

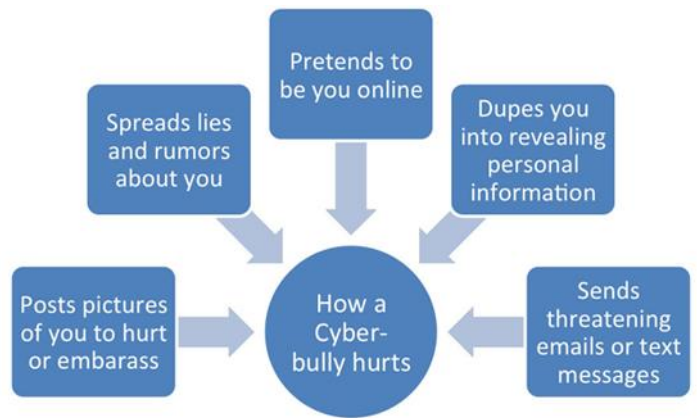
## Choices Topic for October: Relational Aggression/Bullying/Cyberbullying

### What is Bullying?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

### What motivates a bully?

Bullying is about social dynamics. It involves the abuse of power. It involves someone who knows how to get their need for love, attention, and acceptance met through social dominance of a vulnerable target.



**How can you delete cyber bullying?**  
**Don't write it!**  
**Don't forward it!**  
**Report it!**

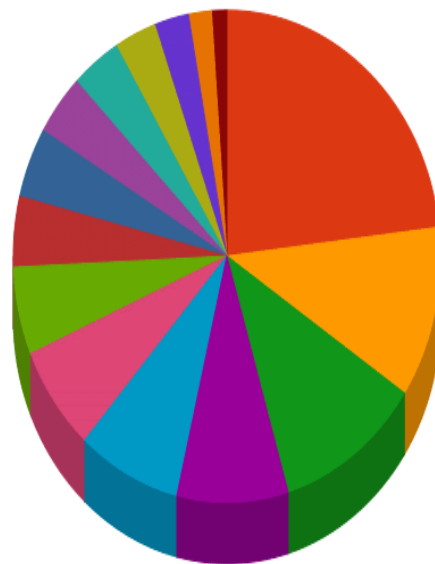
## Discussion Questions, Information, and Research

### Students:

- How does it feel when another student is saying negative things about you?
- How do you know when to tell someone you are being bullied?
- How do you keep yourself safe from cyber bullying?
- What can you do if you suspect a friend is being bullied?
- What would you do if someone threatened you over a text or online message?



**TYPES OF BULLYING REPORTED**  
 (StopABully School Reports from Sept 2011 - April 2012)



\*Multiple types of bullying can be selected.

### Parents, Faculty and Staff:

- What are your family/classroom rules regarding your teen's communication via the internet or cell phone?
- How would you know if your child is being bullied on the computer?
- Are you available to talk to if teenagers are having a problem with bullying?
- What can you do if you suspect your child/student is being bullied?

Resources: [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov), [http://kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/problems/bullies.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/problems/bullies.html), <http://www.pacerteensagainstabullying.org/#/home> <http://nobullying.com/>

