a district of 3,279)

112 to 458 students in Shoreline (a district of 10,173)

355 to 1,454 students in Spokane (a district of 32,311 students)

_____ to _____ in _____ (do the math: .011 X student body   to .045 X student body   of any school or district or state)

11,000 to 45,000 students in the Washington State (we have 999,027 public school students in the state as of October, 1998). We can assume that some of the younger children have not yet figured out their orientations (although many are already experiencing harassment). Still, just counting 9th-12th graders and using the *most* conservative figure of 1.1%, there are at least 3,300 Washington State high school students who already describe themselves as gay, lesbian or bisexual. *Probably one third of them (over 1,100 high school students) are being harassed about it.*

And remember that these youth each have brothers, sisters, cousins and friends who may get harassed for caring about them.

Approximately 6% of heterosexual youth (55,000 children perhaps in Washington schools?) are being harassed because someone <u>thinks</u> they are gay. (six percent of the approximately 91% of 999,027 youth who describe themselves -- or will by high school -- as heterosexual.)
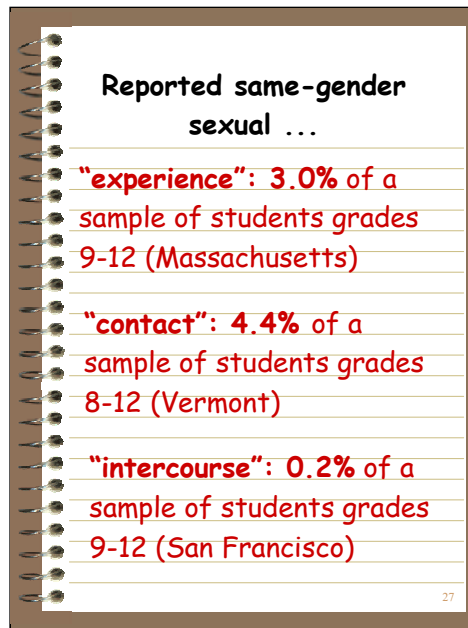
"I made a suicide attempt in the past 12 months and was treated by a doctor or a nurse."
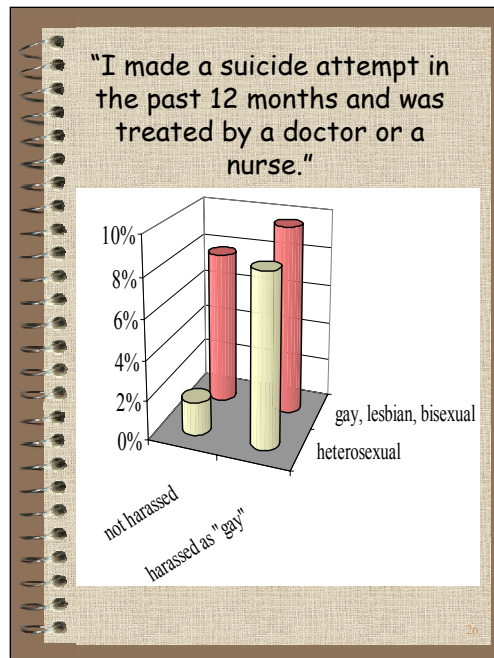
The Seattle study showed that, over all, *GLB students were about 4 times as likely* as heterosexual students to to report having made a serious enough attempt on their lives to need treatment, within the last year. (9.4 vs. 2.2%).

Those GLB students who said they had been harassed because someone knew or thought they were gay were slightly more likely to than their non-harassed GLB peers to report these serious suicide attempts (9.6% of harassed glb youth, vs. 7.8% of those who had not personally been harassed).

The dramatic association with *harassment* was most evident, however, among *heterosexual* students:

Heterosexual youth who said *they* had been harassed because someone thought they were gay were 5 times as likely as non-harassed, straight classmates to report having made a *serious suicide attempt* (8.6% vs. 1.7%).

Reported same-gender sexual ...

"experience": 3.0% of a sample of students grades 9-12 (Massachusetts)

"contact": 4.4% of a sample of students grades 8-12 (Vermont)

"intercourse": 0.2% of a sample of students grades 9-12 (San Francisco)

27

In some studies, researchers asked about the gender(s) of sexual partners instead of, or in addition to, sexual orientation.

Same-gender activity, no matter how it is defined, is not the same thing as orientation. Some GLB students have had no sexual activity of *any* kind and others have had only heterosexual activity (consenting or non-consensual). Nonetheless, they may recognize their predominant feelings and identify as GLB. Similarly, some heterosexually-identified students have had same-gender sexual activity. Some will report same-gender attraction or fantasy.

For analysis' sake (see next transparency) respondents who reported ***being GLB*** and/or having had same-gender ***sexual activity*** and/or same-gender ***attraction*** and/or same-gender ***fantasy*** were considered "sexual minority."

Note that how the question was worded may have influenced the response. If respondents interpreted San Francisco's use of the term "intercourse" to mean penile-vaginal sex, it is no wonder that very few said they had experienced intercourse with someone of their own gender.

In nearly *every* study in which researchers have analyzed the associations, *sexual minority youth were more likely* than their peers to report:

- having been victimized and threatened.
- fearing for their safety.
- *self*-endangering:
  - ∇ heavy alcohol or other drug use,
  - ∇ anorexia/bulimia,
  - ∇ having been (or having gotten someone) pregnant,
  - ∇ having made a serious suicide attempt.

In *Massachusetts,* sexual minority youth were, for example, 23% more likely than their peers to report *having their property stolen or deliberately damaged* at school.

