

**BULLYING**  
**BEHAVIORS:**  
**Enough Is Enough**

**INDEPENDENT STUDY**  
**A FIVE CREDIT CLASS**

*# ED437Q/#ED537Q*

**INSTRUCTOR:**  
**DR. MICHAEL SEDLER**  
**Email:mike@communicationplus.net**  
**(509) 443-1605**  
**THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE**

Please use the checklist/syllabus in the manual.  
**IF POSSIBLE, PLEASE SEND ASSIGNMENTS ELECTRONICALLY (AS AN ATTACHMENT).**  
**MICROSOFT WORD FORMAT, PLEASE.** If necessary, you may send it postal mail to the address below. It is best to send all completed assignments together!

Thank you for signing up for my independent study classes. **You may take up to six months** to complete this course and may obtain an additional 3 month extension. DO NOT send in any completed papers unless you have registered for the class! If working in a group, put all names on each paper, except the integration paper which must be individually authored. See \*\* at bottom of page.

The checklist in the manual is to help you plan your schedule to successfully complete this course. The last page of the manual includes a General Bibliography with phone numbers of publishing companies. If you prefer, you may choose an alternate book not on the suggested list.

On the following page, I have given you a brief biography/resume of my background. You will see that I have a Master's Degree in Social Work; my K-8 Teaching Certification and am a Licensed Social Worker with the State of Washington. My current primary role is as a consultant and trainer for schools, businesses and agencies. I also worked in education for 15 years as a Director of Special Education, a Behavior Intervention Specialist, School Social Worker, and Teacher.

I teach classes and seminars throughout the United States and in Canada. I am adjunct professor through two Universities in Washington. I am available for on-site training, classes, and in-services for agencies and schools. I anticipate this class will be enjoyable and full of learning. Please contact me if you would like me to be involved directly with your school or business.

Thank you once again, for signing up for it and I look forward to working with you over the next weeks/months. If you would like individual feedback on assignments, please indicate this when turning in your work.

Sincerely,

Michael Sedler  
(509) 443-1605  
E-mail: [mike@communicationplus.net](mailto:mike@communicationplus.net)  
Website: [www.michaelsedler.com](http://www.michaelsedler.com)  
P.O. BOX 30310 - Spokane, WA. - 99223

\*\* For those working in groups (400/500 level only!)- be sure to go to The Heritage Institute website at [www.hoi.edu](http://www.hoi.edu) and click on the "group collaboration" icon.

1. Each group member must pick a book to read (you may all choose the same book).
2. Each group member must read the entire manual.
3. Final evaluation/integration paper must be individually authored.

Please share about my classes with others; it is my main form of advertising.

## MICHAEL SEDLER

(509) 443-1605 (w); (509) 939-6302 (c)

Email: mike@communicationplus.net or michael@michaelsedler.com

website: www.michaelsedler.com

### Education

B.A., Political Science

Master Degree, Social Work

Master Degree, Divinity

Doctorate Degree, Ministry

Teaching Certificate

### Work Experience

Consultant/Trainer/Counselor

Director of Special Education

Developmental Disabilities Administration, State of WA.-beh. consult

Supervisor, Educational Services

School Social Worker (K-12)

Behavior Intervention Specialist (K-12)

Classroom Teacher (elementary and middle school)

Assistant Pastor

### Other Experiences

State Correctional Facility for Juveniles, Counselor and Supervisor

Community Mental Health Therapist

State Trainer in Autism (State of Washington)

Adjunct Professor for several Universities

Student Teacher Supervisor

Consultant for schools, business, churches throughout United States

Provide weekend marriage retreats

Interview and Speech Coach/Trainer for Miss Arizona, 3<sup>rd</sup> runner-up Miss America 2012

### Author

***When to Speak Up and When To Shut Up.*** (Jan., 2006 Revell Books, \$5.99). Book from faith-based perspective. Communication book discussing conflict, power struggles, listening strategies, asking questions. **(Over 300,000 copies sold).**

***What To Do When Words Get Ugly*** (October, 2016 Revell Books, \$5.99). (updated/edited version of "Stop The Runaway Conversation.") Two new chapters in addition to edits. Book from faith-based perspective. Importance of not listening to negative discussions and how they impact a person's attitude.

Books are available through all bookstores, at [www.bakerbooks.com](http://www.bakerbooks.com), by calling 800 877 2665, or by checking with various online book companies. Revell is a division of Baker Publishing Group.

Both books are also available in CD format as audio books.

# **INDEPENDENT STUDY COLLEGE COURSES**

THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE (credits through Antioch University, Seattle, WA)

MICHAEL SEDLER, INSTRUCTOR

Register for courses anytime. (6-month period for completion from the date you register). **Collaborate with fellow educators-only one set of assignments turned into instructor.** (Check out "Group Collaboration Guidelines" at [www.hol.edu](http://www.hol.edu)). \*\*Clock hours available for partial course completion.

