

# Social-emotional health programs offer positive ways to deal with stress and anger



In 2011, 22.7 percent of Michigan high school students reported being bullied on school property within the previous 12 months. Bullying reported by middle school students was even higher. Many students who are bullied experience problems with stress, anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts. The total estimated economic cost of mental, emotional and behavioral disorders among youth in the United States is approximately \$247 billion per year. According to the Centers for Disease

Control and Prevention (CDC), studies have shown that bullying behavior is related to domestic violence. The cost of intimate partner violence exceeds \$5.8 billion each year, \$4.1 billion of which is for direct medical and mental health services.

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension addresses violence and bullying through its focus on social and emotional health, with the overarching goal of helping young people and adults learn to foster safe, affirming and inclusive relationships and settings that are free from violence, abuse, bullying and harassment. In 2013, MSU Extension educators taught social-emotional health classes to 3,470 Michigan residents. These community-based sessions provided participants with proven strategies to promote safe and healthy relationships.

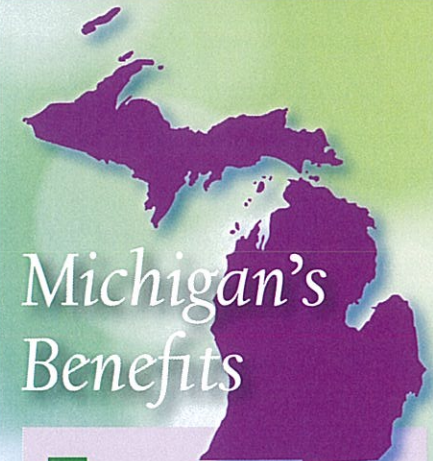
Providing young people and adults with opportunities to explore issues related to bullying and harassment has been a key element of MSU Extension's Be SAFE: Safe, Affirming and Fair Environments initiative.

- » 91 percent of Be SAFE program participants indicated that they gained a greater understanding about bullying behaviors and their effect on young people.
- » 86 percent indicated that they developed new skills for interrupting bullying behaviors and for supporting those who are targeted.

One participant commented, "I feel better equipped to intervene when I see bullying," and another stated, "I now know what to do and how to react if I see a problem."

Additionally, through participation in MSU Extension's social-emotional health programs aimed at violence prevention and anti-bullying, many participants reported:

- » Improved ability to respond in positive ways to conflict and anger.
- » Improved quality in their relationships.
- » Decreased involvement with unhealthy behaviors and relationships.
- » Improved ability to care for their social-emotional needs and the social-emotional needs of others.



The United States spends an estimated \$425 billion in direct and indirect costs of violence each year. The cost of youth violence in the United States has been estimated at \$158 billion annually. Your support of MSU Extension social-emotional programs aimed at bullying and violence prevention allows participants to learn safer and healthier ways to interact with others. This benefits community members through decreased mental, emotional, social and economic costs associated with violence in communities.

In 2013, the state invested more than \$54 million in MSU Extension and AgBioResearch. In the past three years, MSU Extension and AgBioResearch have been able to leverage every dollar invested into \$2.19 in additional funding and have generated more than \$818 million for Michigan residents, resulting in a cost/benefit ratio of 15 to 1.

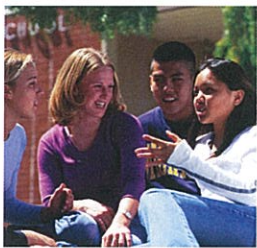




## Be SAFE: Safe, Affirming and Fair Environments

The Be SAFE initiative helps youth and adults work in partnership to create environments that are physically and emotionally safe. The overall goals of this effort are to promote social and emotional learning and development, address and reduce bullying, prevent bullying behaviors by tapping the wisdom and assets of youth and adults, and develop positive relationships with peers and adults. The cornerstone of the initiative is the Be SAFE curriculum, which is designed for use in out-of-school settings. Program options are Be SAFE curriculum workshops, half-day community workshops titled "ABCs of Bullying Prevention: Addressing Bullying in Community Settings," a series of workshops for parents and caregivers, and one-time presentations based on the curriculum.

### ABCs of Bullying Prevention: Addressing Bullying in Community Settings Workshop



This half-day workshop is designed for adults who live with, care about and work with young people, including parents, caregivers, and those who work in schools and in youth and family agencies. Program participants discuss the prevalence and types of bullying behaviors

affecting their communities. They examine bullying, bias and harassment; explore key strategies for addressing these complex issues at the personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural levels; and learn about programs and resources that can be used in community settings.

### RELAX: Alternatives to Anger Education

This interactive program includes discussion and skill-building activities to enable participants to learn what anger is and what triggers it. Participants learn techniques for calming down and destressing, the principles of problem solving, effective communication skills, and ways to forgive and let go of the past. Program options are a four-part RELAX workshop series, a four-part online program, a train-the-trainer workshop and one-time presentations based on the curriculum.

## Nurturing Families (Formerly Community Based Nurturing Parenting)



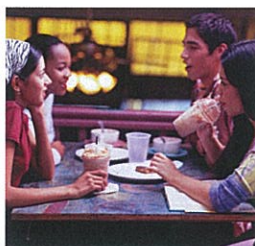
Nurturing Families is an evidence-based program for parents and caregivers to strengthen and build parenting skills that promote positive family relationships. Participants learn what nurturing is and how to be a nurturing parent. They learn to enhance positive relationships with

children, to discipline without spanking, to handle stress and anger, and to help build self-esteem. They explore child growth and development, including the brain development of children and teens. Program options are a six- to 10-part workshop series and one-time presentations based on the curriculum.

### Safe Dates

This eight- to 10-session series can take place in a school classroom as well as in a variety of other community settings. The Safe Dates program helps middle and high school-aged students develop healthy relationships through discussion of and reflection on dating scenarios and a variety of activities. Participants learn the difference between healthy and abusive dating relationships, the causes of dating abuse and its consequences, and skills to help themselves or a friend involved in an abusive dating relationship. Teens also become familiar with methods to develop healthy dating relationships, including positive communication, anger management and conflict resolution.

### Building Strong Adolescents



Assets are skills, experiences, relationships and behaviors that help youth develop into successful and contributing adults. The Building Strong Adolescents program provides parents and caregivers of young people ages 11 to 19 the tools needed to develop key assets. All lessons link

teen development with assets, specific parenting strategies for asset development and activities to practice new skills. Program options are a six- to 10-part workshop series and one-time presentations based on the curriculum, with the online program coming soon.

**“When I see people getting bullied, I make sure to tell an adult and help the situation.”**

– Middle school student involved with the Be SAFE program