Religious-Based Bullying:

Insights on Research and Evidence-Based Best Practices from the National Interfaith Anti-Bullying Summit

Given the prevalence rates and negative mental health outcomes associated with religious-based bullying, it must be considered a public health issue in need of prevention and intervention attention. This brief provides insights from the first-ever National Interfaith Anti-Bullying Summit held in D.C. on December 2-3, 2017. The summit gathered a multitude of experts on the issue, including advocates, researchers, teachers, parents, physicians, mental health practitioners, and, most importantly, targets of bullying to share their stories of the abuse and how it impacted their mental well-being.

About the Author

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Dr. Nadia Ansary is an associate professor of psychology at Rider University. She received her PhD in developmental psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University in 2006. She has several lines of research, but primary among these are the following: (1) exploring the mental well-being of Muslim American youth and community-based outreach for this population; (2) bullying and victimization with a special focus on Muslim targets of peer harassment and abuse; and (3) understanding the psychosocial development of immigrant, as well as first- and second-generation youth struggling to acculturate, especially within the context of discrimination. She has numerous publications concerning Muslim American and Arab American mental health.

Dr. Ansary is a specialist on bullying in schools. In 2008, she was appointed by Governor Jon S. Corzine to the New Jersey Commission on Bullying in Schools, where she participated in creating a report providing recommendations for legal and school-based remedies for bullying in schools; the Commission's report informed the development of New Jersey's Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights. This work has led to the completion of two first-authored publications providing guidance to schools in selecting anti-bullying approaches. Dr. Ansary has appeared on numerous television and radio programs to discuss her research and has provided programming on the topic of bullying to the New Jersey Judiciary.

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American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to bringing together and strengthening the impact of Muslim health professionals to improve the health and wellness of all Americans. AMHP is engaged in a number of areas of high importance to the American Muslim community and country at large, including advocacy and advancing access to health care, mental health, and career and professional development. In February 2015, AMHP was invited to meet former President Barack Obama during a private round table at the White House to discuss contributions of Muslim health professionals.

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Executive Summary

In our current socio-political climate, it has become commonplace to hear derogatory statements made in public spaces about Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, and Jews. News outlets and the cyber world abound with accounts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying of religious minorities; these occur in various everyday contexts. Particularly troubling are the harassment, intimidation, and bullying of religious-minority youth occurring in school settings.

In a study conducted by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) on a nationally representative sample of American families, 42% of Muslims, 23% of Jews, and 6% of Catholics reported that at least one of their children had been bullied in the past year because of their religion.[1] Importantly, in 25% of the cases involving Muslim students, a teacher or administrator at school perpetrated the bullying.[2] Other research also supports the high prevalence rate of peer victimization among Muslim youth. A report by the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) found that 50% of their sample of California Muslims aged 11-18 reported being called mean names about their religion.[3]

Given the prevalence rates and negative mental health outcomes associated with religious-based bullying, it must be considered a public health issue in need of prevention and intervention attention.

Recognizing the severity of this issue, the American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP) and a group of interfaith partners that included Sikh Kid 2 Kid and Islamic Networks Group (ING) organized the first-ever National Interfaith Anti-Bullying Summit on December 2-3, 2017,

in Washington, DC. The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) provided background research on bullying to participants prior to and during the Summit, and captured the Summit discussions through this brief.

The summit gathered a multitude of experts on the issue, including advocates, researchers, teachers, parents, physicians, mental health practitioners, and, most importantly, targets of bullying to share their stories of the abuse and how it impacted their mental well-being. Approximately 80 participants attended plenary and small-group breakout sessions that addressed the most pressing issues concerning religious-based bullying. The summit presentations yielded valuable insights for educators, parents, and students, as well as the broader community. Accordingly, a series of concise recommendations garnered from the proceedings and co-authored with Dr. Rukhsana Chaudhry, Director of Mental Health Programming at the American Muslim Health Professionals, are presented below, separated based on various adult and youth roles. Furthermore, a list of organizations and resources to address religious-based bullying are available in the Appendix.

Educators

◆ Implement anti-bullying prevention strategies that address:
  • A whole-school approach,
  • A positive school climate,
  • Social-emotional character development (SECD) of students, including promoting upstanders,
  • An emphasis on inclusion,
  • An explicit mention of protected groups in the school's harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) policy,[4]
  • Teacher and staff training pertaining to the prevention of bullying,
  • Cultural sensitivity and support for minority students (e.g., faculty sponsorship for clubs or student groups, a recognition of all religious holidays, etc.), and
  • Religious literacy and addressing bias and inaccuracies in the curriculum.[5]

◆ Teachers should be equipped with anti-bullying training in order to develop the skills necessary to implement a school's anti-bullying program.[6]

◆ Bullying should be effectively managed every time it is reported. This entails compliance with the school's anti-bullying policy, including investigation and remedies that should be put in place to address the safety of the target if the criteria for bullying have been met. Beyond this, schools must focus on school-level cultural competency to address religious-based bullying as part of the assessment process.

◆ Make sure to address the target of the bullying, reassuring them that they are wanted and should feel safe within the school. Counseling may also be needed depending on the child's well-being, as well as the severity and persistence of the bullying.

◆ Make sure to address the child who bullies to understand what is compelling him/her to act aggressively and to see if counseling may be warranted.

◆ Provide educators with resources needed for professional development, addressing both cultural competency training and the promotion of religious literacy. Identity and self-exploration-based practices for teachers in which their own identity and cultural backgrounds are explored with colleagues is critical. This correlates to the notion that empathy and social-emotional learning occurs throughout the system and not just at the student level.

◆ Incorporate anti-bullying initiatives into school-based learning on life skills. Ensuring a student's ability to participate and thrive within the school community must include a focus on anti-bullying work, with specific attention on religious-based bullying and challenging of stereotypes.

◆ Teachers should incentivize students to challenge biases (e.g., validation from adults regarding the reasonable risk and benefits to doing so).

◆ K-12 teachers should ask questions on their introductory surveys at the start of the school year about children's likes and needs, as well as a faith celebration question. This allows parents to connect to the school culture and can or should lead to parents collaborating or speaking with students about their religious holidays.

◆ Promote inclusion of individuals with disabilities (e.g., providing a safe quiet space for the child to retreat to when distressed) by embracing each person's uniqueness and contribution to the school community. Teachers play a critical role in managing perceptions of individuals with disabilities, including (1) avoiding the use of labels (i.e., instead of referring to a student as a "disabled child," refer to them as a "child with a disability"), (2) working with their classes to manage misperceptions and stereotypes, and (3) addressing derogatory language immediately.

Parents and Cyberspace

◆ Since targets of bullying often feel shame about being victimized and therefore hesitate to discuss such instances, it is important to develop strong parent-child bonds characterized by an honest dialogue. Furthermore, as adolescents explore facets of their identity that include their culture or religion or experiment with their appearance, they may be more vulnerable to being bullied. As such, parents should attempt to keep the lines of communication open.

◆ Parents also need to foster a relationship with the school and teachers, learn about the anti-bullying policy, and be active in community organizations.

◆ When bullying happens, parents are encouraged to meet with the school, and then send a follow-up email documenting the contents of the meeting so that there is a record that will enhance school accountability.

◆ Parents are the gatekeepers, and thus parental monitoring must be present with the use of technology in the daily lives of children and adolescents.

◆ It is critical for parents to be aware of the laws and policies governing cyberbullying in their districts.

