media cause

No Bullying.
No Hate.

Topline Discovery Findings
August 2022 Public Meeting

MHSOAC
Mental Health Services
Oversight & Accountability Commission

Our Meeting: **Purpose + Process + Outcome**

Purpose
Share findings and work-to-date on MHSOAC anti-bullying initiative and gain insights and alignment going forward.

Process
Outline findings and facilitate discussion around Stakeholder Insights, Youth Audience Survey, and Cultural Landscape.

Outcome
Gain feedback and alignment on findings and direction as we move forward into the strategy development phase.

Agenda

2:30   **Welcome + Introductions (10 min)**

       1 / Project and Process Overview (5m)

       2 / Stakeholder Insights (15m)

3:00   **3 / Youth Audience Survey (20m)**

3:20   **Discussion of Parts 1-3 (20m)**

       4 / Cultural Landscape (20m-30m)

3:30 //   **Discussion of Part 4 / Public**
3:40   **Comment (30m)**

Project + Process Overview

Project Overview

Bullying is an issue that affects not only young people, but their families, educators, and wider networks.

Our campaign and resources will create connections and safe spaces for entire communities to come together around solutions to this real, prevalent, and pressing area to create positive change and healthy environments.

"

Our work together will focus on reaching, connecting, and serving young people of diverse backgrounds—and beyond—who have experienced hate or bullying.

Guided by the voices of young people, community leaders, and experts, we'll aim to create a safe, and meaningful space for youth and allies to act in solidarity to create and promote well-being for themselves and their peers.

Process Overview

Completed

Stakeholder Interviews
Youth survey with 200+ youth
Cultural Landscape Analysis

What's Next

Focus Groups + 1:1 Interviews
with Youth, Parents and
Educators
Ongoing YAK Leadership +
Input

Campaign Strategy
Brand Development
Platform Selection + Setup
Social Media + Influencer Strategy

Where We Are

We've conducted the initial phases of our Discovery research, having spoken to key stakeholders, conducted a survey with 200+ youth across California, and delved deeper into our own analysis of what's happening with bullying dynamics and young people today.

Where We're Going

Our next step in this process is to speak with parents, educators, and youth themselves in focus groups and 1:1 interviews.

These will play a pivotal role in ensuring our campaign and digital solution are meeting the real needs of young people, and supporting them in ways that are relevant and authentic to them.

After which, we will begin the development phase where we define the campaign and brand strategy and build out the execution/production plan.

Stakeholder Insights

As we build this out, stakeholders offered some important
must-haves:

- **Youth-created + Youth-led**

- **Age Specific + Appropriate**

- **Anonymous + Safe**

- **Immediate + Easy**

Youth-created + Youth-led

Put Young People at the Center
- Facilitate peer-to-peer discussions
- Videos, quotes, and testimonials of people their age
- Partner with influencers that youth look up to
  - e.g. Tik Tok and Instagram influencers
  - They can drive awareness to the platform

Content Creation
- Have them create their own content (rather than digesting a bunch of material)
- Educational Hub: Youth create their own accounts, save content they like, receive badges for things they learn

Empowering Youth to Speak Up + Take Action
- Programs that have been the most successful are those that train young people on how to use their voice in the most effective way (go before school supervisors or administrators)
- Perhaps direct messaging to bystanders who are silent to change social norms
- Grassroots mobilization of local communities will also be important

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- **Youth-created + Youth-led**

- **Age Specific + Appropriate**

- **Anonymous + Safe**

- **Immediate + Easy**

Age Appropriate

For the younger kids (5-13) we should filter resources through parents and educators
- School districts can provide fliers to parents
- Educator training + workshops
- Positive Parenting Program
- Be mindful about stigmas and cultural barriers within families

Anonymous + Safe

- Many seek anonymous feedback on web forums but there's no quality assurance on the responses they're receiving.
- The Reddit model is successful, but requires moderators who can facilitate conversations, to ensure a safe space for sharing
- Moderators can also provide resources as needed

