



Robert G Harrington

University of Kansas, USA

Theater of the oppressed as a creative strategy to cope with school-based gender identity bullying and cyber bullying

The purpose for the workshop is to share with attendees how theater of the oppressed has been used as a creative strategy to inform, prevent, and intervene in school-based gender identity bullying and cyber bullying and to share the results of two studies conducted using this creative theatrical approach. The goals of the workshop are to make the attendees leave it by gaining following key points in their mind. 1) To describe current forms of school-based gender identity bullying and cyber bullying and their ramifications on bullying targets and bystanders. 2) To describe how theater of the oppressed can be used as a therapeutic tool to help students, parents, the community-at-large, and mental health professionals to understand the impact and trauma associated with these two forms of bullying. 3) To describe two theatrical applications of theater of the oppressed: "it gets better project", a dramatic musical about gender identity bullying, and "out of bounds", a stage production about school-based relational bullying via cyber bullying. 4) To demonstrate the effects of theater of the oppressed through sharing our research results on audiences who attended and engaged in "it gets better" and "out of bounds." 5) To provide an opportunity for workshop attendees to engage in a theater of the oppressed activity as "SpecActors". Participants will be invited to form small groups and "stage"

a response to a bullying incident from their own collective experiences. The purpose is to demonstrate how theater of the oppressed could be used in small groups as a therapeutic technique and 6) To share the touching "it gets better" PSA that was developed by a middle school group of students who attended the "it gets better" performance to show how theater of the oppressed can be used with clients who have been bullied or who are allies.

Speaker Biography

Robert G Harrington has been working as a Professor at the University of Kansas for 38 years. He teaches and conducts research on bullying prevention and intervention. He works collaboratively with schools, mental health agencies, and other universities and has been an Invited Speaker at many conferences on the topic of bullying. He has been awarded the Social Justice Award for his work in the field of bullying. He is on the Editorial Board of the journal, *Bullying and Social Aggression*.

e: rgharrin@ku.edu



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