Students

◆ Promote being an "upstander" and respond to bullying when it occurs. It is very important to not stand by and watch bullying since this promotes the behavior. Instead, upstanders either "speak up" or leave the situation to get an adult who can stop it. After the incident, upstanders can provide support for the child who was bullied to help that individual to feel safe again.

• One example of this type of the upstander model is the Hope4Utah community suicide prevention model program. For the purpose of religious-based anti-bullying programs, this model may be looked to for its foundation on a peer-to-peer mentoring model. The program is made up of "hope squads" that are comprised of trained students who can identify warning signs and assist at-risk students to get help from an adult. This type of social group power based on a peer-to-peer mentoring model can be effective in anti-bullying efforts, especially as

it relates to religious-based bullying. Another example of the utilization of the upstander model is the bullybust.org program. This program aims to form a community of upstanders through "upstander alliances" that are made up of students who develop projects and utilize resources on upstander training to change school climate. It was developed by the National School Climate Center in 2009.

• Upstanders are particularly important in addressing religious-based bullying as it was generally concluded at the summit that bystanders who observe misperceptions or misinformation about a particular religious background without any intervention can and may believe these misperceptions or misinformation.

◆ Always report any harassment, intimidation, or bullying incident to an adult. It is not being a "snitch."

◆ Ask teachers and/or guidance staff to have an anonymous submission box to report bullying incidents to avoid concern over retaliation.

Community Members and Organizations

◆ Community engagement is critical for young religious minorities and is not just for their parent's generation. Islamic Networks Group (ING) and Sikh Kid 2 Kid have youth programs that train and certify young people to conduct workshops on Islam and Sikhism, respectively.

◆ Organizations that bridge relationships between Muslim, Arab, and South Asian populations and the communities they live in, such as the Council of People's Organization (COPO), are important grassroots groups.

◆ Organizations such as social media companies, corporations, and community-based organizations with a focus on youth must incorporate bias- and stereotype-challenging practices into their value system as they develop products and programs. Platforms must include language that demonstrates the importance of thinking critically about stereotypes in a social-emotional-based learning environment.

Practitioners

◆ Practitioners should note that ongoing bullying of one's faith or religion may be experienced as a form of abuse and has long-term mental health outcomes for the target. In connection to mental health, social factors such as loneliness and social isolation at home and in the community should be explored for both the target and the bully.

Beyond these practical recommendations, the report presents recommendations for future directions in terms of research and strategies for prevention and intervention. Another key objective of the summit was to share resources to address religious-based bullying. A listing of organizations and resources are noted in the Appendix that address (1) bullying, (2) school climate, (3) teacher cultural competency training, (4) social-emotional character development in schools, and (5) community resources. Most importantly, this report reflects the most pervasive theme of the conference—a call to action to safeguard vulnerable children and pursue equity in their most fundamental public space: school.

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Introduction and Background

Religious minority students are common targets of hate-related speech, as well as harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) in schools. In our current sociopolitical climate, it has become commonplace to hear derogatory statements made in public spaces about Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, and Jews. News outlets and the cyber world abound with accounts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying of religious minorities; these occur in various everyday contexts. Particularly troubling are the harassment, intimidation, and bullying of religious-minority youth occurring in school settings.

Schools should represent safe environments where children grow and learn free of abuse.

In a study conducted by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) on a nationally representative sample of American families, 42% of Muslims, 23% of Jews, and 6% of Catholics reported that at least one of their children had been bullied in the past year because of their religion.[7] Importantly, in 25% of the cases involving Muslim students, a teacher or administrator at school perpetrated the bullying.[8] Other research also supports the high prevalence rate of peer victimization among Muslim youth. A report by the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) found that 50% of their sample of California Muslims aged 11-18 reported being called mean names about their religion.[9]

Given the prevalence rates and negative mental health outcomes associated with religious-based bullying, it must be considered a public health issue in need of prevention and intervention attention.

Schools should represent safe environments where children grow and learn free of abuse.[10] Although every child deserves this, many schools have failed to protect children from the abuse perpetrated by peers or worse—and on rare occasion—at the hands of their trusted teachers or administrators. According to the U.S. Department of Education, in 2015, 1% of 12-18 year olds reported being the target of religious-based hateful speech while on school grounds.[11] While such a low percentage may not mobilize communities into action, this number vastly underestimates the prevalence rates of harassment, intimidation, or bullying (HIB). This underestimation is due

to inadequate reporting mechanisms, lack of training in schools on what constitutes bullying, and failure to report due to fear of retaliation or the belief that adults in school will do nothing to address the incident.

Harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) of religious-minority students is an area that has received little attention from researchers and even less in terms of prevention and intervention programming. This report identifies the challenges that exist in our current understanding of religious-based bullying and provides evidence-based recommendations, based on the summit proceedings, to address them. These challenges include, but are not limited to, a failure to have a uniform definition for HIB across the scholarly, legal and policy realms; variations in reporting and recording of HIB incidents; a lack of research which examines risk and protective factors associated with being the target of hate; and a dearth of evidence-based approaches to address the prevention and intervention of religious-based bullying.

This report identifies the challenges that exist in our current understanding of religious-based bullying and provides evidence-based recommendations, based on the summit proceedings, to address them.

The Summit

Recognizing the severity of this issue, the American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP) and a group of interfaith partners that included Sikh Kid 2 Kid and Islamic Networks Group (ING) organized the first-ever National Interfaith Anti-Bullying Summit that took place on December 2-3, 2017, in Washington, DC. The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) provided background research on bullying to participants prior to and during the summit, and captured the event's discussions through this brief.

The summit gathered myriad experts on the issue, including advocates, researchers, teachers, parents, physicians, mental health practitioners, and, most importantly, targets of bullying to share their stories of the abuse and how it impacted mental well-being. Approximately 80 participants attended. Over the course of the two-day summit, there were six plenary sessions covering testimonials, current research, cyber-bullying, and safe use of technology, as well as future directions. The summit also included breakout sessions and workshops covering myriad topics from correlates of bullying to cultural competency training for teachers to community engagement, to name a few. Two case studies of actual religious-based bullying situations were discussed in smaller groups.

Consistent themes permeated the plenary presentations, the smaller breakout sessions, and the collaborative discussion groups. These sessions highlighted research and evidence-based best practices regarding:

◆ Bullying prevention and intervention

◆ The impact of religious-based bullying on mental health

◆ The need to combat prejudice, hostility, and marginalization, and seek equity

◆ Strategies for overcoming exclusion and social isolation, particularly among youth

◆ Interfaith engagement, empowerment, and advocacy

◆ Teacher and administrator professional development (e.g., cultural competency and religious literacy training, guidance in navigating challenging classroom discussions, leadership support for training, etc.)

◆ The necessity of social, emotional, and character development in schools

◆ Safe navigation of social media and digital citizenship

◆ Identification of resources (free online toolkits and videos for parents and teachers)

Each of these themes will be explored in the pages that follow. More specifically, our objective is to memorialize the summit proceedings on religious-based bullying with the purpose of disseminating information on (1) the heartbreaking experiences and mental health outcomes of bullying, (2) the most current research, (3) evidence-based best practices, (4) resource identification and sharing, (5) future directions for research and practice, and (6) solutions for program development and practice for educators, practitioners, and schools. Integrating this information highlights the valuable work that many are already doing, provides guidance for those seeking improvement in their anti-bullying efforts, and illuminates areas where more ground needs to be covered. Most

importantly, this paper reflects the most pervasive theme of the conference—the need for action to safeguard vulnerable children and pursue equity in their most fundamental public space: school.