In *Seattle*, sexual minority youth were, for example, 76% more likely than their peers to report *feeling unsafe* or afraid *at school* some, most or all of the time (reported by 20.9% of GLB and 11.9% of heterosexual youth),

In *Vermont* , sexual minority youth were , for example, at lest three **times** as likely (300%) to report having *skipped at least one day of school* in the past 30 days because they felt unsafe (reported by 18% of students with same-gender experience, and 6% of students with only opposite-gender experience and 2% of those with no sexual experience).

Sexual minority youth reported more *alcohol/drug* use, regardless of gender, in all five studies.

Sexual minority youth reported more *anorexia/bulimia,* regardless of gender, in Seattle, VT and WI. (The association was significant only among males in MA and MN.)

Sexual minority youth reported higher rates of *pregnancy*, regardless of gender, in MA, Seattle, VT and WI. (The association was significant only among females in MN.)

Sexual minority youth reported higher rates of *suicide attempts serious enough to have required treatment by a health care professional* in MA, Seattle, VT and WI. (In MN, only suicide attempts were analyzed [not treated attempts] … and they were associated with the sexual minority variables.)

The Safe Schools Coalition

Understanding & Addressing Malicious Harassment in Schools
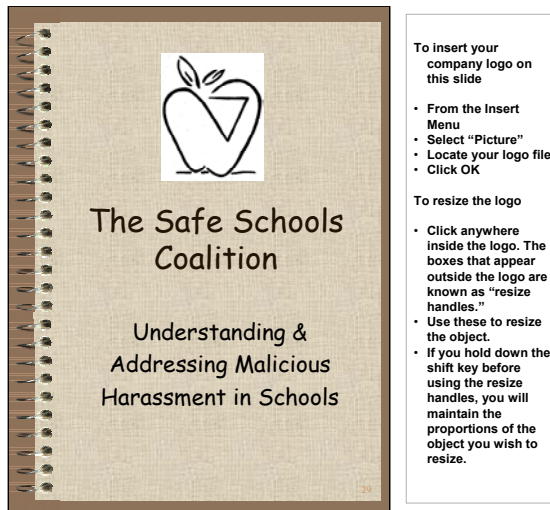
You will start with this transparency, instead of # 1, if your workshop is about *malicious harassment in general*, *rather than anti-gay harassment, in particular.*
• Welcome people
• Say something credibility-building about yourselves. (see page 1)
• Introductions of the participants
• Establish ground rules. (see page 1)
• Tell the group your objectives. (see page 1)

Explain that, in Washington State, malicious harassment is illegal. (RCW 9A.36.80) The law defines "malicious harassment" as "physical injury, damage to property, or threats directed at individuals or groups on the basis of:
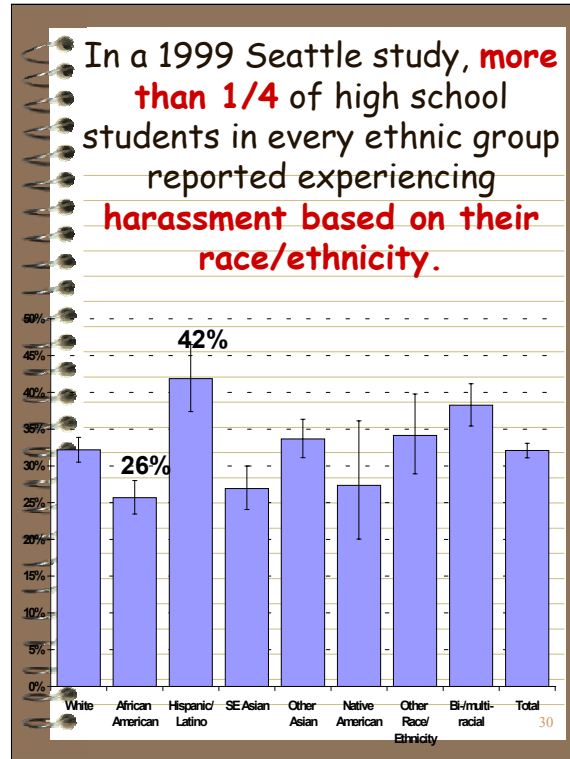
race,	national origin,
color,	gender,
religion,	sexual orientation, or
ancestry,	mental, physical or sensory handicap"

But only rarely do school officials involve law enforcement for on-campus incidents (from speeding in the parking lot to assault). **They rely on school policy for guidance, instead.** We know of twelve school districts in Washington State have established policies explicitly protecting students and/or employees from harassment and discrimination based on (perceived) sexual orientation as of Winter, 2000. (Note: Another 7 have collective bargaining agreements) Those with explicitly inclusive policies are:

+ Bainbridge Island,	+ North Thurston,
+ Cheney,	+ Marysville,
+ Federal Way,	+ Northshore,
+ Lake Washington,	+ Seattle,
+ Olympia,	+ Spokane,
+ Port Townsend,	+ Tumwater

In 2002, the Washington State Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law a "Safe Schools/Bullying Bill" that will require all districts to adopt or modify their harassment policies by August, 2003. The new law will protect **BOTH** schools and their employees (from legal liability) **AND** students (from harassment) if local officials do three things:

1) adopt or amend the district's harassment policy to be really clear and inclusive by August 1, 2003 as required by the law;
2) inform parents or guardians, students, volunteers, and school employees *about* the new policy; and
3) train employees to effectively *implement* the policy.