Immediate + Easy

- Online counseling sessions that can be scheduled fairly quickly (remember they don't have cars, or necessarily any money to pay for therapy, and may not want to tell their parents)
- Anonymous peer hotline (teen line)

The tone of our campaign and platform must be **direct, authentic, and youth-driven.**

That means we:

- **Call it what it is**
- **Don't shy away from the heavy stuff**
- **Think about language**
- **Reflect diversity**

Call it what it is (be direct and real)

- This is not an afterschool special. We need to be direct and real with our language and visuals
- Let's do our best to name things for what they are, rather than blindly group it all as "bullying."
  - If it's racism let's call it that.
  - It's OK to use words like hate, abuse, shaming.

Don't shy away from the heavy stuff

- In the same vein, young people are often shielded from the hard truths.
- Topics like suicide, addiction, poverty are often filtered out when addressing this group. But they want to have these conversations. Let's be aware and open to these conversations happening.

Stakeholder Insights / Tone + Voice

The tone of our campaign and platform must be **direct, authentic, and youth-driven.**

That means we:

- **Call it what it is**
- **Don't shy away from the heavy stuff**
- **Think about language**
- **Reflect diversity**

Language Matters

- Use person first language to decrease stigma (e.g. say "person who was bullied" rather than "victim")
- Avoid language and guidance that can be construed as victim blaming (e.g. what could you have done differently?)

Representation Aids Authenticity

- Include representation that they don't usually see (underrepresented and marginalized)
  - Different races, gender identities, people of different sizes

Youth Audience Survey

Survey:
Methodology and **Objectives**

Methodology
- Survey fielded through SurveyMonkey
- Supplemented with community networks

Target
- 18 year old California residents (for SurveyMonkey recruits, ages may vary for community answers)
- To qualify, participants had to indicate that they've experienced bullying or racism from friends, peers, or acquaintances, between 3rd and 12th grade

We conducted a survey with youth across California to to gain a broader understanding of:

- The events surrounding bullying, and associated behaviors/ reactions

- Any platform or media preferences young people have today, broadly speaking and as it relates to sensitive issues or social justice

- Initial feedback and appeal of potential platform ideas

The surveys were sent to recruited respondents via SurveyMonkey, and to community networks in connection with MHSOAC.

Surveys were in field for 5 weeks, from June 15 - Jul 19, 2022.

Participant **Demographics**

We recruited for a mix of races and ethnicities, including a target of one third AAPI respondents.
All recruited respondents were 18 years old, and live in the state of California.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Hispanic or Latinx	35.94%	78
Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander	**32.26%**	**70**
White	11.98%	26
Black or African American	6.91%	15
Mixed Race	6.45%	14
American Indian or Alaskan Native	2.30%	5
Middle Eastern	1.38%	3
Prefer not to say	1.38%	3
Not listed (please specify)	1.38%	3
TOTAL		**217**

Q1: Which race / ethnicity best describes you?
Answered: 217

Summary of **Findings**

- **Bullying occurred most frequently in 6-8th grades (37% of incidents),** with high school (30%) and elementary school (27%) being fairly evenly split. For AAPI respondents, bullying tends to occur younger, with an increase to 41% answering 6-8th grade, and roughly 9% for <2nd grade.

- **82% experienced name calling or being made fun of, while 59% experienced racially offensive language or hate speech**. For AAPI respondents, those who answered racially offensive language or hate speech jumps to 72%

- **Bullying still happens mostly at school.** 83% of respondents indicated that school was where their bullying experience primarily took place. Only 5% indicated that it happened online*. Public places, a friend's house or via text were even less common.

- **Only half (51%) of participants told anyone about the incident.** A parent (59%), teacher or school counselor (55%), or a friend (48%) were the most common people they told. For AAPI respondents, slightly fewer (46%) told anyone, with parent (53%), friend (53%), and teacher (50%) being fairly equal.