Personal Experiences of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying

Experiences of harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) can create a storm of negative emotions in targets of the abuse, evoking shame, self-hatred, and loneliness. Three speakers bravely shared their stories of bullying at the summit. For Sumi Mukherjee, a published author and speaker on the issue, the bullying spanned most of his educational career, from kindergarten through 9th grade. As a child of Indian descent growing up in Minnesota, he was bullied primarily because of his appearance. During his talk, he stated that he had endured verbal and physical assaults, including racial slurs and obscene and prank phone calls. He was subjected to questions and comments such as "Where are you from?," "Why are you brown?," and "You look weird." Though he had one primary attacker, Mukherjee stated that many children participated in his abuse. Despite his parents' efforts to speak to teachers, administrators, and other parents, the adults in school did little to protect him. By 9th grade, the bullying subsided largely due to the assistance of one school counselor and maturation on the part of the abusers. Though new incidents seldom occurred, the long-term trajectory of abuse had taken its toll; by age 16, Mukherjee began experiencing symptoms of obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), which compromised his ability to function.

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Because of OCD, Mukherjee would frequently envision horrific events happening to his loved ones, and he irrationally believed that by repeating words or actions he would be able protect his family from harm. It is critical to note that this disorder was directly connected to his history of persistent bullying as, at times, the mental images he experienced also consisted of visions of the children who bullied him. Mukherjee suffered silently, keeping his OCD undisclosed from all including his parents until the age of 20. Also at this age, Mukherjee pursued a meeting with his primary attacker and was surprised to find that he too suffered from a mental illness and struggled to maintain adult responsibilities. The meeting proved to be cathartic, in that he apologized to Mukherjee, explaining that as a child he endured abuse, which compelled him to harm others. As of this date, Mukherjee has published four books and speaks nationally to tell his story in the hopes of preventing abuse.

Two other speakers, also young men, similarly reported being targeted because of their ancestry and race, particularly because of their affiliation to the Sikh faith. Ajai[12] wears the dastaar (turban) signifying his religious devotion. In September 2017, two of his classmates created an offensive "starter pack" on Instagram, that represented a collage of photos of stereotypes attributed to his religious and ethnic background. As is common, Ajai did not report the incident, for fear of retaliation. The school received an anonymous report of the situation, conducted an investigation, and suspended the perpetrators of the hate crime, also permanently documenting the incident on the youths' transcripts. The last speaker, Veer,[13] reports a similar experience of harassment, intimidation, and bullying, which was allowed to continue over time. Veer described how he was taunted by peers who also pulled off his turban. For Veer, the persistent bullying he experienced led him to act out, and he went on to bully and victimize others. He also reports that he cut his hair and no longer wears the turban—actions that run counter to prescriptions of the Sikh faith. Candidly, Veer revealed that he developed bipolar disorder and also struggles with drug addiction that began with his efforts to self-medicate from the abuse.

These stories are more than just unfortunate; they are tragic representations of abuse that in some cases were allowed to persist across many occasions and years. Moreover, it is important to highlight that in two of the cases portrayed, mental illness was a clear outcome of the abuse. And it is important to note that this was *also* an outcome for Mukherjee's primary attacker, who as an adult, suffered from schizophrenia. These cases depict in a vulnerable human light what the literature empirically supports, that targets of bullying, as well as perpetrators of bullying, are at risk for myriad negative mental health outcomes.

As these three cases illustrate, harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) related to a defining feature of one's identity can be extremely damaging to the well-being of a developing child. Particularly in Mukherjee's and Veer's cases, and others like them, with persistent bullying over

several years, several questions arise: How was this allowed to happen and continue in the school setting? Were teachers unaware of what constitutes bullying when they were presented with these situations? How many other children in their schools experienced this form of persistent abuse? Did teachers not act because of their own biases, which went

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unchallenged by lack of professional development? What should the school have done to protect Mukherjee and others like him? Their stories provoke questions while also adding a human component to the scholarly literature on religious-based bullying. Indeed, much of what they described was touched upon in nearly all of the sessions of the summit.

Religious-Based Bullying: Definitions, Prevalence Rates, Correlates, and Outcomes

Multiple Definitions Create Difficulties for Assessment

The scholarly literature defines bullying as requiring three criteria:[14]

1) An intent to harm (physical, psychological, or social, etc.)
2) An imbalance of power such that the target has difficulty defending him- or herself
3) The hurtful behavior is repeated or occurs in a persistent manner

The legal perspective varies greatly from state to state, though there is movement towards stricter definitions and school responsibility. For example, the New Jersey Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights, one of the strictest anti-bullying laws in our nation, takes a more general approach by using the phrase "harassment, intimidation, or bullying" (HIB). It includes all elements of the definition above. However, it further includes "a single incident or series of incidents" within its definition of HIB, thereby requiring schools to respond whether or not harm is inflicted multiple times. Furthermore, this law also explicitly notes vulnerable groups (e.g., religious, racial, sexual minorities, etc.) in its conception of HIB.

Honing in on a unified definition of bullying and bias-based bullying specifically has been a challenge across both the scholarly and the policy realms. As a consequence, assessing accurate prevalence rates that explicitly identify vulnerable groups has been a challenge. Religious-based bullying is a multilayered issue particularly as it relates to the intersection of religion, ethnicity, race, and ancestry.

Honing in on a unified definition of bullying and bias-based bullying specifically has been a challenge across both the scholarly and the policy realms.

Literature documents the entanglement of ethnicity, race, and ancestry with religion promoting the stereotype that people of darker skin color are followers of non-Christian faiths.[15] The conflation of skin color and religion enables a perception of individuals of color to be considered as "other," as "enemy," and as "terrorist." Consequently, hate crimes and bias-based bullying become more acceptable when the individual is considered an outsider who possesses anti-American views; the escalation of hate crimes after terrorist activities supports this position.

Muslims and Jews Experience Disproportionately High Rates of Hate-Speech and Bullying

According to the U.S. Department of Education's Indicators of School Crime and Safety Report, 1% of 12-18-year-olds reported being the target of hate-related words due to religion while on school grounds in 2015.[16] In terms of being the target of hate-related words based on ethnicity, 1.8% reported being targeted. While these statistics are not significantly different than those obtained in 2013, there was a 25% increase in student reports of seeing hate-related graffiti from 2013 to 2015. There were no significant gender differences in rates of reported hate-related speech.

Further research analysis tease apart these numbers. In a study conducted by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) on a nationally representative sample of Americans, 42% of Muslims, 23% of Jews, and 6% of Catholics reported that at least one of their children had been bullied in the past year because of their religion.[17] Significantly, in 25% of the cases involving Muslim students, a teacher or administrator at school perpetrated the bullying.[18] Other research also supports the high prevalence rate of peer victimization among Muslim youth. A report by the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) found that 50% of their sample of California Muslims aged 11-18 reported being called mean names about their religion.[19] Likewise, in not-yet-published data collected from 86 Muslim youth, over 30% reported being bullied through social exclusion or

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by mean names and half of the sample reported that they feared being bullied in the future.[20]

Like other social institutions, schools "mirror larger forces of exclusion and inequality in society, often reflecting dominant notions of who does and does not belong."[21] Since HIB in schools is a reflection of the larger socio-political climate,[22] and because the U.S. Department of Education statistics do not breakdown bullying based on religious affiliation, it is important to examine other sources of data. According to an ISPU poll conducted in 2018, 61% of Muslim participants reported experiencing religious-based discrimination. This number is in stark comparison to other religious groups, with 48% of Jews, 21% of Protestants, and 19% of Catholics reporting discrimination based on faith affiliation.[23] In a similar vein, it is helpful to examine the most recently available FBI hate crimes statistics from 2016:[24]

◆ 54.2% were anti-Jewish.

