



The Bully's Face: Using Art to Understand Bullying in Gifted Children



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Article Reference



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The Goals for this session

- ▶ Article in *Gifted Child Today*, December, 2018.
 - ▶ Review themes from the literature on bullying and the gifted
 - ▶ New Knowledge from the literature
 - ▶ Rage, Wisdom, and the Gifted Child
 - ▶ Archetypes, Image, and Metaphor
 - ▶ Procedures of “The Bully’s Face” activity
 - ▶ An opportunity for you to experience the activity for yourself
- [You will want to gather colored paper and/or magazines and a glue stick.]



Definition of a Bully

A bully is a person who uses any approach at his or her disposal including, but not limited to, intimidation (physical, emotional, verbal), positional authority, relational authority, or societal authority to create limiting effects on another's behaviors, thoughts, or feelings. (Cross, 2001a)

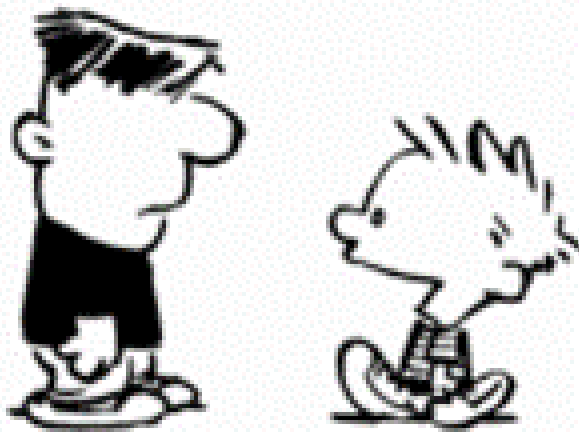
Bullying and Gifted

- ▶ Gifted are not more or less likely to be victimized
- ▶ Gifted individuals' experience may be more complex
- ▶ Gifted can be bullies or victims
- ▶ Bullying tends to be based on differences
 - ▶ Special education students more often
 - ▶ Students gifted in the arts
 - ▶ Androgynous or LGBT+ students
 - ▶ Socially challenged students
 - ▶ Emotionally sensitive students

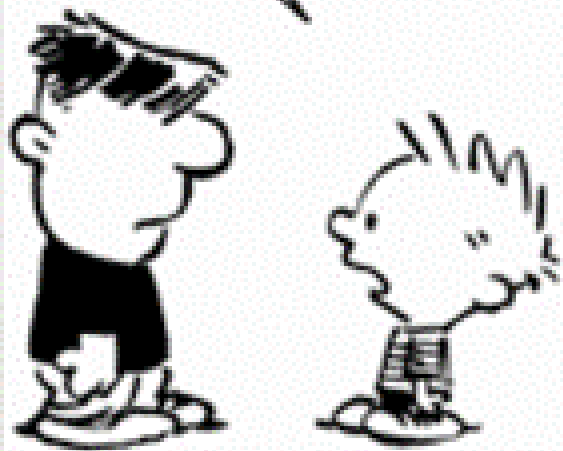
Bullying behaviors based on established gifted traits

- ▶ High degree of empathy
- ▶ Ability to notice discrepancies
- ▶ Attacking small errors
- ▶ Advanced verbal ability and sophisticated verbal humor

MOE, I WAS WONDERING
SOMETHING.



ARE YOUR MALADJUSTED
ANTISOCIAL TENDENCIES
THE PRODUCT OF YOUR
BERSERK PITUITARY GLAND?



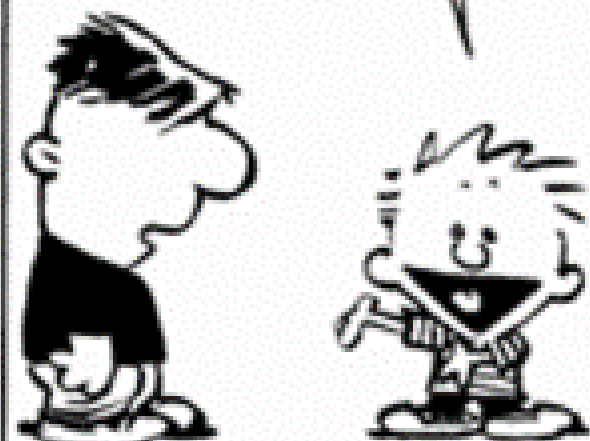
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WTFESN

What?

ISN'T HE GREAT,
FOLKS? LET'S
GIVE HIM A
BIG HAND!