The following are **3 CREDIT CLASSES** (3 quarter credits = 2 semester credits)

**1. Increasing Motivation and Self-Esteem in Students (SS401p/SS501p)**

Strategies to help students feel confident and help educators find more successful approaches with them.

**2. Parents: Adversary or Ally--A Cooperative Approach (SS401q/SS501q)**

Specific ideas on connecting with parents and helping better communication between school and home.

**3. Social Skills: A Foundation For Learning (SS401v/SS501v)**

Activities and ideas to encourage students to improve their peer and social relations.

**4. Understanding & Connecting With Aggressive Students (ED404d/ED504d)**

Each person will increase their understanding of ways to de-escalate aggression and its' causes.

**3 CREDIT COST: \$280-400/500 level; \$195-clock hours (3 quarter = 2 semester)**

The following are **5 CREDIT CLASSES:** (5 quarter credits -3.3 semester credits)

**1. Bullying Behaviors: Enough is Enough (ED437q/ED537q)**

Identification and interventions to reduce bullying behaviors and victim mentality within schools and community.

**2. Counseling Skills For Educators (ED409r/ED509r)**

Helpful ideas on listening skills, asking questions, and communicating with students.

**3. Gang Attitudes And Actions (SS406k/SS506k)**

This class will help each person to identify gangs and intervention strategies for your community/school.

**4. High Maintenance Behaviors & Interactions (SS409f/SS509f)**

This course investigates the many aspects of high needs people, behaviors and effective interactions.

**5. Mental Health Issues and Students (HE402n/HE502n)**

Understand various disorders (oppositional defiant, obsessive compulsive, bi-polar) and interventions.

**6. Nurturing Compassion Within Our Schools (ED434y/ED534y)**

Ideas to help adults and children learn to be more sensitive, kind, and compassionate toward one another.

**7. Organizational Teaching Skills (ED429w/ED529w)**

Increase your own organizational and time management skills as well as helping students in these areas.

**8. School Violence (SS406m/SS506m)**

Each person will learn indicators and interventions for potential violent situations.

**9. Stress Reduction in Staff and Students (HE401m/HE501m)**

Strategies to reduce stress, become more effective in life, and teach these skills to students.

**10. Student, Classroom and Whole-School Discipline (ED419g/ED519g)**

Focus is on negative talk, gossip and rumors within schools. Behavioral strategies for each above area.

**11. Youth Suicide (SS404u/SS504u)**

Specific discussions on signs and interventions for suicide prevention.

**5- CREDIT COST: \$415-400/500 LEVEL; \$315-clock hours (5 quarter = 3.3 semester)**

**NEXT PAGE FOR MORE CLASSES AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION**

# **INDEPENDENT STUDY COLLEGE COURSES**

**THE HERITAGE INSTITUTE (credits through Antioch University, Seattle, WA)**

**MICHAEL SEDLER, INSTRUCTOR**

The following are **6 CREDIT CLASSES**: (6 quarter credits - 4 semester credits)

## **1. Autism: Questions and Answers (ED445y/ED545y)**

Understanding the general areas of autism, diagnosis, and overall strategies for interventions for children with special needs.

## **2. Establishing Rules and Boundaries (ED445x/ED545x)**

Ideas to assist educators in setting up a successful work environment for children (rules, procedures, teaching tools).

## **3. Inspirational Education (ED452f/ED552f)**

This course will re-charge the batteries and create a new excitement about teaching in each person.

## **4. The Impact Of Trauma and Loss in Students (ED464z/ED564z)**

Strategies to support children who have experienced traumatic situations in life.

## **5. Why Children Act Out (ED458t/ED558t)**

Recognize the underlying function of behaviors and interventions approaches.

**6- CREDIT COST: \$495--400/500 LEVEL; \$380-clock hours (6 quarter = 4 semester)**

**REGISTRATION: Call The Heritage Institute--1 (800) 445-1305; 1 (360) 341-3020  
Or register on line at www.hol.edu**

**QUESTIONS: Please call Michael Sedler at (509) 443-1605. Leave message when necessary.**

**Email address: mike@communicationplus.net Website: www.michaelsedler.com**

\*\*For clock hours, only complete the first section of the course. Remember, clock hours may not transfer to other districts or states. You cannot go back and acquire credit once clock hours have been earned for a class.