◆ 24.8% were anti-Islamic (Muslim).

◆ 4.1% were anti-Catholic.

◆ 0.8% (12 offenses) were anti-Hindu.

◆ 0.5% (7 offenses) were anti-Sikh.

In terms of hate crimes based on race/ethnicity/ancestry:

◆ 4.2% were a result of bias against groups of individuals consisting of more than one race (anti-multiple races group).

◆ 3.1% resulted from anti-Asian bias.

◆ 1.3% were classified as anti-Arab bias.

Correlates and Outcomes of Bullying

Since a sizeable number of young people experience religious-based bullying, it is critical to know what outcomes might be expected for targets of bullying. Furthermore, the personal stories shared at the summit portrayed the negative mental health outcomes that can be associated with being a target of bullying. Adopting a developmental perspective is particularly salient when considering bullying, brain development, and well-being. According to Dr. Farha Abbasi, a summit presenter, chronic stress leads to persistently high cortisol levels creating permanent changes in the developing brain. Specifically, chronic stress—the type experienced in bullying—has been shown to shrink the prefrontal cortex, the executive governor of the brain, which can result in long-term poor decision-making, reduced attention, and impaired cognitive functioning.

As has been done in prior work,[25] risk factors and outcomes will be considered as a collective grouping, or as correlates of bullying, since many consequences of being bullied are also risk factors for being a target.[26] With regards to the target or victim of abuse, several correlates (acting as both risk factor and outcome) of bullying have been supported in the literature including: anxiety and depression;[27] compromised peer relationships;[28] academic disengagement;[29] and risk of suicidal thoughts.[30]

Since many religious followers wear visible religious symbols (e.g., the Muslim hijab, the Sikh dastaar as well as chunni or dupatta, and the Jewish yarmulke, to name a few), the target of the attack often anticipates future incidents.

Turning to outcomes of bias-based bullying specifically, it has been shown to be more harmful than other forms of bullying. In particular, one study found that youth who were harassed due to a minority group affiliation reported higher levels of mental health issues and substance use compared to those who were targets of non-biased-based harassment.[31] Other evidence suggests that even frequent "minor" experiences of microaggression related to minority status are associated with poor mental health outcomes since the attacks are perceived to be due to an integral part of one's identity and are expected to occur again.[32] Since many religious followers wear visible religious symbols (e.g., the Muslim *hijab*, the Sikh *dastaar* as well as *chunni* or *dupatta*, and the Jewish *yarmulke*, to name a few), the target of the attack often anticipates future incidents.[33]

The *Muslim Youth Voices Study* is a qualitative study conducted by Barbara Sahli, who presented on these findings at the summit. In this work, she found that 100% of participants experienced some form of discrimination. In terms of negative emotions, 66% reported feeling alienated, anxious, and shock surrounding the experience. And yet, many held tight to their Muslim identity with 86% self-identifying as Muslim and 52% reported feeling positive feelings about their religious identities. On the other hand, several others reported feeling shame and a need to hide their Muslim identity. She noted that a strong religious identity, internal religious conviction, and community engagement (e.g., participating at a mosque school or youth group), served as protective factors against the effects of discrimination in that study. Madiha Tahseen, Barbara Sahli, and Sarrah AbuLughod also presented on Muslim youth's shame over identity and anxiety due to backlash from media and the dominant culture. They, too, noted the protective effects of civic engagement on mental well-being.

Undoubtedly, given the prevalence rates as well as negative psychological, social, and academic outcomes, bullying must be considered a public health issue.[34] To address bullying, greater allocation of resources for prevention and intervention is required.

Evidence-Based Prevention and Intervention Strategies Make a Difference

Effective bullying programs share some common prevention and intervention features as noted below. Due to space limitations, only a portion of these will be discussed in separate sections that follow with examples of resources that were presented at the summit. A listing of organizations, web links, and other resources on religious-based bullying, which were discussed at the summit, can be found in the Appendix.

With regards to *prevention* of bullying and bias-based bullying specifically, effective programs focus on:

- A whole-school approach,
- A positive school climate,
- Social-emotional character development (SECD) of students, including promoting upstanders,
- An emphasis on inclusion,
- An explicit mention of protected groups in the school's HIB policy,[35]
- Teacher and staff training pertaining to the prevention of bullying,
- Cultural sensitivity and support for minority students (e.g., faculty sponsorship for clubs or student groups, a recognition of all religious holidays, etc.), and
- Religious literacy and addressing bias and inaccuracies in curricula.[36]

A Whole-School Approach, Positive School Climate, and SECD: Necessities, Not Luxuries

Students deserve to experience schools that are both physically and psychologically safe, and they have the right to a sense of belonging to their school community. At its foundation, schools must address bullying on a holistic level or adopt a whole-school approach. This is characterized by infusing anti-bullying messages and strategies in a systemic manner (e.g., curricula, classroom practices, etc.) as opposed to presenting it as a separate initiative, such as a school assembly once a year.[37] Several summit presenters noted that the anti-bullying messages and strategies employed by a school must be linked to life-skills learning. This is relevant to

a school's messaging, which may ask students how they are helping the school community thrive. By addressing bullying-specific initiatives in this way, several summit presenters noted that school climate is more likely to change.

Importantly, several summit presenters noted that higher education settings are neglected from the extant literature on school climate, as the primary focus is on the K-12 setting. Clearly, the sense of safety and connection to one's school community should be personified in *all* educational settings, not just K-12, with a culture of respect and caring characterizing interactions between the various members of a school community (i.e., students, faculty/staff, and administrators, as well as any combination of these different parties).

A positive school climate is necessarily connected to the appreciation of diversity and promotes inclusion of minority groups as integral members of the school population. It is also intertwined with a school's commitment to instruct on and promote social-emotional character development (SECD), which entails "…practicing and building competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making."[38] According to Maurice Elias, an expert on SECD, "schools cannot function if students lack character. Without respect, responsibility, honesty, trust, positive relationships, caring, justice, integrity, and good citizenship, to mention just a few key aspects of character, it is impossible for classrooms and schools to function and for the adults in the school to serve as educators and role models for students."[39] Furthermore, SECD must be a priority that is integrated into the curriculum as opposed to a simple "add-on" initiative or program. "It is something students learn, and if they are not learning it adequately at home, schools have to teach it because they cannot attain their academic missions without doing so."[40] It is also a key factor in helping children develop the confidence and social skills necessary to be an "upstander" as opposed to a bystander when bullying happens.

Fostering a positive school climate was a pervasive theme throughout the summit. Suzanne Greenfield, the

Students deserve to experience schools that are both physically and psychologically safe, and they have the right to a sense of belonging to their school community.

Director of the Citywide Bullying Prevention Program in the Washington DC Office of Human Rights, addressed the issue of school climate and inclusion. With regards to assessment of school climate, she noted that schools could access the National School Climate Survey for free online (see Appendix). Furthermore, she stated that schools should pay particular attention to children's responses to question #19, "Do you see yourself reflected in your curriculum?" She suggested that responses to this question could be used as a proxy for evaluating the safety of certain minority groups in that school. In a similar vein, Barbara Sahli, an educator and consultant, asserted that schools must gather data on their various populations with the intent to foster a sense of belonging for these minority groups. These data can help teachers fully grasp the diversity of their student body. That understanding can then inform the types of novels they choose to cover, inform classroom discourse, prepare them for potentially challenging classroom discussions, and enhance cultural sensitivity with regards to their interactions with students and families.

