

Bullying in the LGBT Community



**Dasha Evans, Senior
College of Liberal and Applied Arts
School of Social Work**

Dr. Kim Rich-Rice, Advisor



The Problem...

Bullying in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community is a phenomenon that has always been present. Within the past few years this problem has been more becoming in communities, schools, and the nation. In 2010, there was an increase of individuals completing suicide due to bullying. Many of the families who were affected by losing a loved one felt as though the school's did little to help prevent the incidents since much of the bullying occurred between school hours. Reports indicate that 160,000 children miss school because of the fear of being bullied. Sadly, not much had been done in the past to address this phenomenon.

Who Was Affected?

Sadly, between 30 and 40 percent teens of the LGBT community are more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers. More and more cases are developing with children as young as 13 in middle school. The growth of technology has played a role in bullying; bullying is now seen beyond the classroom and into the realms of cyberbullying.

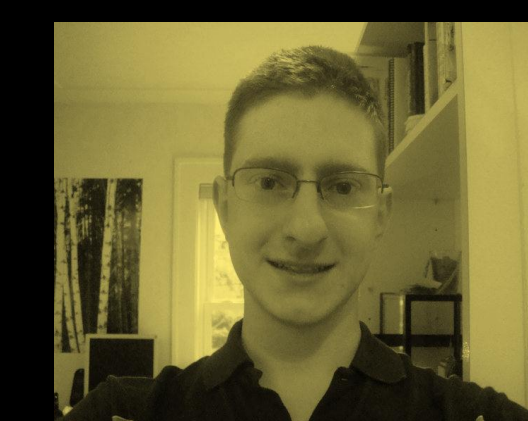
Popular stories received media coverage in 2010 with three gay males completing suicide. Tyler Clementi, 18; Seth Walsh, 13; and Asher Brown, 13 were all victims of bullying that led to their death.

- Tyler Clementi ended his life by jumping off the George Washington Bridge in September 2010. He was a student at Rutgers University where his roommate had secretly video-streamed him having sexual intercourse with another male.
- Seth Walsh was found unconscious after an attempt in trying to hang himself in his backyard in Los Angeles, CA. He lingered a week on life support before passing away in September 2010
- Asher Brown shot himself in the head with a 9mm after receiving several remarks about him being gay and his behavior in October of 2010 in Cy-Fair, TX.

"Labels are for filing. Labels are for clothing. Labels are not for people."

—Martina Navratilova

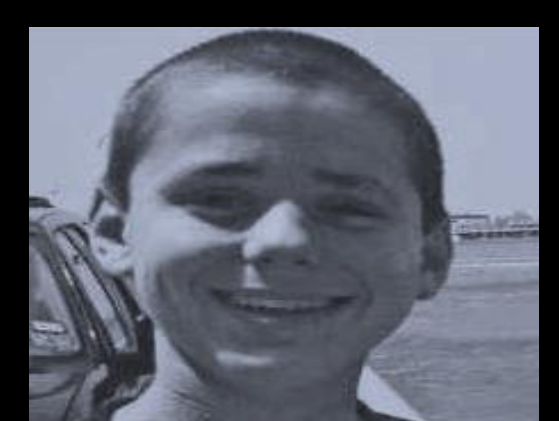
In Memory of



Tyler Clementi



Seth Walsh



Asher Brown

What is Being Done?

In March 2011, President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama hosted the first-ever White House Conference on Bullying Prevention. The President along with celebrities started a program entitled "It Gets Better Project".

For the 2012 fiscal budget, Obama designated \$132 million to combat violence and bullying in children by providing grants to state and local governments. For the schools and districts who receive designated federal funds, they would have to adopt a code of conduct that prohibits bullying and harassment, implement prevention programs, and report any data on like incidents through the state to the Department of Education.

The Roles of a Generalist Social Worker.

A generalist social worker is someone who advocates for an oppressed group and maintain professionalism by being culturally competent, diverse, unbiased, and true to the Code of Ethics. A generalist social worker may intervene with bullying in such a way by spreading and promoting awareness and diversity. The generalist social worker may intervene with this community problem on a micro, mezzo, or macro level. Advocating for the victim as well as working with the bully is an example of a generalist working on a micro level. Working with the family and schools are examples of the mezzo level; and working with the community and helping change policy is an instance of a generalist social worker intervening on a macro level.

It is important for a generalist social worker to understand corresponding theories that relate to the problem such as conflict theory, social systems theory, and ecological theory. These theories help aid with understanding the thought process of others and why the problem exists. Also, educating others about the problem as well as working with families who child was a victim are other objectives as a generalist social worker.

"Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind".

Dr. Seuss