1-30

Bullying behaviors based on established gifted traits

- ▶ High degree of empathy
- ▶ Ability to notice discrepancies
- ▶ Attacking small errors
- ▶ Advanced verbal ability and sophisticated verbal humor
- ▶ Know-it-all attitude
- ▶ Impulsivity
- ▶ Tendency to want to dominate others
- ▶ Intuitive awareness of the proximity and acuity of the teacher

Rage, Wisdom, and the Gifted Child

“I am destructive, absent minded. I feel misunderstood.” ~ Randy, writing as a bully

- ▶ Rage in gifted students (Cross, 2001b)
- ▶ The goals of gifted education (Freeman, 1998) to instill wisdom and compassion

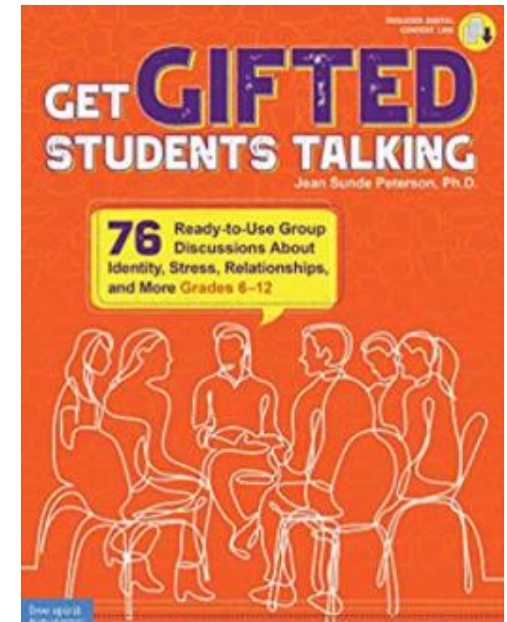
Bullying behaviors I observed

- ▶ The Seat Saving Game
- ▶ The Hand Game
- ▶ The Scapegoat

Archetypes, Image, and Metaphor

“The arts are largely forms that generate emotion” (Eisner, 2008, p. 3).

- ▶ Create a simple image of the archetypal Bully and Victim, and use the image as the discussion focus
- ▶ Group dialogue discussions are based in Jean Peterson’s *Get Gifted Students Talking* (2018)
 - ▶ Share feelings
 - ▶ Introspection
 - ▶ No need to “fix”
 - ▶ Providing compassionate presence and a safe environment



“I sometimes feel like I am the strongest and best person, but other times I feel left out and lonely. I want people to know I exist and it seems like the only way to get their attention is to make them cry” ~Julie, writing as a bully

“He deceived people. He helps to make everyone feel good and then turns around and stabs them in the back. He feels misunderstood because everyone knows what he has done in the past.”

~Annette, writing as a bully

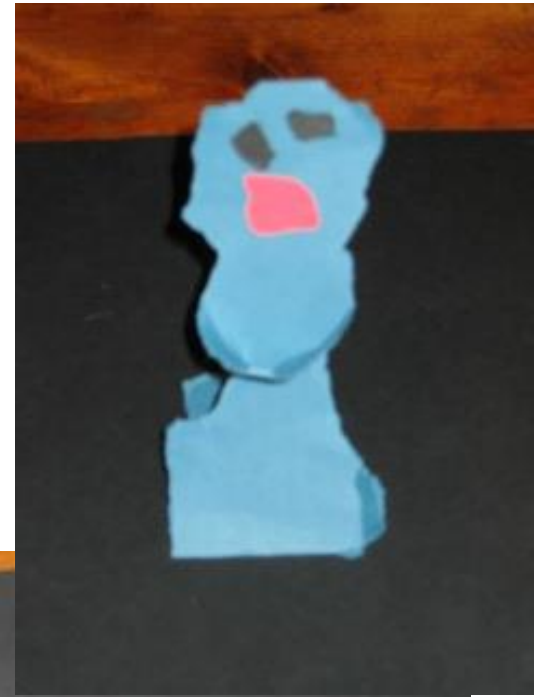


“He is quiet, mean to others, cries because of feelings that were hurt, scared, frightened, hurt, ashamed, unliked, feels like no one likes him.”

~Mary, writing as a victim.

“I’m nice, I try hard, find the good things about something. I try my hardest, but someone always tells me that it’s wrong, or it should be better.”

~Susan (who used her own name) writing as a victim.