Fostering a positive school climate was a pervasive theme throughout the summit.

Beyond gathering data on school climate, programming to address lack of school belonging and social isolation were directly addressed at the summit. For example, Air Gallegos of Beyond Differences discussed several programs that this organization offers. The programs aim to promote self-awareness and an appreciation of diversity, while also embracing one's own unique identity. The organization offers online teacher lessons, complete with lesson plans, scripts, and activities, and student leadership lessons that can be used as integrated systemic efforts to nurture connections among youth. "Know Your Neighbor, Know Your Classmate" and "No One Eats Alone" are examples of these programs.

Inclusion, Equity, and Religious Literacy

Inclusion and equity are fundamental tenets of a positive school climate. Many presenters noted issues surrounding Christian norms, lack of awareness and celebration of non-Christian holidays, and structural barriers to religious practice and expression in schools and extracurricular activities. Dr. Farha Abbasi discussed how adherence to Christian norms (e.g., Christmas celebrations in schools, winter and spring breaks that coincide with Christmas and Easter respectively, etc.) conveys

messages about who "is important" and who "is not important." To be inclusive, schools must be sensitive to the beliefs and needs of all students. For example, with regards to Muslim students, she asserts that: (1) students who are fasting during Ramadan should not be expected to take exams and perform the same as their non-Muslim peers, (2) schools should provide a safe quiet place for prayer, and (3) cafeterias should provide halal food offerings on the schools' lunch menus. Dr. Abbasi and other summit presenters noted the exceptionally vulnerable situation of international students functioning at higher education institutions. They note that these young adults may experience myriad forms of HIB with little protection as higher education campuses often do not consider the issues of school climate and inclusion in the same manner as K-12 school districts. Furthermore, these young adults may not be familiar with whom to report HIB incidents to. Additionally, they may fear losing their student visas if they are perceived to be a problem.

Since some schools may not have information on faith affiliation, summit presenters John Camardella (affiliated with the Religious Freedom Center) and Anisha Ismail Patel (of InnovusED, an education consulting firm) suggested that K-12 teachers ask questions on their introductory surveys at the start of the school year about children's likes and needs, as well as a faith celebration question. This allows parents to connect to the school culture and can or should lead to parents collaborating or speaking with the broader school community about their religious holidays. In their presentations, they also noted that when children do not see holiday displays that reflect their beliefs and traditions, it provides a clear message to those children that their faith and culture are not worthy of celebration.

Teachers' religious literacy skills, which were discussed in the plenary sessions as well as in smaller breakout groups, are also inextricably tied to inclusion. John Camardella, as well as Ameena Jandali of Islamic Networks Group (ING), noted that some teachers are under the misperception that religion should not be taught in school and are therefore uncomfortable speaking about it. In different sessions, both speakers stated that teaching religion—as opposed to indoctrinating or teaching in a devotional manner—is mandated in all 50 states. This reflects a generally accepted ideal that religious literacy is essential to cultivating global citizens, because doing so helps to challenge stereotypes and reduce the "othering" of those of different faiths. It also helps to confront expectations related to the racialization of religion or the assumptions that people make about others' faith affiliation based solely on skin color or physical features.[41]

Religious literacy promotes exposure to the main tenets of various faiths in an accurate and unbiased fashion. For example, ING provides trained instructors who work alongside teachers to provide various presentations that dispel myths about Muslims (e.g., contributions of Muslims to civilizations, Muslim women beyond stereotypes, etc.). In areas of the United States where speakers are not available, teachers can access slides, resources, activities, and film links to promote religious literacy. These services are free of charge when teachers register with ING. Relatedly, John Camardella is working with the Religious Freedom Center and higher education institutions to publish a religious studies guidebook, and the organization's website has downloadable resources and lessons on religious liberty.

Religious literacy promotes exposure to the main tenets of various faiths in an accurate and unbiased fashion.

Summit presenters noted that not all religious literacy programs have the intended effect of promoting awareness and shattering stereotypes. Alice Chan, a researcher who examines religious literacy programming, stated that there is mixed evidence about the effect of religious literacy programs reducing negative perceptions. In her work, she found that some programs included inaccuracies about certain faiths and were actually associated with increased negative perceptions. She cautioned that such programs require a sound curriculum, administrative support, unbiased teachers, and community input to ensure their efficacy.

Beyond inclusion of faith groups in the school community, the summit also addressed the inclusion of individuals with disabilities who are exceptionally vulnerable to isolation and bullying. Dr. Ashleigh Molloy discussed schools' progression past a mere responsibility to meet the needs of these individuals (e.g., providing a safe quiet space for the child to retreat to when distressed) towards embracing each person's uniqueness and contribution to the school community. He discussed the critical role that teachers play in managing perceptions of individuals with disabilities, including (1) avoiding the use of labels (i.e., instead of referring to a student as a "disabled child," refer to them as a "child with a disability"); (2) working with their

classes to manage misperceptions and stereotypes; and (3) addressing derogatory language immediately. Again, as was suggested for religious and ethnic minorities, Dr. Molloy asserts that inclusion entails having books in the library reflecting characters with disabilities and making sure that students with disabilities are involved in class activities and in school plays in roles they can be successful in. Disabilities—just like religious, racial, or ethnic affiliations—do not define people's identities, but rather, it is simply one facet of a person's identity. Based on his presentation, it is clear that when teachers believe that youth with disabilities "are not broken, they are just different," so too do their students.

Inclusion and a commitment to equity are qualities that schools must espouse through what they teach, how they teach it, and how this shapes the interactions they have with all members of the school community. In one of the small discussion groups, a summit participant noted that recognizing difference is something that people normally shy away from; however, it is critical to recognize differences at an early age. Through exposure, young children learn to appreciate and accept differences more easily, and over time they will not feel compelled to point out those differences. In addition, in one breakout session, summit presenters noted that modeling how to have difficult conversations to break down social barriers with ethnic and religious minority communities is necessary to teach children how to tackle stereotypes. It was noted that youth who are offered different perspectives may feel it is difficult to veer from adult biases that they are exposed to. Similarly, Sherri Brown, a Jewish preschool director, stated in her presentation that adult modeling of behavior, especially at an early age, is the most critical way to promote inclusion.

Professional Development of Teachers

Teachers need anti-bullying training in order to develop the skills necessary to implement a school's anti-bullying program.[42] As noted above, this entails promoting a positive school climate, inclusion of minority youth and youth with disabilities, and an explicit understanding of the school's harassment, intimidation, and bullying (HIB) policy. Unfortunately, many summit presenters who discussed experiences of bullying noted that the inaction of adults in school who were aware of the bullying was perhaps the most hurtful part of their abuse. Barbara Sahli, principal investigator of the Muslim Youth Voices study, relayed one participant's experiences of being bullied because of her faith. When another student reported the incident to a teacher, the teacher responded by saying that the student was being harassed as "her

people (Muslims) caused a lot of problems." These types of explicit biases pave the way for some educators to permit hostility in their classrooms and to fail to protect vulnerable youth when they should. Perhaps the only situation worse than adults failing to advocate for targets of bullying is when an adult at school perpetrates the abuse. In a study conducted by the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) on a nationally representative sample of American families, 25% of the bullying cases involving Muslim students had a teacher or administrator at school perpetrate the bullying.[43] Presenters Madiha Tahseen, Barbara Sahli, and Sarrah AbuLughod liken bullying perpetrated by teachers to abuse by a parent or guardian. Indeed, these statistics are more than unfortunate—they are appalling. The only remedy is a school district's commitment of time and resources for professional development of its teachers and leadership.

