

Wholly Healthy

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Happy Valentine's Day

Health Office

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Wellness Council

The Student Wellness Club is raising awareness of the dangers of sun exposure and **indoor tanning!** We're presenting the facts re: skin cancer and the direct correlation of melanoma with indoor tanning. We hope to encourage the Juniors & Seniors to sign a "**No Tanning Pledge**" for the Prom. If enough girls pledge, MAHS will go into a drawing sponsored by The Melanoma Foundation for a prize of \$500-\$1000 to go toward prom expenses!

FEBRUARY is.....
RELATIONSHIP
AWARENESS
MONTH
Healthy and Unhealthy

GIRLS BULLYING GIRLS (*Relational aggression*)

Many of you may have read the column by Kevin Cullen in the Boston Sunday Globe this past week; **The untouchable Mean Girls**. For those of you who did not, Kevin Cullen's column told the story of Phoebe Prince, a beautiful 15 yr. old girl who had moved from Ireland to western Massachusetts last fall. Phoebe was a freshman, at an age where the most important things in life are friends, wearing the right clothes and fitting in. After briefly dating a senior on the football team, Phoebe became the target of the Mean Girls who felt she needed to learn her place.

What followed was relentless name-calling, stalking and intimidation. On January 14th, while Phoebe was walking home from school, one of the Mean Girls drove by her, and threw insults with an energy drink can at her.

Phoebe continued walking home, into her house, into a closet and hung herself. Her 12 yr. old sister found her.

The town's Superintendent has stated that the bullying included disagreements at school over romances but apparently continued with taunting text messages and harassing postings on Facebook. This has been termed **cyberbullying**. This type of bullying is easier because the bully never faces the victim, it's faster because in one click an instant message can spread through an entire school, and it can be incessant. It exists in all schools, public and private, coed and single-sex.

What is most disturbing is the fact that these girls later went on Facebook, mocked her death, expressed no remorse and denied any wrong doing. At this time, it is unclear what the punishment will be for these girls.

I will take one Theology class per grade (this week and next) to read this column. I will discuss that Law Enforcement is creating laws for prosecution in cases of bullying, in particular cyberbullying. I will emphasize that a message sent or posted can never be taken back but can be retrieved for evidence, and that there will be severe consequences if evidence provides proof of bullying. I hope to engage the girls in a candid discussion about the motivation behind bullying and the devastating consequences it can have.

As a parent (and your daughter's school nurse), my sadness, rage and frustration is palpable. I will work diligently toward ending this malignant disease of bullying.

Bullying

A shake of the head, a roll of the eyes

The rumors-the lies

They no longer play on your pride

But rip you up inside

That is what girls do

This is what they say

It is like this everyday

The mothers reply

But that is a lie

Walking in the hall

Taking in it all

All alone-no one home

Kids shouting, kids staring

All this torture I'm bearing

No one caring

Anonymous, Age 12

Reasons people bully:

- They feel threatened by another individual.
- They are socially insecure.
- They are unhappy with themselves
- They have been the victim of bullying.
- They don't understand or accept diversity

Reasons people are bullied

- Being different
- Appearance
- Intelligence
- Ethnic or racial background
- Athletic ability, family life

Bullying occurs when one person or a group of people repeatedly hurts someone else. There are many types of bullying, and for **young women**, bullying usually involves more teasing than hitting.

Bullying can be:

- Leaving someone out of a group on purpose, such as a clique.
- Ignoring someone— giving them the “silent treatment.”
- Using the Internet, instant messaging, My Space / Face Book to hurt someone (cyber-bullying).
- Rolling your eyes, making faces or bad gestures with your hands at someone.
- Making fun of someone for being “different.”
- Gossiping and/or spreading rumors.
- Using people to get something you want (such as a smart “friend” so they can do your homework.)
- Forcing someone to do something embarrassing or dangerous in order to join a group or team , also called “hazing.”

Signs that a friend or someone you love is being bullied to a point where it is affecting their life in major ways are:

Loss of appetite

Sudden drop in grades

Consistent depression

Erratic, minor violent attitude when dealing w/ stress

Loss of social activity

Abuse of alcohol/ drugs

Fights, inappropriate behavior in school setting.

Unfortunately, bullying is more common than we would like to think. People who have been repeatedly teased or bullied can carry the emotional scars for life.

Bullying will not be tolerated at MAHS. If you are concerned that a student at MAHS is being bullied or is bullying, please bring this to the attention of the guidance department or the school nurse and the administration.