- **Fear, embarrassment, and feeling like it wouldn't have made a difference** were the top reasons for not telling

*Note: this question was framed as where bullying primarily took place, so may not negate bullying happening in other places, including online.

Additionally, respondents were 18 at the time of the survey so some may have experienced the bullying up to 10 years ago, where cyber-bullying may have been less prevalent. Additionally, some may have experienced bullying at an age where they did not yet use social media (e.g. 3rd-5th grade)

Summary of **Findings**

- **A majority of participants did not seek out information or help online.** 73% of respondents answered that they did not seek out any information or help. Roughly 12% looked online for information on bullying or for an adult to speak with about bullying. Roughly 9% looked online for peers to speak with.

- Of the initial ideas we shared, **a safe, online, peer community was preferred as the most useful resource.**

- **When talking about bullying or racism, Instagram is the social media platform of choice (65%),** followed by 49% using TikTok, then Snapchat (30%), and Text (22%).

- **60% of respondents talk about racism or bullying to some degree on social media.**

- **Participants are most likely to engage in content from someone they know.** Personal connection or familiarity with someone drives interest (31 All / 34% AAPI) more than simply someone their age (24 All / 28% AAPI), or even an influencer (19% All / 19% AAPI). Content from companies or brands, or professionals/ experts in their field were least likely to get their attention.

Takeaways and Recommendations

What we're trying to create here is very relevant and important. Young people today, particularly young people of color and the AAPI community, experience bullying and racism at high rates.

However, in order for young people to use it, we need to address the reasons why many young people aren't seeking help or talking about what happened to them today.

Those reasons include: fear, embarrassment, not feeling like it will make a difference, thinking they deserved it, not knowing what resources are available, and not wanting to make things worse.

Takeaways + Recommendations

- Build awareness of what this is and how it will help.

- Define what bullying and racism look like.

- Reinforce support and acceptance.

- Normalize talking about it.

From a campaign and messaging perspective, our work needs to:

Build awareness of what this resource is, and how it will help
This will help with the people who simply didn't know where to go and what was available.

Define What Bullying and Racism looks like
Some shared in open-ended responses that they didn't tell anyone because they know it was bullying at the time. At minimum we need to help people identify and name what's happening to them before they can seek help.

Reinforce support and acceptance (not necessarily "solutions")
Many respondents expressed wishing they simply had someone to listen to them and provide emotional support. Connecting young people to peers for support, or simply providing messages of hope, and reinforcing that this is not their fault, they don't deserve it and shouldn't have to handle it on their own, will be critical.

Normalize talking about it, to combat the stigma
Presenting stats, sharing how common it is, talking openly about the hardships, confronting the ugly truths—these will all help combat the stigma. Using influencers to join the conversation will also be a part of our strategy.

Takeaways + Recommendations

- Prioritize middle schoolers.

- Include parents, educators, and even friends/peers.

- Recognize distinctions.

Prioritize middle schoolers (6-8th graders), as bullying and racism occurs most during this time.
This is not only a time of transition (from a smaller to bigger school, making new friends, and experiencing puberty), it's also when smartphone adoption and social media use will become more prevalent.

Include parents, educators, and even <u>friends</u> in being part of the solution.
Many shared in their verbatims that they told a teacher and it didn't change anything or that they didn't think anyone would believe them. Considering parents, educators, and even friends are the people respondents confided in most about being bullied, our campaign and platforms needs to include resources, education, and tools for them as well. For this initiative, this could be tips to identify what's happening, conversation starters, and ways to comfort and listen (avoid questioning or skepticism, do not tell them to ignore it, etc.)

With AAPI and BIPOC youth being key audiences in this work, we must recognize that racism and bullying are distinct, yet co occurring.
Our campaign and platform should address and name both, without shying away from calling it racial bullying and discrimination.

Takeaways + Recommendations

- Create a safe, anonymous community.