**COURSE TITLE:** **BULLYING BEHAVIORS**

**NO. OF CREDITS:** **5 QUARTER CREDITS**  
**[Semester Cr Equivalent: 3.3]**

**CLOCK HRS: 50**  
**PDU'S: 50**  
**CEU'S: 5.0**

**INSTRUCTOR:** **MICHAEL SEDLER, D. MIN., M.S.W.**  
**P.O. Box 30310**  
**Spokane, WA. 99223**  
**(509) 443-1605**  
**E-MAIL: [mike@communicationplus.net](mailto:mike@communicationplus.net)**

### **ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST**

The assignment checklist will help you plan your schedule of work for this course. Check off items completed so that you can better monitor your progress. While you have six-months to complete your work, many will find a shorter time period convenient. All assignments are to be typed, 1-sided and double spaced. SEND ASSIGNMENTS VIA EMAIL, IF POSSIBLE. **Please send all assignments together. Grades will be submitted once all assignments and the integration paper have been sent to instructor.**

In case of discrepancy between the University syllabus sent to you and this one, please use the syllabus found in this manual for all your assignments.

***For Washington Clock Hours, Oregon Professional Units, or Continuing Education Credits., please complete the first 8 assignments.***

#### **\_\_\_ Assignment #1:**

Read all the materials within the manual. Write a one (1) page summary indicating what you hope to learn from this class and how it will impact your teaching, parenting, or other aspects of your life. **(send to instructor)**

#### **\_\_\_ Assignment #2:**

Read your chosen text. This may be one from the bibliography at the back of the manual or one of your own choosing. If taking this course in a group, each person should read a book. Only one person needs to write a summary. Once you have read the book, respond to the following questions **(send to instructor)**:

- Share one specific area of learning that was new to you.
- What area of the book do you plan to implement in your teaching or life approach?
- If you were going to share this book with another person, who would that be and why?

#### **\_\_\_ Assignment #3:**

View a movie (or television show) from the list located in the back of the manual (or one of your own choice that fits within the topic of this class). Be sure to take notes on what you watch as it pertains to the subject matter in this course. (see assignment #4)

#### **\_\_\_ Assignment #4:**

Once you have completed watching the movie (or TV show), respond in a two (2) page paper **(send to instructor)**:

- List behaviors that you would categorize as bullying tactics
- How did people respond to the actions by the bully/bullies? Be sure to organize behavior into the subgroups of bully, victim (bullied), and observer when appropriate.
- Based upon your experiences in your school/community, in what ways were the actions and responses depicted realistic?
- Give an example of bullying behaviors in your school/community and how these actions influence the general environment.

#### **\_\_\_ Assignment #5:**

Observe a setting within your school or community noting areas of bullying and victimization as discussed in the manual. Write a one (1) page summary. **(send to instructor)**

**\_\_ Assignment #6:**

Review a minimum of three websites on bullying behavior (examples of websites found in bibliography at the end of manual).

- What similarities did you notice between these websites?
- Choose one website and share a one (1) page summary of its contents. **(send to instructor)**

**\_\_ Assignment #7:**

Discuss the course content with a non-educator. Obtain feedback from the person as to his/her perspective of schools and the community as it relates to bullying behavior. Share this person's insights and ideas in a one (1) page paper. **(send to instructor).**

**\_\_ Assignment #8:**

Interview a student at your school or a child within your community regarding bullying behavior. A few areas to discuss may include:

- Have you ever seen bullying behavior? What did it look like?
- Have you ever bullied anyone? Have you ever been bullied?
- When the problem of bullying occurs, what can students do about it?
- Does your school/community attempt to minimize bullying tactics in the specific setting?

Write out the responses from the child along with your own personal thoughts. **(send to instructor).**

***This completes the assignments required for Washington Clock Hours, Oregon PDUs, or CEUs.***

***Continue to the next section for additional assignments required for University Quarter Credit***

**ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS REQUIRED for 400 or 500 LEVEL UNIVERSITY QUARTER CREDIT**

In this section you will have an opportunity to apply your learning to your professional situation. This course assumes that most participants are classroom teachers who have access to students. If you are not teaching in a classroom, please contact the instructor for course modifications. If you start or need to complete this course during the summer, please try to apply your ideas when possible with youth from your neighborhood, at a local public library or parks department facility, (they will often be glad to sponsor community-based learning), with students in another teacher's summer classroom in session, students from past years, or use one of your own children or a relative.

**\_\_ Assignment #9: (Required for 400 and 500 Level)**

Develop an action plan for reducing bullying within your school/district or chosen setting. Use the "sample action plan" outline found within the manual as guidance. **(send to instructor).**

**Assignment #10: You must choose either "A" or "B" (Required for 400 and 500 Level)**

**Assignment #A: (SEND commentary to Instructor)**

- Develop a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course.
- Implement your lesson with students in your classroom.
- Write a 2 page commentary on what worked well and what could be improved.
- Include any student feedback on your lesson.

