

MetroWest Anti-Bullying Coalition Empathy Interviews Disclosure (DRAFT)

You are invited to share your story as part of the MetroWest Anti-Bullying Coalition's initiative to address Bias Based Bullying. Your story and your voice is so important to building awareness around Identity Based Bullying. Our goal is for you to feel as informed, empowered, and supported as possible in this process (see "How Your Story Will Be Shared" below).

About the MetroWest Anti-Bullying Coalition

The MetroWest Anti-Bullying Coalition (ABC) is a grassroots group, convened by SPARK Kindness, for the purpose of addressing and preventing bullying. The MetroWest ABC will be meeting in April/May 2024 with a specific focus on "Bias Based Bullying."

Bias Based Bullying (or Identity Based Bullying) "is defined as any form of bullying related to characteristics considered part of a person's identity or perceived identity group, such as race, religion, disability, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical appearance, etc." [Bias Based Bullying] is particularly harmful, because it: 1) targets an individual's core being/identity; and 2) harms individuals who "identify in the same way or worry that they might be the next target."

Bias Based Bullying is a newer and critically important area of bullying prevention work. It is also potentially emotionally challenging and complex. It will involve addressing: 1) intentionally harmful behavior (bullying); and 2) discrimination and bias against marginalized groups. Therefore, it requires sensitivity, courage, empathy, and self awareness (of privilege and more). Effective work also begins with listening to and understanding individuals and groups who have historically been silenced and marginalized. Therefore, the framing and process of our work is critical to ensure optimal trust and safety for all. [HERE is our list of values](#) for your review.

Impact of Your Story

- Bullying is about silencing people, but biased bullying is about silencing people who have already been silenced. Therefore, we have not heard the critically important stories of harm and impact related to bias-based bullying.
- In order to create positive change we need to build empathy and understanding about the emotional, psychological, social, and physical harm of identity-based bullying. Sharing stories helps foster this empathy and understanding by high-lighting the impact on those who have experienced identity-based bullying.
- If you so choose, your story will be shared with leaders from the MetroWest Anti-Bullying Coalition, with the goal of addressing and reducing Bias Based Bullying (see "How Your Story Will Be Shared" below).

What Contributing Your Story Involves

- You can choose to share your story via a written submission or an in-person or Zoom interview. you are encouraged to select whatever is most comfortable for you.
- In person or Zoom interviews will be 30 to 45 minutes long. The meeting will not exceed 45 minutes unless the interviewer asks for your permission to talk for a longer period.
- The meeting will be conducted by a member of the MetroWest Anti-Bullying Coalition or their designee.
- The meeting/interview will not be recorded (unless requested by you.)

- The interviewer will ask you several questions and then encourage you to share your story regarding Bias Based Bullying. You can decline to answer any question at any time. You may also stop or discontinue the session at any time without any consequences.
- You may stop the interview at any time to ask a question, for clarification, or just to take a break.
- This subject matter of Bias Based Bullying is sensitive and emotionally challenging. First and foremost, we want you to feel both empowered and comfortable with what you are sharing.

How Your Story Will Be Shared

- You will be asked to sign a Consent Form that will outline the ways in which your story can be shared. Generally, your story will be used as part of the educational initiatives related to the Metro West Anti-Bullying Coalition meeting, currently planned for April/May of 2024. Your story may appear in materials for the event, slide presentations, or online resources.
- After you sign the Consent Form, here is an outline of the potential ways that your story may be shared:
 - a. Compendium of Impact Stories/Educational Purposes - Your story will be organized, anonymized, and included in a compendium of "Impact Stories" to be shared with the MW ABC. These stories will be used to educate and enlighten local leaders about the impacts of Identity Based Bullying, while preserving the names/identities of those who share their stories.
 - b. Marketing/Event Materials - A select number of stories will be utilized in the marketing materials for the MW ABC event on May 1 and in materials distributed at the event itself. Again, these stories will be anonymized and no names or identifying information will be used. Stories may also be used on a future MW ABC website, to be developed over the next year.
 - c. Coalition Event/Speakers - A very select number of stories (2-4 total) will be presented live at the Metro West Anti-Bullying Coalition meeting on May 1, 2024. A Work Group of the MetroWest ABC will be reviewing stories and selecting entries for the event. (For this category, the Work Group will be reviewing those entries where participants have answered "yes" they would be interested in sharing their story live at the May 1, 2024 event.) However, if – when we contact you - you have changed your mind, and do not wish to share your story live at the event (for whatever reason) we completely understand and respect that. The Work Group would then select another candidate. (Please know that if you do not wish to share your story live at the event, you will still be given the option of having it included in the (anonymous) Compendium of Impact Stories to be shared for educational purposes.)
 - d. MetroWest Anti-Bullying Coalition Members - These Coalition members will use these stories to gain insight, develop policies and protocols, create teaching tools, and build understanding within their organization and to better serve their community.
- If you decide to not share your story/sign the Consent Form, that is also perfectly acceptable and understood. We are still grateful for your consideration.
- It is up to you whether you would like to share your story anonymously (not include your name, Etc.) or you would like to use your actual name, or a pseudonym. This is completely up to you.

Your Questions for Us

- At any time, we welcome your questions about this initiative and this process of collecting stories.
- Questions can be sent to lcanty@sparkkindness.org and cguthery@sparkkindness.org

- Your interviewer is also happy to answer any questions about their connections to and experience with identity-based bullying. This is a community-wide initiative and we are all here to learn from each other.