- Leverage youth networks.

- Find the right balance of voices.

We know a safe, anonymous community to chat with peers is extremely relevant to respondents.
This could support a Teen Line partnership–however, we need to learn more in qualitative interviews whether young people want to talk on the phone /chat with "trained teens" or whether just regular peers would be preferred.

We need to leverage youth networks to get the word out about this, to encourage people to speak up about this to their friends.
We already know it needs to be for youth, by youth. Just given the fact that respondents answered they are most likely to engage in content from someone they know reinforces this.

We should be careful about which companies and brands we partner with (mistrust) and coming off as too "professional" or expert (stuffy).
Participants rated ads, blogs, and posts from companies they like and experts in their field (authors, educators, and other professionals) lowest in terms of likelihood to engage.

Discussion [20 min]

Discussion Prompts

What surprised you?
What did you find most compelling?
What questions do you still have?

Cultural Landscape

Words = Power.

Having the vocabulary to define our experiences gives us the agency to address problems specifically.

For example, not all bullying incidents are hate crimes, but all hate crimes are bullying.

We need specificity and clarity if we're going to make a real impact—and we need to provide those things to our audiences if we're going to be of service to them.

Define: Bullying

In 2014, the CDC and Department of Education released the first federal definition of bullying.

The definition includes three core elements:

- Unwanted aggressive behavior

- Observed or perceived power imbalance

- Repetition or high likelihood of repetition of bullying behaviors

Bullying is a form of youth violence and an adverse childhood experience. **CDC defines bullying as any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths, who are not siblings or current dating partners, that involves an observed of perceived power imbalance, and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated.**

Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm.

Bullying can also occur through technology, which is called electronic bullying or cyberbullying.

CDC

Another Definition: Bullying

Bullying is a distinctive pattern of repeatedly and deliberately harming and humiliating others, specifically those who are smaller, weaker, younger or in any way more vulnerable than the bully.

The deliberate targeting of those of lesser power is what distinguishes bullying from garden-variety aggression.

Psychology Today

"

Bullying can involve verbal attacks (name-calling and making fun of others) as well as physical ones, threats of harm, other forms of intimidation, and deliberate exclusion from activities.

Studies indicate that bullying peaks around ages 11 to 13 and decreases as children grow older. Overt physical aggression such as kicking, hitting, and shoving is most common among younger children; relational aggression—damaging or manipulating the relationships of others, such as spreading rumors, and social exclusion—is more common as children mature.

Most bullying occurs in and around school and on playgrounds, although the internet lends itself to particularly distressing forms of bullying. Approximately 20 percent of students report being bullied at school, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Boys and girls are equally likely to be bullied.

Define: Hate Crime

A hate crime/incident is when someone bullies you or commits a crime against you because they perceive you to be different in some way.

For example, because of your sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, or disability.

Health For Teens

For a hate crime/incident to take place, it does not always have to involve physical harm or violence.

If someone is harassing you, using offensive language towards you or posting abusive messages about you online, then this counts as a form of hate crime.
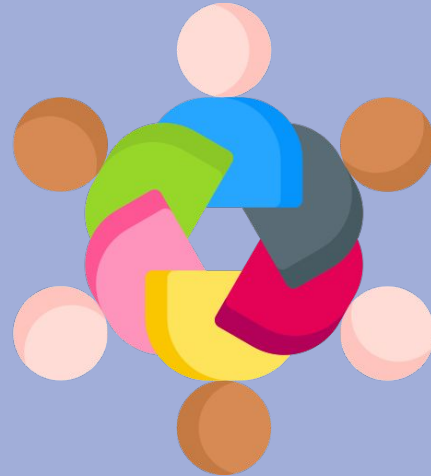
Search results can tell us when bullying will occur.

A new study assessed whether there was a correlation between **Google searches for 'bullying' or 'cyberbullying'** and instances of bullying of either type—and it turns out there is.