***(The following is encouraged but not required):***

- Share what you've learned with other teachers taking our courses by also contributing your Lesson to The Heritage Institute Lesson Library located at <http://www.hol.edu/lesson-plan-library>

**OR**

**Assignment #B: (SEND lesson and summary to Instructor)**

Use this option if you do not have a classroom available.

- Develop a lesson to reflect what you've learned in this course. (Do not implement it.)

- Write a 2 page summary concerning any noteworthy success you've had as a teacher with one or more students.

**(The following is encouraged but not required):**

- Please refer to the guidelines on our blog <http://www.hol.edu/blog> prior to writing your article.
- Please email a copy to [Rebecca Blankinship \(rebecca@hol.edu\)](mailto:rebecca@hol.edu) THI blog curator and media specialist.
- Indicate whether or not you are OK with having your article considered for publishing on our website.
- Subject line to read: (Course Name, Blog)

**Send to instructor:** [mike@communicationplus.net](mailto:mike@communicationplus.net).

### 500 LEVEL ASSIGNMENT

**\_\_ Assignment #11: (500 Level only) Send to Instructor**

In addition to the 400 level assignments complete **one (1)** of the following options:

**Option A)** Mentor another individual in the concepts of this class. Have them share two or three key concepts that they would like to implement within their work or social setting. Share specific the plan and how it will be evaluated for success. (2 pages).

**OR**

**Option B)** Create a PowerPoint presentation for your staff based on this course and focused on perspectives or strategies you feel would be beneficial for your school. Save this as a pdf.

**OR**

**Option C)** Another assignment of your own design, with the instructor's prior approval.

**Send to instructor:** [mike@communicationplus.net](mailto:mike@communicationplus.net).

### 400 & 500 LEVEL ASSIGNMENT

**Integration Paper (send to instructor)**

**\_\_ Assignment #12: (Required for 400 and 500 Level Credit)**

Write a 2-3 page Integration Paper answering these specific questions:

1. What did you learn vs. what you expected to learn from this course?
2. What aspects of the course were most helpful and why?
3. What further knowledge and skills in this general area do you feel you need?
4. How, when and where will you use what you have learned?
5. How and with what other school or community members might you share what you learned?

**Must be individually authored (name and course title) for those taking in a group.**

### QUALIFICATIONS FOR TEACHING THIS COURSE:

**Mike Sedler, M.S.W.**, brings over 30 year of educational experience as an administrator, social worker, behavior specialist and teacher to each of his classes. He provides consultation and seminars throughout the United States and Canada for schools, agencies and businesses. He has a graduate degree in Social Work, a Doctoral degree in Ministry, a Counseling license, as well as his teaching certification. All of Mike's classes are practical and "field tested" in schools and classrooms. Educators have found success in implementing Mike's clear and concise approaches. All of his course material may be immediately implemented into a school or a home.

**NOTES:** You may work collaboratively and submit joint assignments on all but the Integration Paper portion (and other designated assignments) which must be individually authored and submitted.

Alternatives to written assignments such as a video, audio tape, photo collage, etc. are permissible with prior approval of instructor. **IT IS PREFERRED THAT ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE SENT VIA EMAIL. A CONFIRMATION EMAIL WILL BE SENT BACK ONCE IT IS RECEIVED. If you do not receive a confirmation email back after sending your paperwork via email, please re-send or contact the instructor to confirm it has been received. It seems that occasionally things get lost in cyber- space. Thank you.**

**If you want feedback on your work as you proceed through the class, go ahead and send one at a time and indicate you would like ongoing feedback. Otherwise, feedback will be given at the end of the class. Full credit will be given to each student as long as all work is turned in. If something is missing, I will be in contact with you. Failure is not an option. ☺**

## CASE STUDY (Send to Instructor)

Charlie is 11 years old and attends Toro Elementary School just a few blocks from his home. He is in the fifth grade and is an average student. Charlie has always been a bit shy and somewhat anxious around his peers. He just moved to this city 2 months ago and has not yet made any friends at the new school, though he does have a "best friend" at his old school. Charlie is quite tall and thin for his age and is very self-conscious about his appearance.

Over the past month, Charlie has become increasingly withdrawn. Several weeks ago he came home with a tear in his favorite jacket. When his mother asked him what happened, he hurriedly said it was an accident. Each day he goes straight to his room after school and shuts the door. His mother has noticed that he has become more irritable and is often tearful, but when she tries to talk to him about this, he tells her to go away. She is worried about him but thinks this is a phase he's going through since they've just moved to a new city, etc. She also worries about making Charlie dependent on her if she gets too involved in his problems.