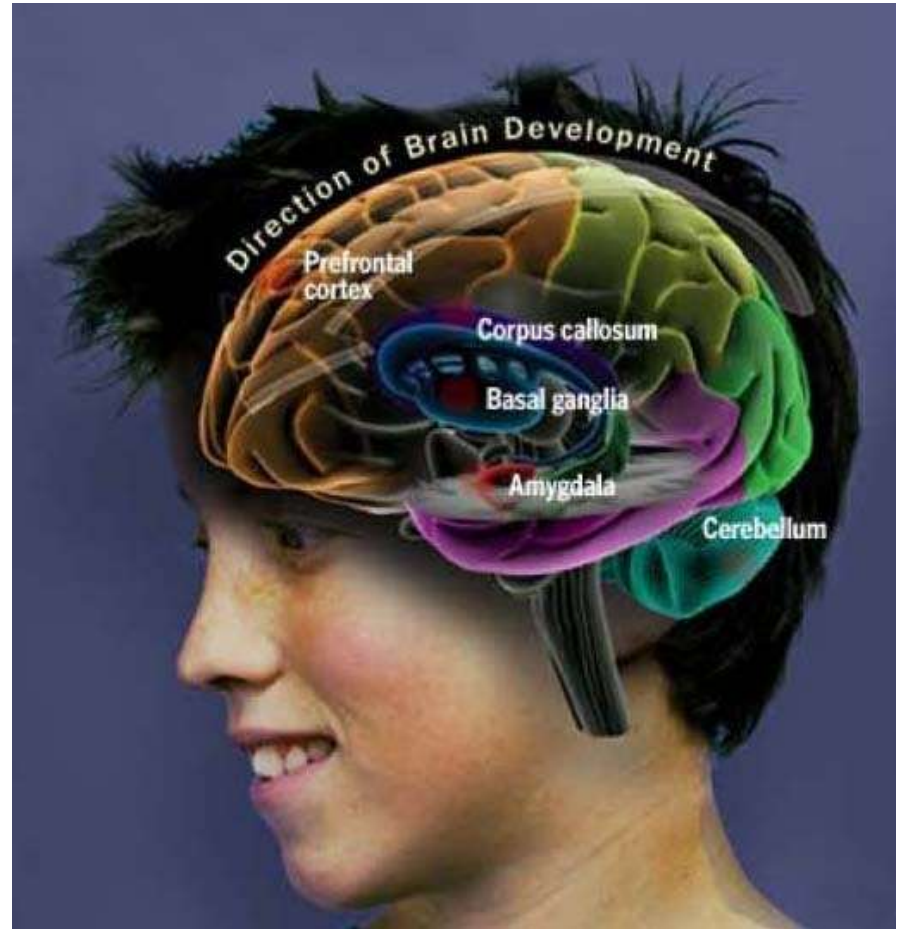


# **Relational Aggression and Bullying**

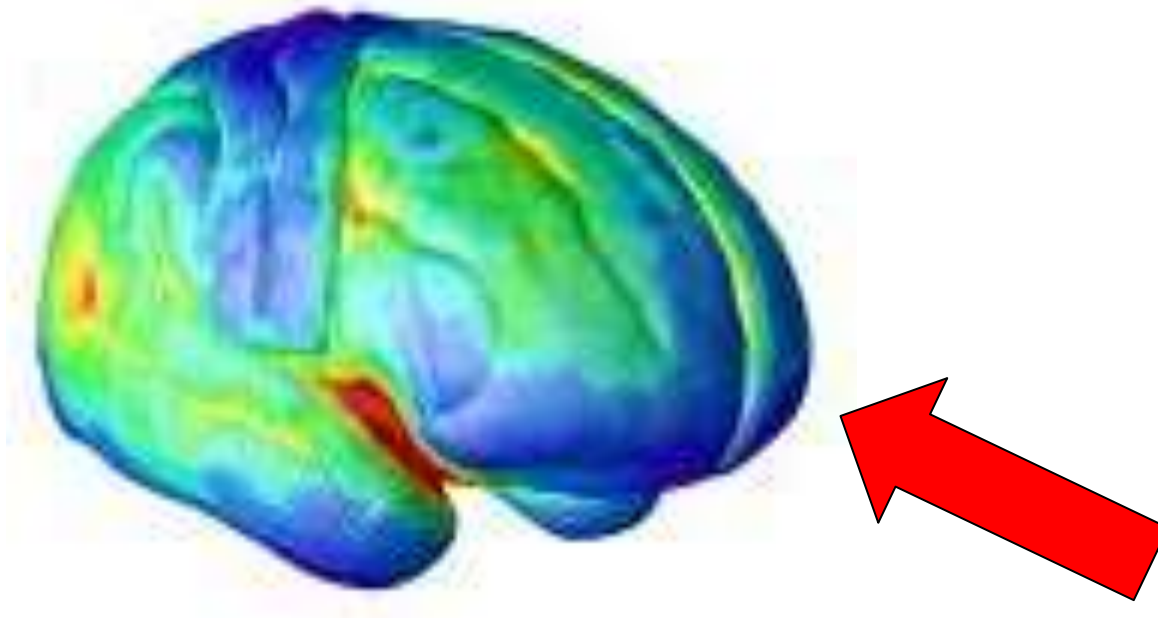
Patrick Hager, Choices Counselor

*A teenager's brain  
"has a well-  
developed  
accelerator but  
only a partly  
developed brake."*

Laurence  
Steinberg



What part of your brain  
is the *brake*?