An important recommendation coming out of the study was to **look at and address online + offline behavior together**.
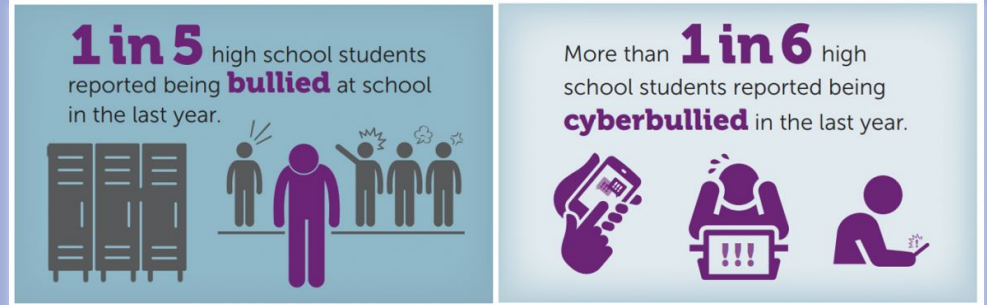
"

- **Search results and online trends** are good indicators of when bullying will occur

- Bullying happens most when there is **unstructured time**

- **Bullying happens less** when learning is remote

- **Don't address bullying online versus offline separately**, look at them together

New Study from Boston University

Exciting to think about the tech partnerships and implications of this study and this finding!

Bullying is common among students across the U.S.

Once we have an agreed upon definition of bullying, it's time to look at the prevalence and impacts of bullying.

The research shows bullying is prevalent among students and happens both in-person and online.

1 in 5 high school students reported being **bullied** at school in the last year.

More than 1 in 6 high school students reported being **cyberbullied** in the last year.

About **20%** of students ages 12-18 experienced bullying nationwide.

StopBullying.gov

Younger students experience bullying the most.

More resources are available on teens experiencing bullying, but overlook **tweens** (ages 9-12, or kindergarden - middle school), despite that this population experiences bullying the most.

KEY FINDINGS

1. One in five tweens has been cyberbullied, cyberbullied others, or seen cyberbullying.
2. Cyberbullying affects tweens in a variety of ways.
3. Tweens use a variety of strategies to stop cyberbullying.
4. Nine out of ten tweens use social media and gaming apps.
5. Many tweens have also experienced bullying at school.
6. Tweens are helpers.

Cartoon Network: Stop Bullying

90% of students in grades 4-8 report having been harassed or bullied.

28% of students in grades 6-12 experience bullying.

20% of students in grades 9-12 experience bullying.

9% of students in grades 6-12 have experienced cyberbullying.

Education Corner

The relationship between **BIPOC and bullying.**

In 2021, the Department of Justice and the Department of Education recognized that **students across the country who identified as Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders were reporting bullying and discrimination** on account of their race or perceived origin.

Race and Ethnicity

21% Other

25% Black

15% Asian

22% White
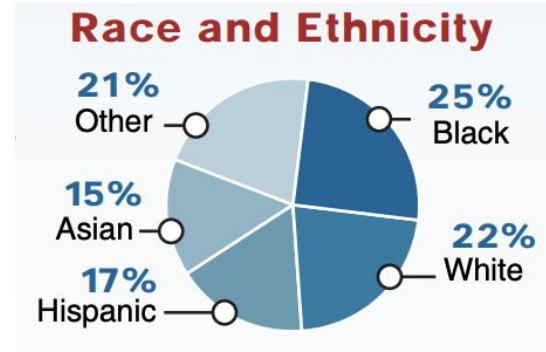
17% Hispanic

It is not clear how often kids get bullied because of their race or national origin, including their ethnicity, ancestry, and language. Research is still growing.

We do know, however, that Black and Hispanic youth who are bullied are more likely to suffer academically than their white peers.

StopBullying.gov (2017)

Where does bullying happen (in-person)?