You hear through others that Charlie is being teased by his classmates several times a week. In particular, two children--a girl, Carly, and a boy, Thomas--make fun of the way he looks and have convinced most of his classmates to avoid him at lunch.

Answer the following questions:

1. What are some of the factors that make Charlie a potential victim of bullies?
2. His mother comes to you for guidance. What would your ideas be for her?
3. Charlie comes to you for advice. What would you tell him?

***Each answer should be three to four sentences in length (minimum)***

## **FACT OR FICTION BULLY QUIZ (secondary students)**

Answer each one as fact or fiction. Correct responses are located below each statement. **You may want to take a piece of paper and lower it down to cover up the answers.**

1. Bullying is a male behavior  
**Fiction** (males are more involved in bullying, but more and more females also bully)
2. Larger classes and larger schools promote bullying  
**Fiction** (the issue is supervision, not size. The more supervision, the safer the school)
3. Bullies come from all socio economic levels.  
**Fact** (it is not money, culture, or gender, but role models, lack of teaching/guidance)
4. Bullies are insecure and have low self-esteem.  
**Fiction** (many are confident, have a solid peer group, and are involved in school)
5. Most bullying involves physical aggression.  
**Fiction** (most common is verbal)
6. Children should stay away from the bullying conflict or they will get bullied as well.  
**Fiction** (there need to be appropriate boundaries and interventions to stop the bully)
7. Bullying is a normal, unpleasant part of growing up.  
**Fiction** (while bullying occurs regularly, it is not normal and can be curtailed)
8. If told their child is a bully, most parents will accept it.  
**Fiction** (typically, it is hard for a parent to accept negative areas about their child)
9. Bringing together the parents of the bully and the bullied doesn't usually help.  
**Fact** (this may turn into a "your fault" meeting with parents blaming one another)
10. Manipulation, gossip, and exclusion are common bullying tactics of girls.  
**Fact** (these are methods are seen more often with females, though not exclusively)
11. Adults respond to bullying based on how they responded when they were younger.  
**Fact** (we have our patterns of response and often default to them in situations)
12. Most acts of bullying are never reported.  
**Fact** (people hope it will just go away if we don't press the issue)
13. Most bullying happens at school.  
**Fact** (this is when there are more children and less supervision, in general)
14. Fighting back will not typically stop the bully behavior.  
**Fact** (inappropriate challenging and confronting will escalate the person)
15. Once a bully, always a bully.  
**Fiction** (although some studies say this is fact-your choice)
16. A victim will usually get over the bullying once it goes away.  
**Fiction** (many victims have a long term emotional scar that impacts relationships)
17. Bullying at school will be reduced with adult supervision.  
**Fact** (studies done in several nations all support that supervision is the main deterrent to bullying)

## THE BULLY

Definition: *Bullying is a purposeful decision intended to create harm, pain, suffering, or intimidation in another person's life. The bully may be male or female*

### CHARACTERISTICS

- DESIRE TO CAUSE HARM

This is not an accident or meant as teasing. "I was just joking" does not fit into this behavior. It is intentional and potentially dangerous. The bully cares very little about the person's feelings (at the moment).

- INEQUITY IN POWER RELATIONSHIP

The person who is a bully has many traits that place them in a power based position. They may be older, stronger, a different race, religion, or gender. The person may have more social or verbal skills than the other person.

- CONSTANT THREAT OF IMPENDING HARM OR BULLYING

This means that the behavior is chronic. There is a chance it will occur again. This is not a one-time occurrence.

### TYPES OF BULLYING

#### 1. VERBAL BULLYING

Over 70% of bully incidents fall into this category. It may occur via threats, belittling, taunting, teasing, gossip, sexual comments, or racial slurs. It does not take a "larger" person or a "smarter" person to be a bully.

#### 2. PHYSICAL BULLYING

Similar to physical abuse, physical bullying is the most easily identified. When there is unpleasant contact between two people, it may fall into this category. This bullying is utilized more often by males.

#### 3. EMOTIONAL BULLYING

This is the most difficult to detect as it may involve shunning, hazing, rumors, nonverbal gestures, and general isolation of others. This bullying is utilized more often by females.