# THE BRAKE: FRONTAL LOBES

Good  
Decisions



NO

Problem  
-Solving

EMPATHY

# AGE

**11-12**



**24-25**

**200**

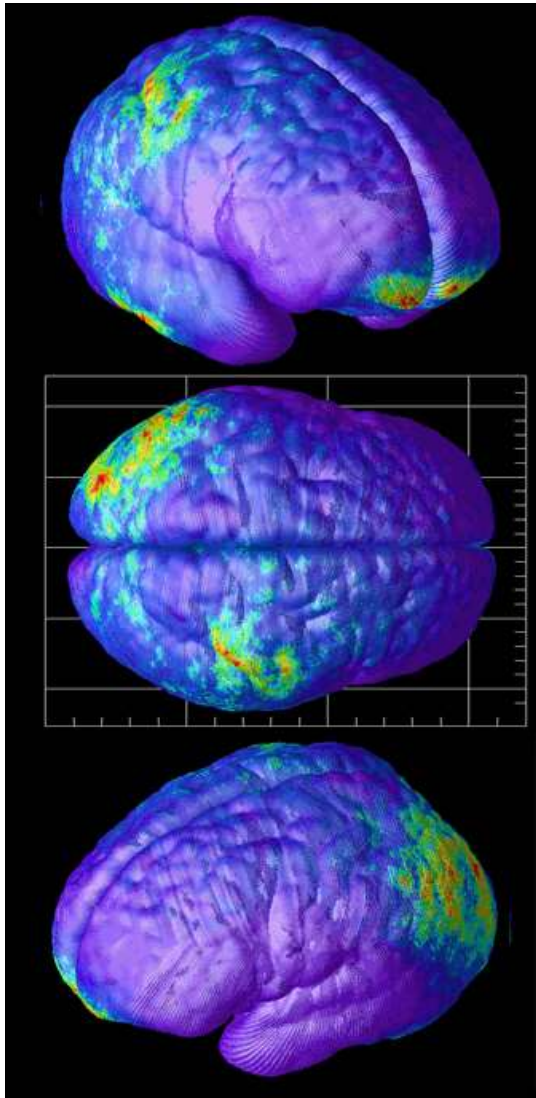
**100**



# Prefrontal Cortex Thinking: The Executive Function Skills

CEO

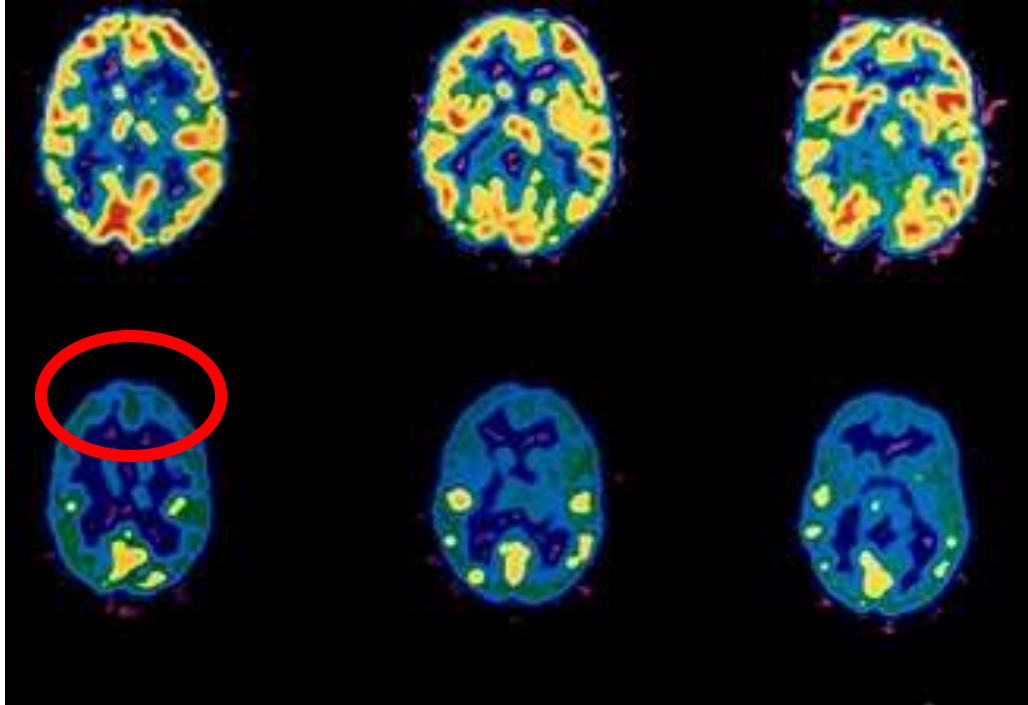
- Abstract; conceptual understanding
  - Impulse Control
  - Problem-Solving
  - Decision-Making
    - Judgment
  - Emotion Regulation
  - Frustration Tolerance
  - Ability to Feel Empathy