In a 1999 Seattle study, **more than 1/4** of high school students in every ethnic group reported experiencing **harassment based on their race/ethnicity.**

42%

26%

White | African American | Hispanic/ Latino | SE Asian | Other Asian | Native American | Other Race/ Ethnicity | Bi-/multi-racial | Total
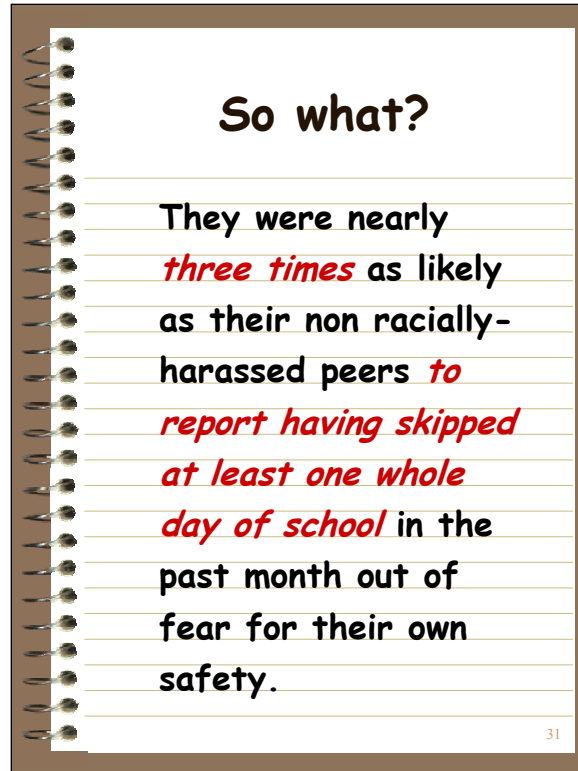
30

Let's look at what we know about the prevalence of harassment. I know that those of you in the back can't read the little titles under the bars, so I will read them aloud to you (read them).
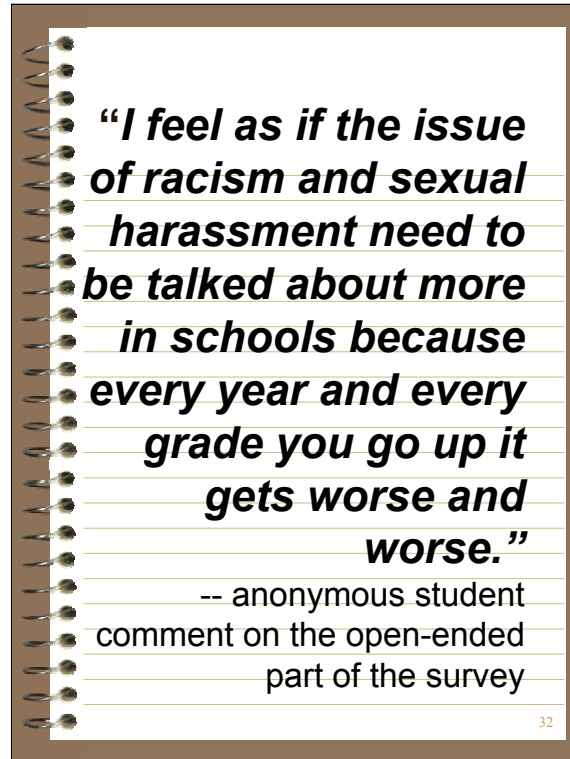
This chart shows that 42% -- nearly half -- of Latino and Multi-ethnic students had been racially harassed. Even among the group that reported the least racial harassment -- African American students -- 26% had it happen to them.

Some people think that only youth-of-color experience racial harassment. Notice that more White youth than Indian, Asian and Black youth had been bullied in this way, according to the 1999 Seattle Teen Health Risk Survey.

Race-based harassment is everybody's problem.

So what?

They were nearly *three times* as likely as their non racially-harassed peers *to report having skipped at least one whole day of school* in the past month out of fear for their own safety.
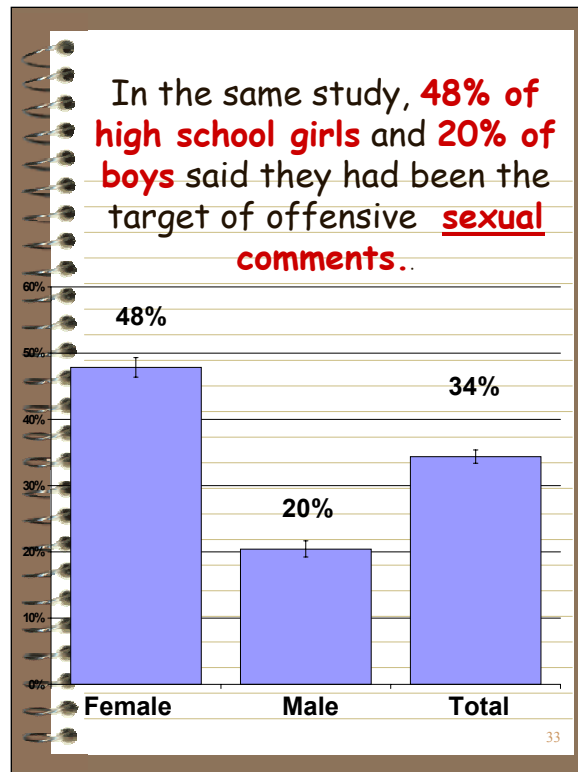
Within each ethnic group, these racially harassed students were nearly 3 times **as likely** as their non-harassed peers **to report having skipped at least one whole day of school** in the past month out of fear.
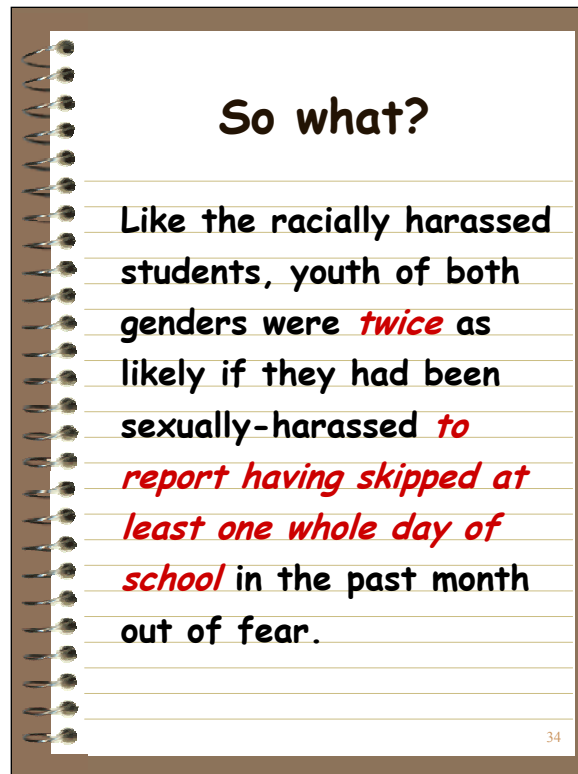
> **"I feel as if the issue of racism and sexual harassment need to be talked about more in schools because every year and every grade you go up it gets worse and worse."**
> -- anonymous student comment on the open-ended part of the survey