> The following percentages of students ages 12-18 had experienced bullying in various places at school:
>
> - **Hallway or stairwell (43.4%)**
> - **Classroom (42.1%)**
> - Cafeteria (26.8%)
> - Outside on school grounds (21.9%)
> - Online or text (15.3%)
> - Bathroom or locker room (12.1%)
> - Somewhere else in the school building (2.1%)
>
> StopBullying.gov

Bullying happens more when we're gathering in person—and we're moving back to that.

Bullying rates plunged over the course of the pandemic, showing there is a correlation between in-person activities and bullying rates (even cyberbullying).

The study's authors challenged educators and parents to consider how changes in the school day/structure could be used to protect more students from bullying.

> "
>
> A new study found in-person bullying rates plunged when schools went remote because of COVID-19—and that even cyberbullying levels tumbled.
>
> New Study from Boston University

Cyberbullying is seen as 'another space' by analysts, similar to 'at school.'

Less is known about cyberbullying, and research seems to focus on either cyberbullying OR in-person bullying.

However, we know that for young people today, the lines between in-person and online are blurred if they exist at all.

"

Of all the social networks, kids on **YouTube** are the most likely to be cyberbullied at **79%**

followed by **Snapchat** at **69%**
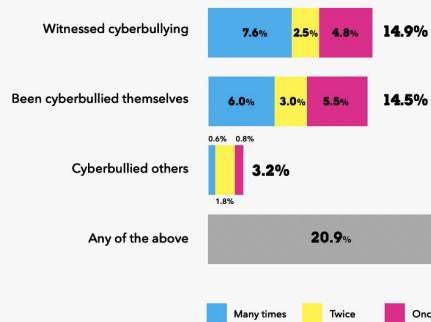
TikTok at **64%**

and **Facebook** at **49%.**

Security.org

Cyberbullying: A **focus on tweens**

Personal device use and ownership explodes during the tween years—the age group who most commonly experiences bullying.

EXPERIENCE WITH CYBERBULLYING
PERCENT OF 9- TO 12-YEAR-OLDS WHO SAY THEY HAVE EVER:

Witnessed cyberbullying — 7.6% | 2.5% | 4.8% — **14.9%**
Been cyberbullied themselves — 6.0% | 3.0% | 5.5% — **14.5%**
Cyberbullied others — 0.6% 0.8% 1.8% — **3.2%**
Any of the above — **20.9%**

Many times | Twice | Once

"

Two thirds of tweens have used **YouTube** and almost half have played **Minecraft** and **Roblox**.

CartoonNetwork: Stop Cyberbullying

Cultural Landscape /
Stopping Bullying

What works to stop bullying

Youth/peers who choose to be allies have some of the most direct ability to be impactful in stopping bullying. They are often the first to be aware of instances of bullying, far before adults.

Sadly, youth bystanders who witness bullying intervene less than 20% of the time.

Research shows that schools and adults should not only *discourage* bullying, but *encourage* positive, uplifting, healthy behaviors and environments.

"

Students have a unique power to prevent bullying. More than half of bullying situations (57 percent) stop **when a peer intervenes** on behalf of the student being bullied.

Pacer.org

The CDC has identified **proven elements** of creating a non-bullying environment.

The CDC and other peer-reviewed sources have determined that an important part of bullying prevention is *not only* communicating to students what is NOT permitted, but **communicating positive behavior**.

Additionally, successful programs **involved a community-centered approach**, including families, teachers/educators, children, and other members of the community.

Promote family environments that support healthy development
- Early childhood home visitation
- Parenting skill and family relationship programs

Provide quality education early in life
- Preschool enrichment with family engagement

Strengthen youth's skills
- Universal school-based programs

Connect youth to caring adults and activities
- Mentoring programs
- After-school programs

Create protective community environments
- Modify the physical and social environment
- Reduce exposure to community-level risks
- Street outreach and community norm change

Intervene to lessen harms and prevent future risk
- Treatment to lessen the harms of violence exposures
- Treatment to prevent problem behavior and further involvement in violence
- Hospital-community partnerships

CDC.gov

Stopping Bullying

Ten ways to help reduce bullying in schools.