Teachers need anti-bullying training in order to develop the skills necessary to implement a school's anti-bullying program.

Effective Management of Bullying When It Happens

While most of a school's anti-bullying resources should be concentrated on prevention, adults in school need to know how to effectively respond when bullying occurs. The anti-bullying literature clearly supports the following intervention steps:

◆ Swift action in accordance with the school's HIB policy, which provides guidance on reporting, investigation, and disciplinary procedures;

◆ Specific tracking of the target's religious, ethnic, racial, and any other defining feature to identify if specific groups are targeted within that school;

◆ Explicit teacher and staff training about how to handle HIB situations in accordance with the school's policy; and

◆ The presence of an HIB team of staff and teachers who are highly trained to provide professional development, investigate reported incidents, and evaluate and improve the school's HIB policy.[44]

When bullying occurs, it is critical to restore the target's confidence that school is a safe place, as is done in restorative justice techniques. Unfortunately, the school's

efforts are oftentimes concentrated on following procedure in terms of investigating and reporting, with the target's needs usually considered as an afterthought. Suzanne Greenfield, director of the Citywide Bullying Prevention Program, noted that it is critical to support targets in order to minimize depression, anxiety, and the potential for future incidents. In a similar vein, she posited that it is important to understand the reasons why the other child engaged in such aggressive behavior and to avoid labeling that child a bully. She argues that schools need to understand what is compelling him or her to abuse another child and to put supports in place so that he/she can learn to change his or her behavior. In doing so, the school becomes a mechanism of support for both parties, minimizes the negative outcomes for each, and reduces the likelihood of future incidents. Harkening back to the keynote speaker's narrative and a bullying target's shared narrative, a commonality existed: When each target learned about the state of mind of the child who bullied them and their experiences of loneliness in particular, the targets were more amenable for a restorative process. Feelings of isolation in both the child who bullies and the target should be further explored as it relates to religious-based bullying.

Several summit presenters noted the challenges inherent in schools' existing reporting mechanisms. The term "snitch" emerged several times throughout the summit when children and parents discussed reporting of bullying. One child who experienced bullying and whose friend reported it said that he failed to report the incident because he feared retaliation. Accordingly, he suggested that schools employ an anonymous mechanism for reporting. In a similar vein, Suzanne Greenfield suggested that schools make an explicit effort to ensure that a child will not be harmed because of reporting. Therefore, it is important to communicate what sorts of punishments can be expected by the child who bullies if he or she retaliates due to reporting.

Parents, Cyberspace, and Community

Building parent-school-community partnerships are a building block of most effective anti-bullying programs both at the prevention and intervention levels.[45] Sarrah AbuLughod and Madiha Tahseen of the Family and Youth Institute (FYI) discussed ways for parents to remain engaged in their children's lives and to address bullying if it occurs. They used the acronym BAIR to guide parents of vulnerable children. BAIR stands for Be aware, Advocate, Identity, and Report. Parents need to be aware of the increased vulnerability for bullying their

children may experience because of their religious affiliation and ancestry. Additionally, communicating with children is critical to fully understand a son or daughter's identity and to nurture a trusting connection so that a child feels comfortable to report bullying. Parents also need to foster a relationship with the school and teachers, learn about the anti-bullying policy, and be active in community organizations. When bullying happens, parents are encouraged to meet with the school and then to send a follow-up email documenting the contents of the meeting so that there is a record that will enhance school accountability. However, during one small group discussion,

Parents also need to foster a relationship with the school and teachers, learn about the anti-bullying policy, and be active in community organizations.

participants noted that parents who are non-English speakers or have recently migrated may be unfamiliar with this process. In this case, a recommendation may be made that requires schools to develop a teaching team—made-up of students and teachers—as a model for other teachers and administrators on how to engage parents who are non-English speakers or have recently immigrated. The specific goal of such a team would be to aid in the process of communication between parents and administrators to discuss issues that their child may face if they are bullied. While parental involvement does not always yield the necessary results, as was seen in Mukherjee's case, it does convey to the school that the target has an advocate, that instances of injustice will be reported, and that action is expected. As Mukherjee stated and the literature supports, parents' attention and responsiveness is invaluable to the well-being of targets. This is especially critical given the fact that children often do not report such incidents to parents, making open lines of communication within families absolutely critical.

Parental support was also a fundamental element discussed in the responsible use of the Internet and social media. This was mentioned across multiple sessions over the course of the two-day summit. Jeff Collins, the vice president of the After School social media app, called this "promoting positive digital citizenship." For Collins, that entails safe, savvy, and ethical use of technology, which should be taught alongside social-emotional character development (SECD). He spoke of social media companies'

responsibility to ensure quick anonymous reporting, as well as the use of algorithms and human monitoring of posted content on these applications to protect against cyberbullying. In Suzanne Greenfield's related presentation, she made the case that children need to be explicitly taught and instructed in navigating the online world early on. Parents are the gatekeepers, so parental monitoring was discussed considerably across several sessions. Another presenter, Maaria Mozaffar, noted the challenges when the online and real worlds mesh, specifically when cyberbullying can and does spill over to the school day. She also stated that many parents are unaware of just how serious negative online interactions can be, and so it is important for parents to monitor children's social media. Moreover, she stated that it is critical for parents to be aware of the laws and policies governing cyberbullying in their districts, and she also noted that policy must evolve quickly to keep up with the changing technological advances.

In addition to parental involvement in forging connections with schools, participants emphasized the importance of community engagement and activism. Aasma Mehdi and Mohammad Razvi of the Council of People's Organization (COPO) discussed how their grassroots organization, developed after 9/11, aims to bridge relationships between the Muslim, Arab, and South Asian (MASA) communities; law personnel; and the broader dominant society. The organization develops cooperation and trust through engaging the MASA community through various programs, including (1) a halal meals on wheels program, (2) Youth Empowerment Program (e.g., academic support services, bullying awareness, etc.), (3) provision of support for immigrants, and (4) an Alternative to Violence Project (AVP) that is an initiative to promote conflict resolution. Community engagement, such as this, can facilitate many positive outcomes, such as helping religious minorities to advocate for inclusion in school, fostering exposure of Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians in the dominant society doing good in the community, and providing a sense of purpose for young religious minorities, which has been shown to be a protective factor against poor mental health outcomes.

Community engagement is also critical for young religious minorities and is not just for their parent's generation. For example, Ishaq Pathan of Islamic Networks Group (ING) spoke at the summit about their youth program that trains and certifies young people to conduct workshops on Islam and common practices of its followers. Similarly, Hana Mangat, who co-founded the youth-led Sikh Kid 2 Kid, presented on their teacher training programs to educate about the Sikh faith and practices. The summit yielded remarkable stories such as these, of young people's resilience and drive for change in the face of discrimination.

Case Studies and Strategies to Address Religious-Based Bullying: Discussant Responses

The themes that emerged during these sessions also arose in smaller groups that discussed complex case studies of actual religious-based bullying incidents. The first case depicted a classroom discussion that was provoked by a teacher-selected reading, which reinforced the stereotype of an oppressed Muslim woman and marriage. In this case, the teacher then singled out a Muslim female in the class and asked her about her plans for an arranged marriage. In this session, conversation included nuanced ways about how the incident should be handled by the school, as well as what steps could have been taken to prevent such an incident. Consistently, across multiple sessions discussing this case, participants spoke of the need for professional development in terms of cultural competency training and the promotion of religious literacy. They also raised points regarding inclusion and how the teacher's own bias likely played out in her selection of the reading. Likewise, the second case study also provoked conversation among discussants about cultural competency and religious literacy. This case surrounded a classroom exchange in which the educator embarrassed a student about the turban he wore as a symbol of his religious devotion to the Sikh faith. Discussants noted the need for school administrators to hold the teacher accountable for her actions, as well as the need for professional development to address her biases.