This is what one student said on the survey when asked if there was anything he or she wanted to add. Statistically, actually, it isn't true.Harssment is reported by a higher percentage of middle schoolers than high school students … but this student obviously experienced and observed increasing harassment over time.

In the same study, **48% of high school girls** and **20% of boys** said they had been the target of offensive **sexual comments.**.

48%

34%
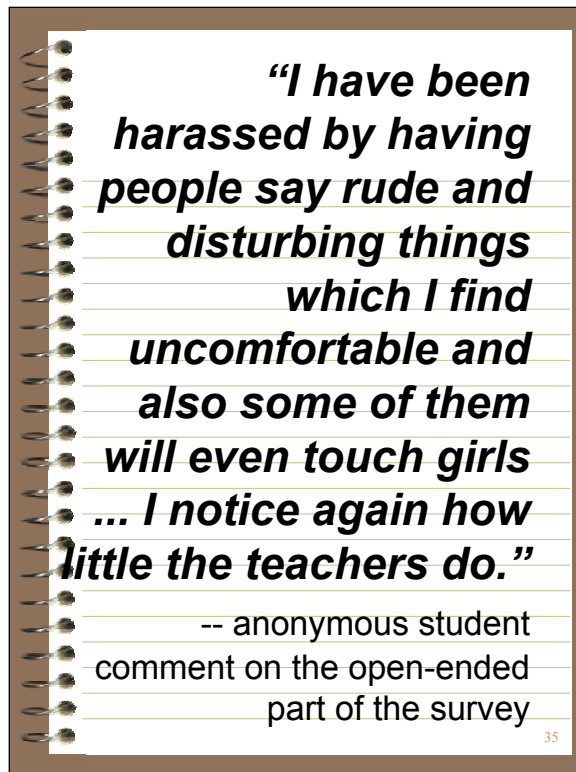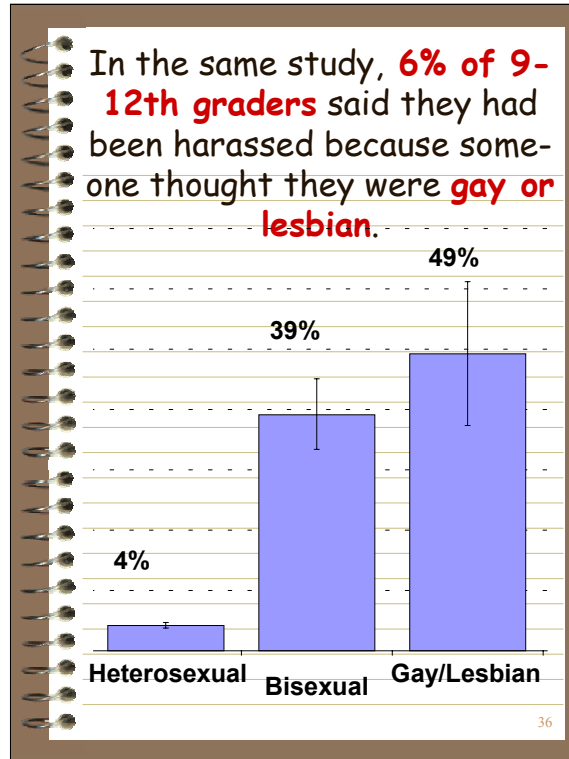
20%

Female   Male   Total

Like race-based harassment, this chart shows that gender-based harassment is everybody's problem. Half the girls, but *also* 1 out of every 5 boys, said they had been on the receiving end of this form of bullying.

So what?

Like the racially harassed students, youth of both genders were *twice* as likely if they had been sexually-harassed *to report having skipped at least one whole day of school* in the past month out of fear.

Like students who have been racially harassed, these teens who have experienced *gender-based* harassment had about double the likelihood of **having skipped at least one day of school** in the past month out of fear, compared with their non-harassed peers.

"I have been harassed by having people say rude and disturbing things which I find uncomfortable and also some of them will even touch girls ... I notice again how little the teachers do."

-- anonymous student comment on the open-ended part of the survey

Another disturbing student comment ...

In the same study, **6% of 9-12th graders** said they had been harassed because some-one thought they were **gay or lesbian**.