The Crisis Prevention Institute created a list of ten avenues for teachers, staff, and administrators to cut back on bullying in schools.

1. Have a clear definition of bullying.
   a. Teasing and bullying is not the same.
   b. Cyberbullying is also a reality.
2. Remove labels; address behaviors.
3. Set clear and enforceable rules and expectations.
4. Reward positive behavior.
5. Have open communication.
6. Engage parents.
7. Look for warning signs.
8. When bullying occurs, clear the scene.
9. Monitor 'hot spots.'
10. Know your state laws and district policies.

Crisis Prevention Institute

Insights on Gen Z

Key facets of our target audience

Gen Z

The most **acknowledging, willing, and concerned** for mental health.

Gen Z sets a new standard for openness and willingness to discuss and destigmatize mental health.

When asked what their top concerns for the world now are, Gen Z answered a Deloitte survey and included **'the mental health of my generation'** in their top five.

Deloitte, Gen Z

Gen Z

The *least likely* to report very good or excellent **mental health**.

Perhaps because of their unending access to the Internet and the news cycle, the APA finds that Gen Z are the least likely generation now to report very good or excellent mental health.

Findings in this study reveal that Gen Z are stressed about:

- Mass shootings
- Rise in suicide rates
- Climate change
- Separation and deportation of immigrant families
- Widespread sexual assualt and assault reports

APA 2018

Unafraid: Gen Z **rises to the real challenges**, in person and online.

- Gen Z is **open about sharing their mental health struggles**. Just as they don't wear filters, they don't filter out the harder topics in their lives.
- Gen Z **uses humor and satire to cope**. Tiktok is a prime example of Gen Z taking the stage to define and laughingly sculpt the constructs they feel in their lives.
- Just as bullying prevention methods show the **power of promoting positive behavior** (not just negating unwanted behavior), Gen Z takes this to their Internet and social media interactions.

HopeLab.org

TIK TOK, GEN Z, AND MENTAL HEALTH:

THE RISE OF THE MOST RESILIENT GENERATION

Cultural
Landscape
Takeaways

Say it **how it is.**

1 /

We need to be straightforward and clear about what we're talking about. Gen Z doesn't respond well to unclear, vague, soft language when it comes to difficult subjects.

They're not worried about having padding—rather they're drawn to honesty and clarity.

Bullying is **predictable** and **preventable**.

2 /

We can predict what factors and influences point to a person behaving as a bully.

But we can also point to which factors and influences are the most likely to discourage bullying behavior and instead, create a positive and welcoming environment.

Gen Z is ready to talk about it.

3 /

Gen Z is the generation least inhibited by thinking of bullying or mental health as illnesses or blameworthy statuses.

If our campaign is able to provide a compelling, clear, visionary narrative, they are ready to show up—as themselves and for one another.

The lines are **blurred.**

4 /

Gen Z doesn't have a line between "online" and "offline"—and successful solutions can't either.

Our approach to this campaign needs to take a holistic approach and not get stuck in old ways of thinking or communicating.

Games of their own.

5 /

More traditional studies have looked at bullying and cyberbullying separately. But in reality, the same dynamics and power systems are at play.

Games are different from social media, but we also know they are one of the primary instances of cyberbullying. How can we include this facet in our strategy?

Discussion [20 min]

Discussion Prompts

- What needs to be tailored about our approach given that a large part of our target audiences are Gen Z?

- How might we lean into the findings about what works: Take a community approach and not only define negative behavior, but encourage positive behavior?

- What are your ideas for how we might bring parents and educators together in a positive, supportive environment?

Discussion of Part 4 / Public Comment

We're ready to create more impact—together.

Your Media Cause Team