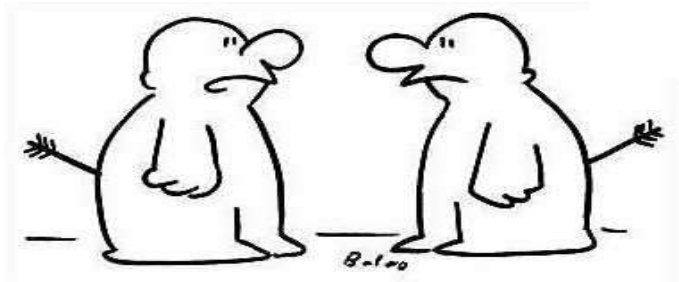
How does brain science relate to relational aggression?



**HYPOFRONTALITY = PLEASURE & FEAR**



**IN BETWEEN Age 11-25 = ARREST**  
*once you start using, you STOP growing emotionally*



"I know exactly how you feel."

## Empathy

- The capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within the person's frame of reference
- Imagining what it might be like to be in "another person's shoes".
- HUGELY important prevention skill for bullying

# Violence Impacts Life Skills & Academic Success!

- 1/3 of all students have been bullied at school
- 160,000 students skip school daily because of bullying... impacts absenteeism
- Effects of bullying persist into adulthood, with victims being at greater risk for depression
- Those who bully are at four-times greater risk for criminal behavior
- Detracts from student learning and time spent teaching
- Fight or Flight! Constant hyper-vigilance can lead to arrested development. How?

# What is bullying?



- Bullying is **unwanted, aggressive behavior**
- Involves a real or perceived **power imbalance**.
- The behavior is **repeated**, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.
- Includes making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

# Bullying is about social dynamics...



- About enforcement of a social hierarchy
- Involves the abuse of power
- May be learned through family system
- Is social play that plays out unconscious power dynamics
- Involves someone who *knows how to get their need for love, attention, and acceptance met through social dominance of vulnerable target*
- The best prevention for bullying is empowerment of students to stand-up to the bully

Adapted from presentation by D. Renee Attaway, M.S., CCC-SLP

# Types of Bullying



- **Physical Bullying** – is action oriented...includes hitting or kicking a victim, or damaging a victim's property
- **Emotional Bullying** – uses words to hurt or humiliate another person...includes name-calling, insults, making racist comments, and constant teasing
- **Social Bullying** – causes harm to one's group acceptance...includes spreading rumors and gossiping
- **Cyberbullying** - bullying through email, instant messaging, in a chat room, on a Web site, or through digital messages or images sent to a cell phone. (same intent to harm...distinguish between "put down" and "get back")