The activity: Using art to give voice to the bully and victim

- ▶ Discussion about bullying in the sixth grade.
- ▶ The Bully: Meditate on their inner feelings and motivations (stepping into the experience of the other – “climb into his skin and walk around in it,” Atticus Finch, *To Kill A Mockingbird*).
 - ▶ On half the paper create them from torn paper and glue (no scissors).
 - ▶ Journal in first person, name them, give them a voice.
- ▶ The Victim: Meditate on their inner feelings and motivations.
 - ▶ On the other half of the paper create them from torn paper and glue.
 - ▶ Journal in first person, name them, give them a voice.

In retrospect, I think including a meditation and artwork on the Bystander might give insight, too.

Feeding back and dialogue – The Bully

- ▶ Four Bully images are placed on the table
- ▶ The group feeds back first, one artist at a time – what they see, reminds them of, what that bully might say, how the bully might feel
- ▶ The artist then shares their bully's words
- ▶ We continue this way until every image/artist has been “fed back”
- ▶ The facilitator should:
 - Establish safety;
 - Note Red Flags;
 - Note themes and recurring ideas.



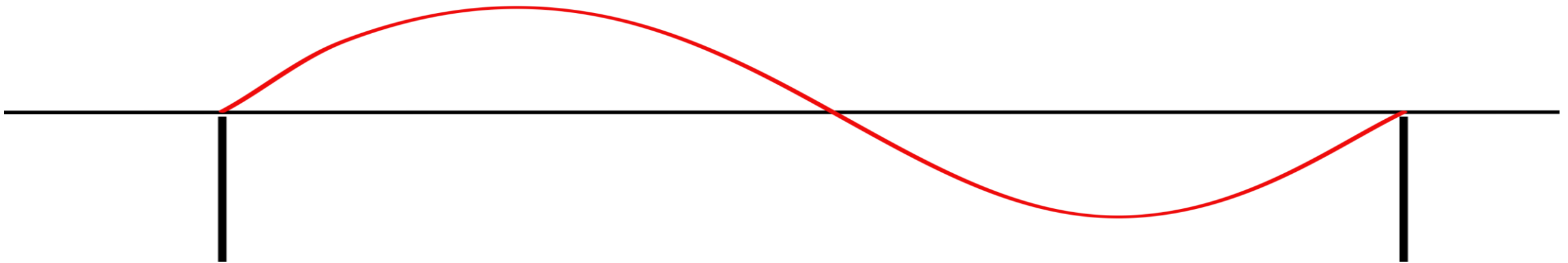
Feeding back and dialogue – The Victim

- ▶ Same process
- ▶ Four Victim images are placed on the table
- ▶ The group feeds back first, one artist at a time – what they see, reminds them of, what that victim might say, how the victim might feel
- ▶ The artist then shares their victim's words
- ▶ We continue this way until every image/artist has been “fed back”
- ▶ The facilitator should:
 - Establish safety;
 - Note Red Flags;
 - Note themes and recurring ideas.



Feeding back and dialogue: What I learned

- ▶ In my group, the surprise was that many of the students identified with the bully.
- ▶ The bully was once a victim who “had enough.”
- ▶ We used this to talk about the shape/cycle of this behavior.



Feeding back and dialogue: What I learned

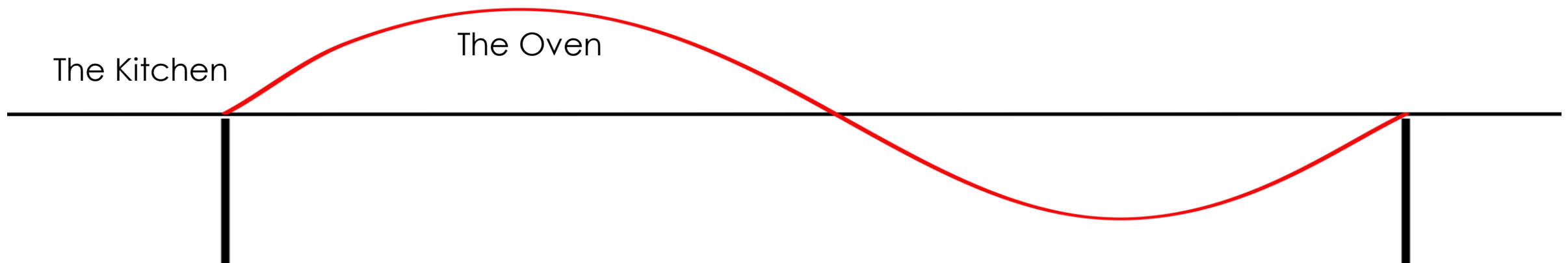
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The Kitchen