49%

39%

4%

Heterosexual

Bisexual

Gay/Lesbian

36

This chart shows that orientation-based harassment is not as common as race or gender-based harassment. Overall, 6% of students report experiencing this form of harassment or violence. Still, that represents 60 students in a typical 1,000-person student-body.

The bars show the ***percent*** of young people who report experiencing orientation-based harassment or violence. *More than 1 in 3 bisexual teens, almost half of gay or lesbian teens and 1 in 20 straight teens said they had been attacked for being perceived as gay.*

Sexual Orientation of Students Reporting Orientation-Based Harassment

Gay/Lesbian 7%

Bisexual 23%
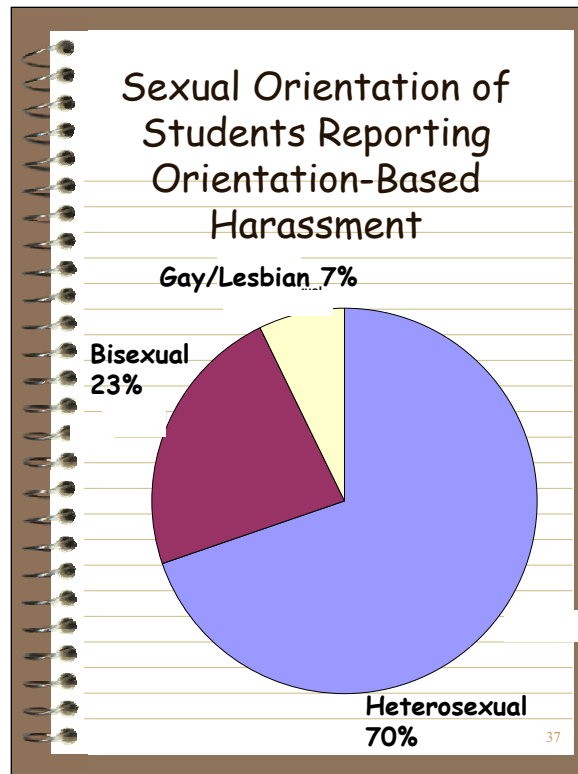
Heterosexual 70%

But that comparison is deceptive. So look at this next pie chart. There are so many more heterosexual teens to *begin* with that even though a lower *percentage* of them get gay-bashed at school 7 out of 10 students who say they have been harassed in this way are actually straight.
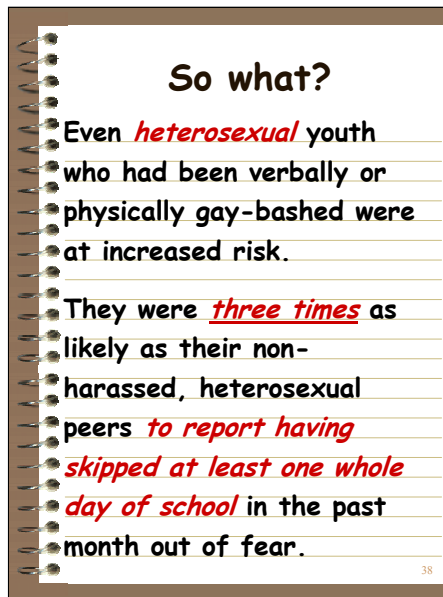
In other words, just as with racial and sexual bullying, ***every child is at risk of being ostracized with anti-gay slurs.***

If a boy is:
"too" quiet,
"too" interested in the arts,
"too" likely to walk away from a fight, or
"too" academically successful, he may be branded a "faggot."

If a girl is:
"too" athletically inclined,
"too" assertive,
"too" likely to walk away from a boy's come-on, or
"too" academically successful, she may be presumed to be a "dyke."

So what?

Even *heterosexual* youth who had been verbally or physically gay-bashed were at increased risk.

They were *three times* as likely as their non-harassed, heterosexual peers *to report having skipped at least one whole day of school* in the past month out of fear.

38

Malicious harassment is devastating, no matter which child is on the receiving end.

Hand out *"Safety and well-being of youth being harassed based on race/ethnicity, gender, or perceived sexual orientation, Seattle Teen Health Survey, 1999."* **You will find it on page 61 of the Resource Guide** or in the white handout section of your Trainers Manual.
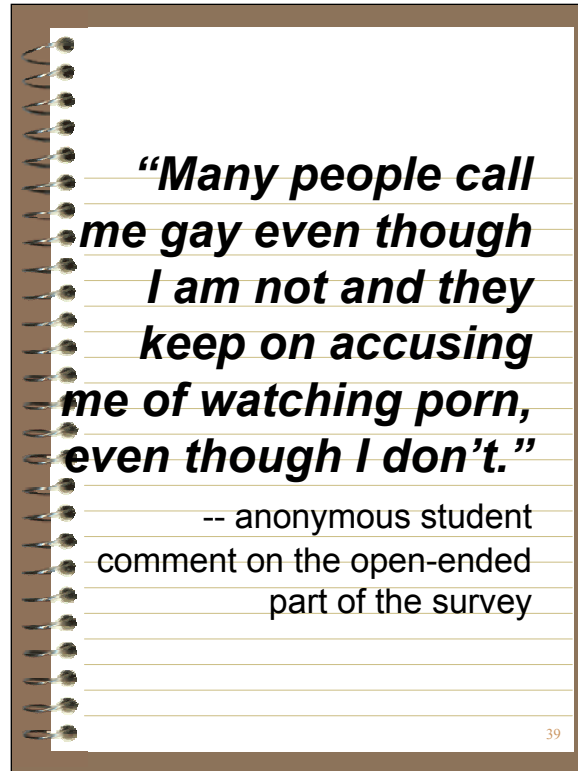
This chart (the handout) has 6 columns. The first two compare people who experienced race-based bullying or violence to those who didn't. The second two compares those who experienced gender-based bullying (that is, sexual harassment) to those who didn't. The third pair of columns compare students who experienced sexual orientation-based harassment or violence to those who didn't. We don't include them on a single chart to encourage your comparing them to one another. They are all uniquely awful. They are on a single chart simply to show how harmful they all are.