## **WHAT CREATES A BULLYING ATTITUDE**

### **Reasons (or bullying behavior)**

- A child grows up with a role model
- The person may feel pressured into bullying (for approval, to avoid repercussions, rejection)
- Likes bullying and finds it exciting (the person finds it reinforcing)
- Excited by the victim's reaction
- Enjoys being in control (power and control play into much of the bullying attitude)
- Gets what he/she wants (once again, a reinforcing behavior)
- A need for attention
- Does NOT feel empathy for the victim/bullied person (this type of person is in the minority though does bring a greater potential for danger to other people)
- Justifies his/her behavior

### **Tactics used by Bullies**

- Domination and control over others (verbal, physical, emotional)
- Use of other people to get what they want (manipulation through intimidation, put downs, threats, etc.)
- Hurts other children when adults are not around (sneaky)
- Uses blame, criticism, and guilt to pursue his/her goals
- Manipulation and deceit are used to pressure people and distort reality
- Gossip, rumors, and lies surround this person. It is hard to distinguish facts from fantasy
- Pressure (emotional, mental, physical, sexual) on others to do what the person wants

### **Male vs. Female Dynamics**

- Male behavior for bullying more often physical
- Male bully desires attention of others and sense of accomplishment
- Female behavior for bullying more often verbal/nonverbal
- Female bullying uses "peer group" support more effectively and isolates the victim/bullied person from others emotionally
- Both use harsh words for intimidation
- Male bullies may be any size, though more often larger in physical size
- Female bullies may be any size, but more often smaller in physical size

## QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT BULLYING

(Some suggestions for classroom discussions)

1. Who can tell me what bullying is?
2. What happens to people who are bullied?
3. How do you think these people feel? How do bullies feel?
4. What is it like to see someone being bullied?
5. Is bullying a problem in our school?
6. Is bullying a problem in our classroom? What makes you think that?
7. What would it take to make our classroom bully free?

## FACTS ABOUT BULLYING

- About one in seven schoolchildren is either a bully or victim.
- Bullying affects about five million students in grades K-8.
- Ten to fifteen percent of all children are bullied on a regular basis.
- Bullying is more than beating people up. Three categories: physical, verbal, emotional. Most bullying is verbal.
- Most bullying happens at school where there is little to no supervision (recess, hallway, cafeteria, in front/behind the school).
- Bullying hurts everyone
  - Victims/bullied: may feel sad, anxious, or afraid.
  - Witnesses/observers: may feel intimidated, afraid, controlled.
  - Bullies: statistics show that one in four bullies will have a criminal record.

## *What Doesn't Work For Bully Reduction?*

### **Interventions that are unlikely to work except as part of a comprehensive intervention:**

\*\*\* Asking the target to solve the problem

Just as in our social reaction to other forms of abuse, we have all tried to get the victims of bullying to act differently to solve the problem. We have trained victims to:

- be assertive
- blend in
- ignore bullying
- pretend they're not bothered by bullying ("Sticks and stones?")

The problem with these approaches used in isolation, no matter how good our intentions in using them, is that they displace responsibility for stopping bullying from us to the victims. If these approaches do not work, the victim is left with a sense of failure. These interventions can be effective only if they are part of a comprehensive intervention.

### **Whole-population education**

There are a number of curriculum approaches to reducing aggressive behavior. Most of them teach alternatives to aggression and work to build empathy. These approaches, like sensitivity training as a preventive to workplace sexual harassment, are often ignored by the people whose behavior we want to change. Bullying youth tend to either deny their behavior or see it as justified. As we watch bullying youth in an educational discussion of bullying we see one of two reactions:

- boredom ("This is stupid");
- outrage directed at others, with no realization that the presentation is about them ("I can't believe bullies do that").

This kind of educational presentation will not change bullies' behavior or attitudes unless it is part of a comprehensive intervention.

### **Four Phases in social reactions to abuse:**

We can learn from these relevant parallels and the interventions that have been tried with them:

- sexual abuse
- spouse abuse
- sexual harassment

Society has dealt with sexual abuse, spouse abuse, sexual harassment, and bullying with a series of reactions:

- **First:** Denial-- (“Uncle Dan would never do that;” “I’m sure he didn’t mean to hurt you;” “Men are just like that;” “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never harm me”)
- **Second:** Telling the victim to solve the problem-- (“Just make sure you’re never alone with him;” “Say no;” “Well, GET the dinner on the table on time;” “Wear less revealing clothes;” “Pretend it doesn’t bother you”)
- **Third:** Broad-brush educational efforts alone-- (“Soft is the heart of a child;” Sensitivity training; “Hands are for helping, not hurting”)
- **Fourth and last:** After each of these individual interventions failed, with an integrated approach based on clear expectations and consistent consequences, followed by counseling for perpetrators, support for victims, and education of the silent majority within a comprehensive approach.

Resources will always be limited, so we have a responsibility to know which interventions are likely to work and which are unlikely to work.