In both case studies discussed, participants noted how humiliating these experiences must have been for the students. In turn, they noted the school's responsibility to restore the children's sense of safety and belonging to the school community. In nearly every session discussing these cases, participants touched on the themes discussed in the scholarly literature as well as best practices that were presented at the summit. Unfailingly, attendees called for greater professional development in the realms of cultural competency and religious literacy, as well as concerted efforts to address inclusion of marginalized groups. Interestingly, many discussants were less concerned with punishment as a means to address the bullying. Rather and most consistently, participants called for practices that would restore the target's confidence in their safety and sense of community, and they also called for more professional development to address the teachers' roles in these incidents.

Summary of Recommendations

The summit presentations yielded valuable insights for educators, parents, and students, as well as the broader community. Accordingly, a series of concise recommendations garnered from the proceedings and co-authored with American Muslim Health Professionals are presented below, separated based on various adult and youth roles. Furthermore, a list of organizations and resources to address religious-based bullying are available in the Appendix.

Educators

◆ Implement anti-bullying prevention strategies that address:

- A whole-school approach,
- A positive school climate,
- Social-emotional character development (SECD) of students, including promoting upstanders,
- An emphasis on inclusion,
- An explicit mention of protected groups in the school's HIB policy,[46]
- Teacher and staff training pertaining to the prevention of bullying,

- Cultural sensitivity and support for minority students (e.g., faculty sponsorship for clubs or student groups, a recognition of all religious holidays, etc.), and
- Religious literacy and addressing bias and inaccuracies in the curriculum.[47]

◆ Teachers should be equipped with anti-bullying training in order to develop the skills necessary to implement a school's anti-bullying program.[48]

◆ Bullying should be effectively managed every time it is reported. This entails compliance with the school's anti-bullying policy, including investigation and remedies that should be put in place to address the safety of the target if the criteria for bullying have been met. Beyond this, schools must focus on school-level cultural competency to address religious-based bullying as part of the assessment process.

◆ Make sure to address the target of the bullying, reassuring them that they are wanted and should feel safe within the school. Counseling may also be needed depending on the child's well-being, as well as the severity and persistence of the bullying.

- Make sure to address the child who bullies to understand what is compelling him/her to act aggressively and to see if counseling may be warranted.

- Provide educators with resources needed for professional development, addressing both cultural competency training and the promotion of religious literacy. Identity and self-exploration-based practices for teachers in which their own identity and cultural backgrounds are explored with colleagues is critical. This correlates to the notion that empathy and social-emotional learning occurs throughout the system and not just at the student level.

- Incorporate anti-bullying initiatives into school-based learning on life skills. Ensuring a student's ability to participate and thrive within the school community must include a focus on anti-bullying work, with specific attention on religious-based bullying and challenging of stereotypes.

- Teachers should incentivize students to challenge biases (e.g., validation from adults regarding the reasonable risk and benefits to doing so).

- K-12 teachers should ask questions on their introductory surveys at the start of the school year about children's likes and needs, as well as a faith celebration question. This allows parents to connect to the school culture and can or should lead to parents collaborating or speaking with students about their religious holidays.

- Promote inclusion of individuals with disabilities (e.g., providing a safe quiet space for the child to retreat to when distressed) by embracing each person's uniqueness and contribution to the school community. Teachers play a critical role in managing perceptions of individuals with disabilities, including (1) avoiding the use of labels (i.e., instead of referring to a student as a "disabled child," refer to them as a "child with a disability"), (2) working with their classes to manage misperceptions and stereotypes, and (3) addressing derogatory language immediately.

Parents and Cyberspace

- Since targets of bullying often feel shame about being victimized and therefore hesitate to discuss such instances, it is important to develop strong parent-child bonds characterized by an honest dialogue. Furthermore, as adolescents explore facets of their identity that include their culture or religion or experiment with their appearance, they may be more vulnerable to being bullied. As such, parents should attempt to keep the lines of communication open.

- Parents also need to foster a relationship with the school and teachers, learn about the anti-bullying policy, and be active in community organizations.

- When bullying happens, parents are encouraged to meet with the school, and then send a follow-up email documenting the contents of the meeting so that there is a record that will enhance school accountability.

- Parents are the gatekeepers, and thus parental monitoring must be present with the use of technology in the daily lives of children and adolescents.

- It is critical for parents to be aware of the laws and policies governing cyberbullying in their districts.

Students

- Promote being an "upstander" and respond to bullying when it occurs. It is very important to not stand by and watch bullying since this promotes the behavior. Instead, upstanders either "speak up" or leave the situation to get an adult who can stop it. After the incident, upstanders can provide support for the child who was bullied to help that individual to feel safe again.

  - One example of this type of the upstander model is the Hope4Utah community suicide prevention model program. For the purpose of religious-based anti-bullying programs, this model may be looked to for its foundation on a peer-to-peer mentoring model. The program is made up of "hope squads" that are comprised of trained students who can identify warning signs and assist at-risk students to get help from an adult. This type of social group power based on a peer-to-peer mentoring model can be effective in anti-bullying efforts, especially as it relates to religious-based bullying. Another example of the utilization of the upstander model is the bullybust.org program. This program aims to form a community of upstanders through "upstander alliances" that are made up of students who develop projects and utilize resources on upstander training to change school climate. It was developed by the National School Climate Center in 2009.

- Upstanders are particularly important in addressing religious-based bullying as it was generally concluded at the summit that bystanders who observe misperceptions or misinformation about a particular religious background without any intervention can and may believe these misperceptions or misinformation.

◆ Always report any harassment, intimidation, or bullying incident to an adult. It is not being a "snitch."

◆ Ask teachers and/or guidance staff to have an anonymous submission box to report bullying incidents to avoid concern over retaliation.

Community Members and Organizations

◆ Community engagement is critical for young religious minorities and is not just for their parent's generation. Islamic Networks Group (ING) and Sikh Kid 2 Kid have youth programs that train and certify young people to conduct workshops on Islam and Sikhism, respectively.

◆ Organizations that bridge relationships between Muslim, Arab, and South Asian populations and the communities they live in, such as the Council of People's Organization (COPO), are important grassroots groups.

◆ Organizations such as social media companies, corporations, and community-based organizations with a focus on youth must incorporate bias- and stereotype-challenging practices into their value system as they develop products and programs. Platforms must include language that demonstrates the importance of thinking critically about stereotypes in a social-emotional-based learning environment.

Practitioners

◆ Practitioners should note that ongoing bullying of one's faith or religion may be experienced as a form of abuse and has long-term mental health outcomes for the target. In connection to mental health, social factors such as loneliness and social isolation at home and in the community should be explored for both the target and the bully.