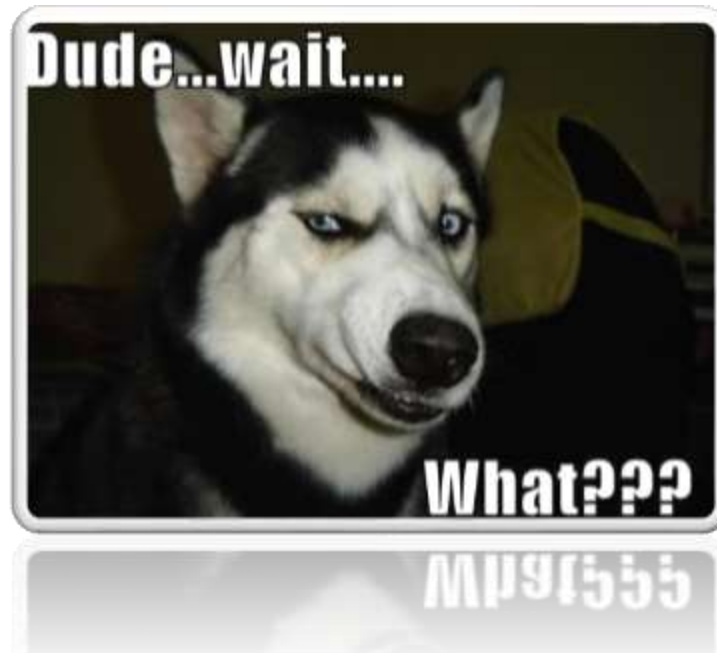
# Roles in Bullying

- Bully
- Bullied
- Bystander
- Upstander



# Bystander Effect

*The greater the number of people present, the less likely people are to help a person in distress.*



The Bystander Effect: The Death of Kitty Genovese



# What is Cyberbullying?

- Cyberbullying occurs when a child or teen uses the Internet, emails, text messages, instant messaging, social media websites, online forums, chat rooms, or other digital technology to harass, threaten, or humiliate another child or teen.



# Why do people do it?

- Anonymity
- Little to no accountability
- Non-verbal is lost
- Do not know it hurts others
- Can't see a reaction-no harm
- Peer pressure
- For “fun”
- On accident
- Impulsive



# What is Trolling?



- **Trolling** is intentionally upsetting people on the internet or in video games by starting arguments or upsetting people by posting inflammatory, or off-topic messages. It is also intentionally provoking people into an emotional response on the internet or in video games.
- [How To Deal With Trolls](#)

# Cyberbullying and Trolling are illegal!

- According to Sec. 42.07 of Title 9 of the Texas Penal Code states that if a person initiates electronic communication with the intent to “*harass, annoy, alarm, abuse, torment, or embarrass,*” another person.
- Class B misdemeanor punishable by 6 months in jail and up to a \$2,000 fine.





## People who bully...

- Have a **higher risk of abusing alcohol and other drugs** in adolescence and as adults
- Are more likely to get into **fights, vandalize property, and drop out of school**
- Are more likely to engage in **early sexual activity**
- Are more likely to have **criminal convictions** and traffic citations as adults. In one study, 60% of boys who bullied others in middle school had a criminal conviction by age 24
- Are more likely to be **abusive** toward their romantic partners, spouses or children as adults



## People who are bullied...

- Have higher risk of **depression** and **anxiety** that may persist into adulthood
- More likely to suffer from **low self-esteem**
- Have increased thoughts about suicide that may persist into adulthood. In one study, adults who recalled being bullied in youth were 3 times more likely to have **suicidal thoughts** or inclinations
- Are more likely to have **health complaints**
- Have **decreased academic achievement** and school participation
- May become **isolated, withdrawn**, jumpy or nervous, or even stop attending school
- Are more likely to retaliate through extremely **violent** measures. In 12 of 15 school shooting cases in the 1990s, the shooters had a history of being bullied
- Increased likelihood of delayed or **arrested development** due to hyper-vigilance

# Be an Upstander!



- **Upstander:** the person who knows what's happening is wrong and does something to make things right

**upstander** (uhp'stān'dər), n. a person who takes action, particularly when the easiest or most acceptable course is to do nothing.

# How to be an Upstander:



- Don't join in the bullying
- Support the victim in private—show your concern and offer kindness
- Stand with the victim and say something. ***Interrupt***
- Encourage others to join in and stand up to the bully. ***Say something***
- Befriend the victim and reach out to him/her in friendship. ***Be a buddy***
- Alert an adult. ***Tell Somebody***



**FACT:**  
**85% OF**  
**BULLYING**

**TAKES PLACE**  
**IN FRONT OF OTHERS**  
**DON'T BE A BYSTANDER!**

[WWW.BULLYASSEMBLIESNY.COM](http://WWW.BULLYASSEMBLIESNY.COM)

# The difference between bullying and conflict...

## **Bullying**

Behavior that is intended to hurt someone, through an imbalance of power, by harming relationships with others. It is not about resolving a dispute.