Every pair of numbers with an asterisk represents a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Look at the fourth line of the chart. It shows how many students say they **feel unsafe at school some most, or all of the time**. You'll notice that racially harassed youth are 3 times as likely as non-harassed peers to say they feel unsafe at school (9% vs. 3% of non-harassed peers). Those who have experienced gender-based harassment are twice as likely as their non-harassed peers to feel afraid (8 vs. 4%). And those who've been harassed for being perceived to be gay are three times as likely as their peers to feel scared at school (15 vs. 5%).
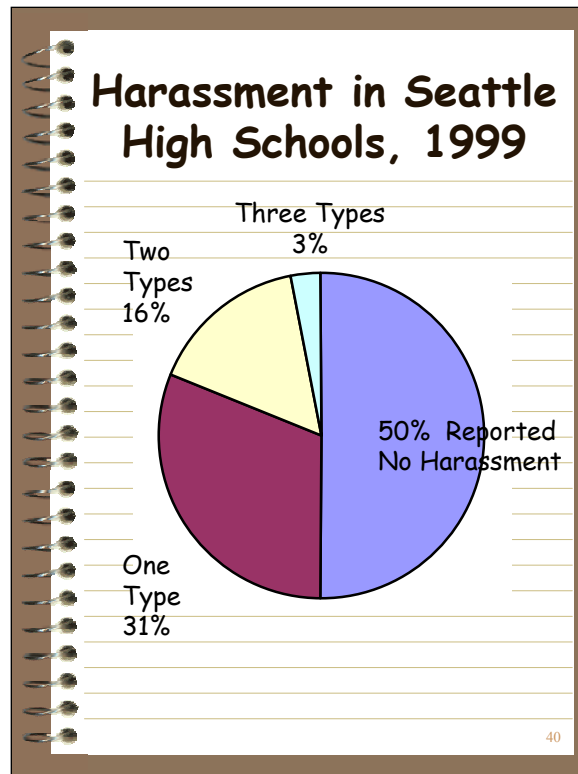
Look at **heavy drug use** -- the first line in the last section. (Walk through it)

And look at **suicide attempts that require medical treatment** -- the last line on the chart. (Walk through it)
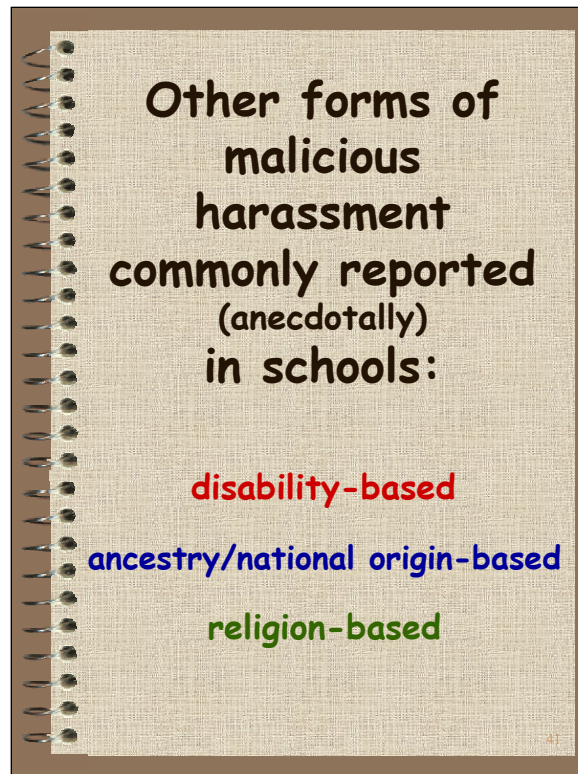
> **"Many people call me gay even though I am not and they keep on accusing me of watching porn, even though I don't."**
>
> -- anonymous student comment on the open-ended part of the survey

One last disturbing comment from a high school student.

Harassment in Seattle High Schools, 1999

Three Types 3%

Two Types 16%

One Type 31%

50% Reported No Harassment

40

Altogether, half of high school students said they'd been harassed or attacked in at least one way.

And many students (19% or nearly 1 in 5) had been harassed on multiple bases (for their race *and* their gender or their ethnicity *and* because someone thought they were gay, for example).

Not surprisingly, the more forms of bias-based harassment they reported experiencing, the more likely they were to miss school out of fear, to carry a weapon and to engage in heavy drug use and other self-endangering behavior.

Other forms of malicious harassment commonly reported (anecdotally) in schools:

disability-based

ancestry/national origin-based

religion-based

… which brings us to the matter of *other* forms of bias-based harassment. We don't have data on these, but those of us who spend time in schools know from our own experience that there's a lot of …

• **disability-based bullying** (especially vulnerable: students with developmental disabilities and with cerebral palsy and other visible disabilities; also bullied as disabled, even if they aren't, may be low-income children and others who do not wear clothes like everyone else's. What makes this "disability-based harassment" is the choice of slur, which may or may not be based on actual or perceived disability.)

• **ancestry/national origin-based bullying** (especially vulnerable: children of middle-eastern descent, newcomers to the U.S. and other bilingual children)

• **religion-based bullying** (especially vulnerable: Muslims, Jews and conservative Christians; any student may be attacked for his or her spiritual beliefs and practices, or for praying or not praying at school -- depending upon the bully's bias)

QUIZ:

"Kids are just mean and there's nothing we can do about it."