Strides Need to Be Made: Future Directions for Research, Prevention, and Intervention

To date, anti-bullying literature is far from creating a full understanding of religious-based bullying or providing a clear path for prevention and intervention. Progress is needed to improve our definition, measurement, and reporting of this form of victimization. So long as reporting mechanisms examine bullying without also recording the racial, ethnic, and ancestry information of the target, we will continue to underestimate the prevalence of this form of abuse. In other words, the conflation of race, ethnicity, and religion will continue to be a substantial barrier to our understanding of just how frequently bias-based bullying occurs. With regards to risk and protective factors, as well as outcomes of religious-based bullying, more ground needs to be covered. While wearing religious symbols

Progress is needed to improve our definition, measurement, and reporting of this form of victimization.

has been a documented risk factor,[49] further research should consider how other variables such as acculturation, years lived in the U.S., and facets of ethnic identity play a hand in this issue. Further analysis is needed on the impact of microaggressions on religious minorities, the school, familial, and peer dynamics that may confer risk or protection, and how intersectionality in identity impacts risk for HIB. In terms of outcomes, though there is emerging evidence suggesting that bias-based harassment is more harmful psychologically than nonbiased-based forms,[50] these findings need to be replicated and tested in larger and more diverse samples. These were all common concerns in the myriad summit presentations and discussions.

With regard to prevention and intervention, strides have been made in terms of suggested programmatic features to prevent religious-based bullying or to provide vulnerable children with some tools to combat it.[51] However, the efficacy of these programs has not been assessed. With regards to the effectiveness of general

anti-bullying programs to address bias-based bullying, the evidence is limited. In a recent review of the efficacy of anti-bullying programs, programs were less effective in diverse schools compared to more racially, ethnically, and religiously homogeneous schools.[52] Thus, there is the suggestion that discrimination or lack of respect for diversity is at play. However, we have no information on just how religious, racial, and ethnic diversity within a school influences the implementation of anti-bullying programs. Another facet related to the challenges of implementation that is glaringly lacking in the literature on religious-based bullying is the issue of "buy-in" from educators. Indeed, bullying prevention and social-emotional learning program implementation require much more than manuals and toolkits. They necessitate a deep—and oftentimes personal—commitment on the part of administrators and educators to grapple with the challenges needed to tailor-fit a program to a school's existing daily operations.[53] Accordingly, program implementation must entail a robust commitment from administrators and educators to engage in an honest evaluation of their own biases towards specific religious groups; this must be done as a prerequisite to professional training on the issue of bullying. As noted earlier, 25% of incidents of bullying of Muslim children were perpetrated by a teacher or school administrator, yet the literature is at a loss for how to address this complex issue. Indeed, future research is needed to inform program development with regards to administrator and educator commitment to the implementation of anti-bullying programs, with a specific emphasis on religious-based HIB prevention and intervention.

These data and anecdotal evidence of bullying of religious minorities demonstrate the need for progress within the various facets of teacher and administrator professional development. Cultural competency, religious literacy, strategies for inclusion of marginalized groups, and the need for social-emotional character development (SECD) were continually discussed in all the plenary and breakout sessions. While summit presenters identified a plethora of best practices and resources, advancements need to be made in terms of empirical evidence of their effectiveness and of policy changes requiring schools to do more in these realms. Progress also needs to be made to promote a better understanding of the cyber world of young students and to move towards the explicit instruction of, as Jeff Collins notes, "positive digital citizenship." The scholarly and policy worlds simply have not kept pace with the advancements in technology that enable aggressive youth to do harm both anonymously and otherwise. While the scholarly realm develops a body of literature, schools must act on the resources that exist in order to catalyze change and protect vulnerable youth.

This National Interfaith Anti-Bullying Summit synthesized our most current understanding of religious-based bullying by gathering the forerunners in research and programmatic development on this topic to share their work. Scholars, policymakers, educators, and parents must work within the confines of the existing scholarship with an eye towards executing and disseminating work that forwards our prevention and intervention efforts to address religious-based bullying. Every child deserves to be educated in an environment that is free from abuse and within a school context that values each child equally.

Appendix A: Recommended Resources from the National Interfaith Anti-Bullying Summit

Table 1. Online Resources

Topic	Organization	Website	Description of Resources
Bullying	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	stopbullying.gov	Provides resources for the prevention and intervention of bullying
	American Federation of Teachers (AFT)	www.aft.org/bully	Provides a plethora of resources for educators on bullying prevention and intervention
	The Family and Youth Institute (FYI)	www.thefyi.org/toolkits/youth-support-tool-kit/	Presents The FYI Bullying Prevention Toolkit and other cultural competency resources for teachers, parents, and students
	ConnectSafely	www.safekids.com/bullying-cyberbullying-resources/	Delivers links and information on cyberbullying
School Climate	National School Climate Center	www.schoolclimate.org/	Recommendations and resources for promoting a positive school climate
	NJDOE Essential Dimensions and Considerations for Safe and Supportive School Conditions	www.nj.gov/education/schools/vandv/1213/forms/EssentialDimensionsandConsiderations.pdf	Recommendations and resources for promoting a positive school climate
	NJDOE Keeping our Kids Safe, Healthy, and in School	www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/hib/	Recommendations and resources for promoting a positive school climate
	Safe Communities, Safe Schools Fact Sheet	www.colorado.edu/cspv/safeschools/#	Quick facts and resources for promoting a positive school climate
Cultural Competency Training	Education World	www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson294.shtml	Teacher lesson plans on respecting differences
	EdChange	www.edchange.org/survey.html	Results of the Social Justice and Multicultural Teacher Educators Resource Survey
	EdChange	www.edchange.org/handouts.html	A variety of resources including 25 websites that address diversity
	Penn State Division of Student Affairs	a) edge.psu.edu/ b) edge.psu.edu/workshops/mc/power/privilegewalk.shtml	a) Online workshops to address cultural competency b) Privilege walk exercise to promote inclusion
	Beyond Differences	www.beyonddifferences.org	Organization that addresses social isolation, site includes student and teacher resources available for free after registration

Topic	Organization	Website	Description of Resources
	InnovusEd	www.innovused.com/about.html	Education consulting firm with cultural competency training for educators and parents
	Religious Freedom Center	www.religiousfreedomcenter.org/resources	Resources including textbooks, lessons, and videos for teacher professional development
	Islamic Networks Group (ING)	www.ing.org	Offers a variety of resources on combating Islamophobia, including free trained speakers on a variety of Muslim-related topics
	Sikh Coalition	www.sikhcoalition.org/resources/?fwp_resource_types=reportspublications	Offers training materials promoting understanding of the Sikh faith
	Sikh Kid-2-Kid	sikhkid2kid.com/	Educator and student resources for promoting religious literacy
Social-Emotional Character Development	The Collaborative for Academic Social-emotional Learning (CASEL)	casel.org/	Resources for teachers including research as well as guidance and toolkits for social-emotional learning
	Character Education Partnership	character.org/	Training and lessons for schools promoting character development
Community Resources	Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU)	www.ispu.org	Provides data and resources aimed at building understanding and strengthening the American Muslim community
	American Muslim Health Professionals (AMHP)	www.amhp.us/	Provides community support through webinars and hosting events that promote mental and physical well-being
	The Family and Youth Institute (FYI)	www.thefyi.org/	Provides myriad resources for parents and families on mental health and social issues
	DeenFit	deenfit.com/index.html	Workshops for American Muslim parents and students on safe social media use and other community resources
	Council of People's Organization (COPO)	copo.org/	Website provides various resources to empower all members of the Muslim, Arab, and South Asian communities in New York City
	Turning Point	tpny.org/services/#support	Provides support, advocacy, and training to address the needs of women and families
Cyber-safety	ConnectSafely	www.connectsafely.org/great-internet-safety-resources/	Resources and links for parents and teens about safe use of the cyber world
	Goodwill Community Foundation (GCF) Global	www.gcflearnfree.org/internetsafetyforkids/resources/1/	Resources and links for parents and teens about safe use of the cyber world
	After School	afterschoolapp.com/about/	A social media app for American teens to communicate in a positive and safe way

Appendix B: Suggested Readings

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