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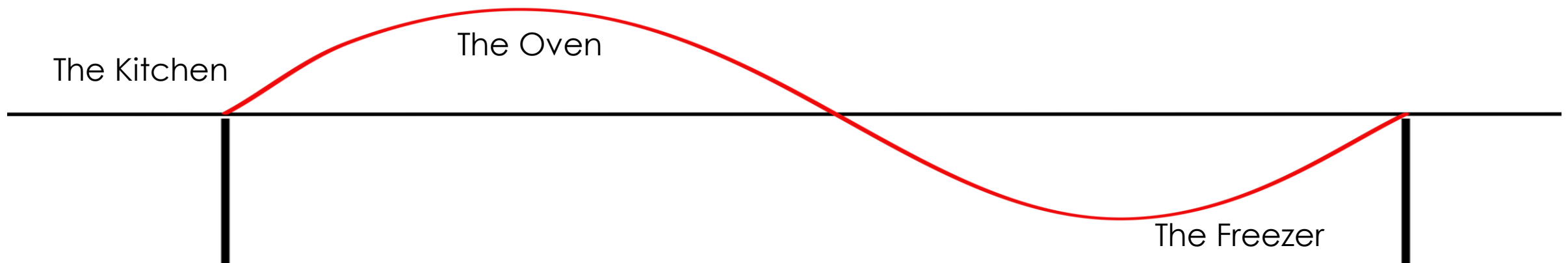


Table 1: Bullying Causes and Effects

These things hurt and cause anger / confrontation:

Name calling, insults, mocking, pushing, hitting, body threats, broken promises, something taken the wrong way, bragging, rumors, taking things, friendship issues like exclusion, shunning, backstabbing, lying, secrets

| Name of this stage | Description of this stage | Anger management techniques for this stage |
|--------------------|---|--|
| The Kitchen | Everything is fine, just going about your business. If you are stressed or bothered by something, your metabolism will be raised to begin with, and make your reaction to difficult events even stronger! | Do yoga, karate, boxing Listen to music Get plenty of sleep Sports Dancing Set a personal goal of managing your anger Meditation Paint, draw, color Write in a journal/diary |
| The Oven | Something hurts you and causes you to get angry or have a confrontation. It's hot in here! | Take 10 deep breaths, Think about something you like Use a stress ball Take a ten minute rest/break Squeeze your fists |
| The Freezer | After the confrontation, you feel a bit drained, cold. | Make a rubric to see how you handled your 'blow up' Think about good things that make you happy or laugh Playing a drum Play with your pets Do some of your favorite things Take a long bath Talk to a friend Play a game |



First-hand experience

There is a Padlet page where you can upload a picture and narrative of your bully and victim.

You can see other images posted by NAGC participants, look for similarities and themes, and comment.

Let's try it!

- ▶ Gather colored paper and/or old magazines and a glue stick.
- ▶ Choose the role you think you understand the most – Bully or Victim.
- ▶ Meditate for at least a minute in silence to see into that person's motivations, inner dialogue, purpose for their role in the bullying cycle. Use your own experience in any capacity for insight.
- ▶ Use your glue and torn paper or magazine images (no scissors) to create that person – a mini-Bully or mini-Victim.
- ▶ Jot down a first-person narrative of their thoughts and feelings.
- ▶ Pause this video while you work.

Next ...

- ▶ When you are ready, move to the other role.
- ▶ Meditate for at least a minute in silence to see into that person's motivations, inner dialogue, purpose for their role in the bullying cycle. Again, use your own experience in any capacity for insight.
- ▶ Use your glue and torn paper or magazines (no scissors) to create that person – a mini-Bully or mini-Victim.
- ▶ Jot down a first-person narrative of their thoughts and feelings.
- ▶ Pause this video while you work.

The Bystander

Add your pictures and narratives
to the corresponding Padlet Wall



https://padlet.com/jgroman/NAGC2020_BullyVictim

Let's "read" an image

Go to the Padlet and choose an image. Consider.

- ▶ This image makes me think of _____.
- ▶ This image reminds me of _____.
- ▶ To me this image _____.
- ▶ This image makes me feel _____ because _____.
- ▶ I think this Bully/Victim is saying _____.
- ▶ I think this Bully/Victim is feeling _____.

Comment on any images that are meaningful to you.

From here ...

Follow your intuition ... you could ...

Have students brainstorm ways to cope with each stage of a stressful situation.

Talk about emotional and self regulation (Richard Cash's book *Self Regulation*).

Have students brainstorm ways to be empowered as The Bystander and The Victim.

Research ways other schools have dealt with bullying (Buddy Benches).

Connect this activity to cyber-bullying.



**Got any
questions?**

No?

GOOD!

References/Resources

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