True or False?
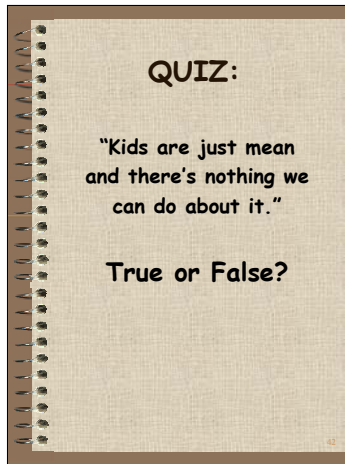
Kids are <u>not</u> all mean; that's a classic example of a stereotype. And as for the culture of meanness, of course there are things we can do about it!! *We must stop accepting prejudice and violence as normal and unyielding.*

The attitudes that lead to malicious harassment do not necessarily ***originate*** at school. But that doesn't absolve schools of responsibility. Of course, movies, television and popular music all contribute to our values, as well. Not to mention families and, for some, faith communities. But between the ages of 5 and 18, children spend an average of 12,000 hours in the classroom … more hours than in *any other single activity* except TV and sleeping. So when studies show that over 80% of hate crimes are committed by young men under age 23, one has to wonder what occasions of silence at school allowed their prejudices to fester.

Besides, if children weren't born with genetic potential for altruism, the human race would have died off long ago. When grown-ups expect the best from them, children and teens are quite capable of giving it.

Some educators are *afraid* to address students' prejudices, for fear that they were learned at home and that, consequently, challenging them means challenging their families' values. That is not always true. ***Many parents are absolutely appalled to discover the attitudes their children are learning, not from them but from peers and pop culture. And these parents very much appreciate the schools' support for values such as compassion and courtesy.***

> **What can we do about it?**

There are 3 ways to address the question "What can we do about anti-gay harassment in schools?" ***The quickest*** is to **use Transparency 44** (that is: give the audience the Safe Schools Coalition's Recommendations). That can be done in **5 minutes**, but is probably the least effective alternative, because it allows for no interaction to speak of.

Better, if you have **10-20 minutes**, is to use ***Transparency 43*** for a group brainstorm. Prompt the group with questions:

*What would you like a **teacher** to do when he or she **sees** bullying or harassment or violence?*

*What would you like a **teacher** to do to **prevent** these kinds of incidents?*

*What would you like a **principal** to do in **response** to a harassment incident?*

*What would you like a **principal** to do to **prevent** these kinds of incidents?*

*What can a school **counselor** or nurse do?*

*What can a school **secretary** or **custodian** do?*

*What can a **bus driver** do?*

*What can a **coach** do?*

*What can a **student** do when he/she is the **target** of anti-gay harassment?*

*What can a **student** do when he/she **sees** anti-gay harassment?*

*What can a **student group** do (a human rights or natural helper-type group, a student government)?*

*What can a **parent** do if his/her child is being harassed?*
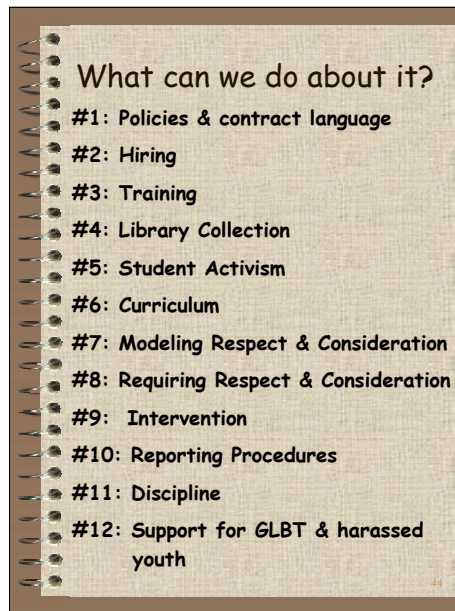
*What can a **parent** do about prevention?*

*What can any **citizen** or voter do?*

*What would you like your school **board** and **superintendent** to do?*

Best is to allow ***25-40 minutes***. The most interactive plan (and therefore the most likely plan to effect change) is to divide the group into small groups and assign each group one of these questions(above) to consider and report back on. If, for instance you had 30 minutes and five small groups, you could give groups 5 minutes to come up with 5-10 good answers to their question and 5 minutes per group to report back.

Hand out or refer to the appropriate Guide pages (p 5-18) from the Safe Schools Resource Guide.

What can we do about it?

#1: Policies & contract language

#2: Hiring

#3: Training

#4: Library Collection

#5: Student Activism

#6: Curriculum

#7: Modeling Respect & Consideration

#8: Requiring Respect & Consideration

#9: Intervention

#10: Reporting Procedures

#11: Discipline

#12: Support for GLBT & harassed youth

#1: Establish explicitly/ protective/inclusive policies and collective bargaining agreements. If you are   not in a position to *make* policy, you are in a position to lobby those who do.

#2: Search for, hire and retain a diverse staff. If you don't hire, talk with those who do.

#3: Provide staff development. If you don't hire trainers, someone in your district does. And students   and parents can ask to make presentations to staff.

#4: Ensure that the library collection includes works which portray diverse individuals and families.

#5: Support student-led human rights groups and peer education projects. Youth hear other youth.

#6: Ensure that the curriculum teaches about prejudice, dispels stereotypes about sexual minority   people and promotes courteous, kind treatment of <u>all</u> people.

#7: Model respect and consideration for everyone.

