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## Occupational Therapy Interventions to Prevent Bullying

Tara Collins<sup>1</sup>, Iris Leigh<sup>2</sup>, Alexander Lopez<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Touro College, Bay Shore, NY, USA, <sup>2</sup>Habilitation Assistance Corporation, Pocasset, USA

**Introduction:** Occupational therapists work with youth from diverse populations and age ranges. Our expertise can promote interventions to teach resiliency and self-advocacy. These are key elements for bullying prevention.

**Objectives:** Session participants will be able to understand:

1. Complexities of bullying with persons from diverse populations
2. Unique skills of occupational therapists to prevent bullying
3. How to design interventions to increase resiliency

**Rationale:** Bullying affects youth from all cultures and socioeconomic populations. Of special concern are youth from diverse populations, those with disabilities, from minorities, and/or identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT). They are more likely to be bullied than their peers and do not always access supports.

**Approach:** Occupational therapists' awareness of students' struggles lead us to develop interventions that foster self-expression, connectedness to school and peers, and resiliency. Occupation-based services encourage team building in a trusting environment. OTs collaborate with parents, teachers, and support personnel to provide input into safe and healthy school practices.

**Practice Implications:** Occupational therapists have the expertise to become involved with school safety taskforces and develop policies and interventions to promote inclusion of all children in daily activities. By demonstrating inclusive practices, we can help students successfully transition from school to community services.

**Conclusion:** Occupational therapists have a unique role with children of all ages and from diverse populations. We foster occupational performances, social justice, empathy building, and resiliency to prevent bullying and to help youth develop stronger self-advocacy skills to carry them into their adult lives.