## *What Does Work For Bully Reduction?*

### **What are the components of a successful comprehensive intervention?**

- Consensus-development among staff (with input from students and community members) so people enforce the same expectations consistently. What is your school's definition of unacceptable peer behavior? What behaviors will you commit to changing no matter what it takes? These might include:
  - physical aggression: hitting, kicking, pushing, choking, punching;
  - verbal aggression: threatening, taunting, teasing, hate speech;
  - social exclusion.
- Development and consistent enforcement of effective consequences for verbal and physical aggression which are predictable, inevitable, immediate, and escalating and based on uniform expectations for all. Consistent use of consequences will reduce these behaviors and are a necessary component of effective prevention. Inconsistent enforcement makes the problem worse. Effective consequences are small (so they can be used consistently), escalate with repeated aggression, and often involve loss of unstructured times like recess, lunch with peers, or extracurricular activities.
- Building positive connections between staff and students and positive feeling tone in staff-student interactions.
- Monitoring to make sure that consequences and education are effective.
- Effective counseling for youth who bully after enforcement of consequences has generated some anxiety.
- Effective support for targeted youth, including protection from repeated mistreatment.
- Empowering bystanders to tell adults, support targets, and discourage unacceptable behavior.

From a study of bullying prevention in Colorado schools (USA)

- "A reduction in bullying occurred in schools where teachers and students are willing to intervene, treat each other fairly and demonstrate that they care."
- "Adult and student intervention in bullying is critical from elementary through high school."
- "A positive relationship with adults and students at school and a school culture of trust and fairness are key to reducing bullying."
- "Schools with lower levels of bullying report higher scores on statewide tests."

## **BULLY INTERVENTION APPROACHES**

**1. If ... Then contracts.** Use short term goals and approaches. "If you can walk to the lunchroom as expected, then you can have five minutes of your recess."

IDEAS: walking down the hall, at recess, in lunchroom, during passing period, during seat work time, during discussions.

**2. Help them find legitimate power.** Children and adolescents have a desire to be in control, be recognized, be accepted, and feel good about themselves. Help them find a way to accomplish this in an appropriate manner.

IDEAS: Allow them to help in the classroom, be a peer helper, cross age helper, monitor class materials, clean up, organize materials, and choose others to work with.

**3. Develop a meaningful interaction with the bully.** Attempt to connect with the bully on a personal level. What are their areas of interest? What do we know about them?

IDEAS: Attend their activities, read about their areas of interest, and offer to help in difficult areas, include them in group activities.

**4. Pre-set for success.** Be clear in expectations and behaviors. Discuss these with the bully, practice the plan, and have them share it with another person.

IDEAS: Allow the bully to choose an area to work on in school. Agree on an area and have them check back in with you. Have the bully keep a journal of behaviors. Daily meetings with the person for accountability.

**5. Work on language approaches.** Often, the bully uses threatening statements, nonverbal tendencies are harsh, and the general demeanor is problematic.

IDEAS: Give the bully some "pat" phrases to use in situations, practice body language, and have them look in the mirror to evaluate self, point out times when they fall into patterns with verbal and nonverbal approaches.

**6. Intervene early.** When a situation arises, prevent it from going very far. Don't expect the "bully" to make immediate changes. As the adults, we need to provide a safe environment for success and change.

IDEAS: Monitor activities and groups, keep an extra eye on the person, check in periodically with the student, have other students discuss how things are going, offer opportunities for student sharing.

**7. Teach and re-teach expectations.** The bully will need frequent reminders and guidelines for the behavior.

IDEAS: Make a list for the person, have them write out the rules, have them share the rules with you each day/week, verbalize the rules to others.

**8. Make the parent(s) aware.** Though the behavior may/may not be monitored at home, it is important to include the family.

IDEAS: Send home a list of strategies, meet with the parent(s), have the child write a letter home each week (or make a phone call), allow parent(s) to observe.

**9. Set up a positive reinforcement program for child.**

Additional praise, support, and encouragement may be needed for this child to succeed. Don't worry about what other students might say, they want the bully to stop.

IDEAS: Points for successful times (sticker/stars), additional free time, phone call (note) home, positive visit to principal (wouldn't that be a change), recognition from other staff.

**10. Establish boundaries, consequences, and referral process for further infractions.** School policies and rules should be clearly defined. This will need to be made known to the family and the student.

IDEAS: Allow the student to present the rules to the parent(s), write out their own ideas for the rules, and go over the rules each day before school (or particular events).