#8: Require respect and consideration for everyone. Require it of staff, if you are a principal. Require   it of children, if you are a parent or you work in a school. Tell friends when they are   being mean, no matter who you are.

#9: Intervene swiftly and firmly in anti-gay harassment, as in any malicious harassment. Explain that   you want the behavior to stop and go the next step: educate   students on the spot, re: *why* the behavior is wrong.

#10: Make certain that students and employees know *how* to report an incident; make it safe to do so   and take reports seriously.
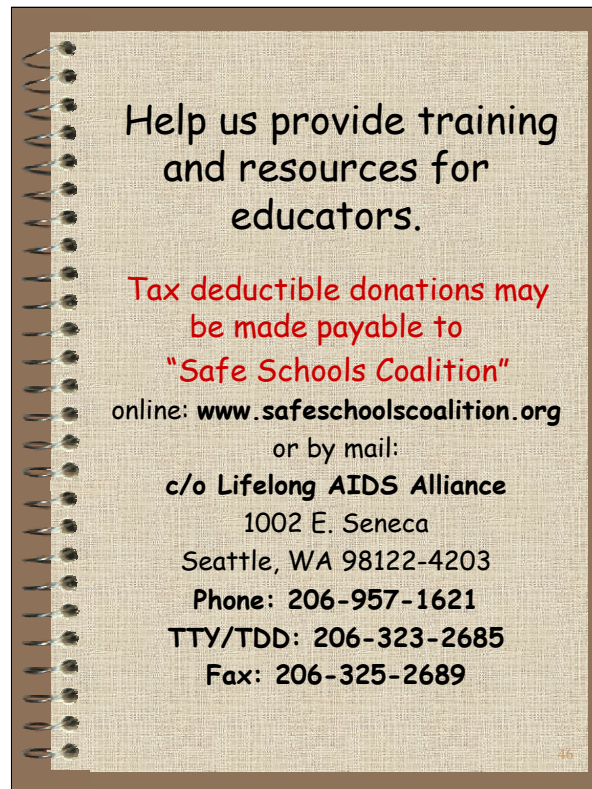
#11: Educate and discipline the offenders, and monitor and punish retaliation.

#12: Address the needs of the targeted person -- and gay, lesbian and bisexual students in general --   for safety and for support. Hang flyers identifying staff who want to be supportive   resource people, publicize the counselors' & nurse's willingness to address the issue   of sexual orientation, provide support groups for GLBT and questioning youth and for   students with GLBT parents and friends.

Safe Schools Coalition:

www.safeschoolscoalition.org

crises: 1-888-307-9275
info: 206-632-0662 ext. 49

intervention@safeschoolscoalition.org
membership@safeschoolscoalition.org
publications@safeschoolscoalition.org
training@safeschoolscoalition.org
questions@safeschoolscoalition.org

Invite people to take a moment to jot down one or more of these contact options or provide the transparency as a *handout.*

Help us provide training and resources for educators.

Tax deductible donations may be made payable to "Safe Schools Coalition"

online: www.safeschoolscoalition.org

or by mail:

c/o Lifelong AIDS Alliance

1002 E. Seneca

Seattle, WA 98122-4203

Phone: 206-957-1621

TTY/TDD: 206-323-2685

Fax: 206-325-2689

Invite people to donate on the spot (pass a hat, a bag, a basket)

or to mail donations or call them in or donate online -- credit cards are very welcome

or to donate time and energy to personal action … see the next transparency.
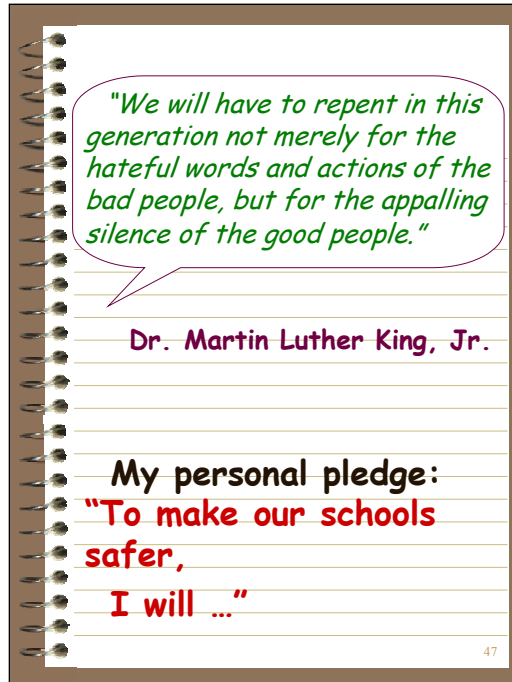
Ask people to jot down whatever might be their own personal next step, even if, for someone else it might be a baby step. If they look stuck, give them a few ideas to get them started. Include some steps at differing levels of activism ... for instance:

I will read a book. (How about *Beyond Acceptance*?)

I will take a school board member out for coffee and share the Safe Schools Report.

I will not laugh the next time I hear an anti-gay joke.

I will buy $30 worth of gay-positive books for our school library.

I will teach a lesson about prejudice and I will say the "G" word aloud in that lesson at least once.

I will start a human rights group at my school to educate other kids about prejudice.

I will stop using the term "sissy."

I will come out to my principal about my lesbian grandmother.

I will write an article about sexual minorities for the (school newspaper, PTSA newsletter, teachers' union newsletter, teachers' mailboxes)

Explain that you have copies of the Safe Schools Resource Guide, which offers strategies as well as tools and allies, for anyone who would like one.

And HAND OUT the <u>Volunteers Needed</u> page, inviting people to volunteer for the Safe Schools Coalition and the <u>Evaluation Form</u>.