## **Conflict**

A disagreement or difference of opinion between equals. Both parties have the power to influence the situation. Adolescents learn how to give-and-take through successful conflict resolution.

# Fact or Myth?

- **Nothing can be done at schools to reduce bullying.**
- **MYTH** – School initiatives to prevent and stop bullying have reduced bullying by 15 to 50 percent. The most successful initiatives involve the entire school community of teachers, staff, parents, students, and community members.
- **Parents are usually aware that their children are bullying others.**
- **MYTH** – Parents play a critical role in bullying prevention, but they often do not know if their children bully or are bullied by others. To help prevent bullying, parents need to talk with their children about what is happening at school and in the community.

# Fact or Myth?

- **All children will outgrow bullying.**
- **MYTH** – For some, bullying continues as they become older. Unless someone intervenes, the bullying will likely continue and, in some cases, grow into violence and other serious problems. Children who consistently bully others often continue their aggressive behavior through adolescence and into adulthood.
- **Reporting bullying will make the situation worse.**
- **MTYH** – Research shows that children who report bullying to an adult are less likely to experience bullying in the future. Adults should encourage children to help keep their school safe and to tell an adult when they see bullying.
- **Teachers often intervene to stop bullying.**
- **MYTH** – Adults often do not witness bullying despite their good intentions. Teachers intervene in only 14 % of classroom bullying episodes and in 4% of bullying incidents that happen outside the classroom.

# Fact or Myth?

- **People who bully are insecure and have low self-esteem.**
- **MYTH** – Many people who bully are popular and have average or better-than-average self-esteem. They often take pride in their aggressive behavior and control over the people they bully. People who bully may be part of a group that thinks bullying is okay. Some people who bully may also have poor social skills and experience anxiety or depression. For them, bullying can be a way to gain social status.
- **Bullying often resolves itself when you ignore it.**
- **MYTH** – Bullying reflects an imbalance of power that happens again and again. Ignoring the bullying teaches students who bully that they can bully others without consequences. Adults and other students need to stand up for children who are bullied, and to ensure they are protected and safe.

# Fact or Myth?

- **People who bully have power over those they bully.**
- **FACT** – People who bully others usually pick on those who have less social power (peer status), psychological power (know how to harm others), or physical power (size, strength). However, some people who bully also have been bullied by others. People who both bully and are bullied by others are at the highest risk for problems (such as depression and anxiety) and are more likely to become involved in risky or delinquent behavior.
- **Spreading rumors is a form of bullying.**
- **FACT** – Spreading rumors, name-calling, excluding others, and embarrassing them are all forms of social bullying that can cause serious and lasting harm.
- **Only boys bully.**
- **MYTH** – People think that physical bullying by boys is the most common form of bullying. However, verbal, social, and physical bullying happens among both boys and girls, especially as they grow older.

# ADHD and Autism

- These diagnoses are associated with increased risk of being bullied and increased risk of bullying
- ADHD more likely to bully – seems to be due to low self control and impulsiveness
- Students with autism are 4x more likely to be bullied and are prone to bully others because of aggressive responding and limited social-problem solving, though they are often unaware they are bullying

# What can I do as a parent?

- Talk with your child about bullying
- Has your child experienced or witnessed bullying?
- Teach empathy, respect, and compassion
- If you hurt another person, you repair it.
- If child is bullying, make expectations clear and provide clear and consistent consequences for bullying behavior
- Kids learn the reasons for respecting and caring for others when they experience receiving respect and care from the adults in their lives
- Teach social responsibility
- Create a culture of kindness
- Encourage problem solving



Adapted from presentation by D. Renee Attaway, MS, CCC-SLP



# What can I do about cyberbullying?

- Require that your child uses technology in a public place in the house
- Set limits on the amount of time they can spend on technology
- Require them to give you all usernames and passwords
- Take time to acquaint yourself with their virtual worlds
- Encourage them to speak with you if they experience cyberbullying – know how to block communications and report bullying activity

Remember...

**1** PERSON  
**CAN** make a  
difference

Strong people  
Stand up for themselves,  
But stronger people  
Stand up for others.

- Unknown



**THE COUNCIL**  
ON RECOVERY  
HOUSTON | AUSTIN

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