## **GUIDELINES TO HELP MINIMIZE BULLYING AND AGGRESSION**

### **KEY PRINCIPLES FOR INTERVENTIONS**

- a. Warmth, positive interest, and adult involvement*
- b. Firm limits as to unacceptable behavior*
- c. Consistent application of non-hostile, non-violent sanctions*
- d. Behavior by adults at home and school that create an authoritative  
(not authoritarian) adult-child interaction*

### **ELEMENTS FOUND IN AN EFFECTIVE ANTIBULLYING POLICY (Does your school have any of these elements in place?)**

1. A strong positive statement of the school's desire to promote positive peer relations.
2. A succinct definition of bullying or peer victimization, with examples.
3. A declaration of the right of individuals and groups in the school to be free of victimization by others.
4. A statement of responsibility of those who witness peer victimization to seek to stop it.
5. Encouragement of students and parents with concerns about victimization to speak with school personnel about them.
6. A general description of how the school proposes to deal with the bully/victim problem.
7. Immediate feedback, consequences, and a behavior change plan for policy violations.
8. A plan to evaluate the policy in the near future.

## TEN QUICK TIPS ON HOW TO BEAT BULLYING

(Elementary focus)

- 1. WALK TALL-** try not to act scared. Practice walking tall with shoulders back and head held high. Act brave.
- 2. DEVELOP SELF-CONFIDENCE-** Be positive! Find areas that you enjoy and get involved.
- 3. START A SCHOOL PROGRAM-** Get others to be a part of an anti-bullying group. Talk to your teachers and find support.
- 4. TELL A FRIEND-** Always tell a friend or an adult you trust about the bullying. Get someone on your side.
- 5. WALK AWAY-** If possible, ignore the bully or say "No" and walk away. The bully is seeking attention.
- 6. IGNORE THE TEASING-** Try not to react to the bullying and teasing. If you act like you don't care, the bully may get bored and give up.
- 7. DON'T FIGHT BACK-** The most dangerous thing you can do when confronted by a bully is to fight back. Bullies are generally stronger than their victims. By fighting back, you could make matters worse.
- 8. GIVE UP YOUR POSSESSIONS-** If the situation is getting dangerous, if the bully is much bigger and stronger than you, or if he/she has a weapon, then it would be smart to give the bully what he wants. Material things are replaceable, you are not.
- 9. STICK WITH OTHERS-** Try not to be alone in places where you could be unsafe (empty schoolyard, alleys, school bathroom). Bullies tend to pick on those who are alone.
- 10. REMEMBER, BULLIES HAVE WEAKNESSES TOO-** Try to see beyond the bully's scary face and words. Think about what is missing in his/her life that makes them act so cruel.

## **UNDERSTANDING RELATIONAL AGGRESSION (RA)**

The term "Relational Aggression" is often used when referring to girls and bullying. While females may use physical means for intimidation, they often resort to emotional and mental approaches to gain an advantage.

Definition: *Using relationships rather than fists for bullying. Rumors, name calling, cliques, and shunning are common methods used to dominate others.*

Girls and Relational Aggression: Stages of development-

6 to 10 years (observable details)- views life based on cause and effect (consequences/rewards), doesn't grasp the concepts of personal motivation ("They hurt my feelings" is based on sense of revenge).

9 to 11 years (good person issue)- begins to grasp sense of others and show empathy/caring for others. The fear of rejection and loss becomes a major part of life.

11 to 14 (close friendships )- want to be part of a peer group and be accepted.

15 to 17 (peer groups )- the child begins to sense that she is part of a community. Desires input from others, specifically peers (sorry Dad/Mom). Gender issues are huge.

17 to 19 (independence )-behavior patterns with others become more entrenched as she wants to be seen as an individual. May impact dress, attitude, and relationships.

## **GENERAL INTERVENTION APPROACHES**

**Early Intervention**-set clear boundaries and consequences. Teach responsibility, communication skills, and the concepts of self-image (looking within). The battle will be outward appearance vs. inward perspective of self.

**Develop Anti-RA skills**-use strategies for anti-bullying. Help the person to overcome areas of insecurity and fear in relationships. Encourage and focus on strengths.

**Understand behavior motivation**-ask questions, encourage communication, refuse to be rejected by the child, let them know of your desire to support.

**Problem solving skills**-class discussions on problem solving, class meetings, teach options, choices, and strategies for life issues.

**Alternative behaviors**-evaluate "what about next time?" Teach replacement skills.

**Develop personal power**-Help them see solutions, choices. Empower the students to accomplish their goals without hurting others, rejecting others, or feeling left out.

## **Female Bullying**

An estimated 15% of school aged children are subject to chronic bullying in school, and percentages of relational bullying among girls are even higher.

Bullying occurs in four main ways: physical, verbal, relational and cyber. A simple definition of bullying is behavior that is:

- intended to do harm or disturb the victim,
- occurs repeatedly over time, and
- involves an imbalance in power

According to the American School Health Association, an estimated four million children are bullied every year, and 160,000 students miss school every day due to fear of being bullied. The Health Behavior in School Aged Children (HBSC Survey) reports over 50% of students being bullied verbally or socially at least once in the previous two months.

## **How Girls Bully Each Other**

Boys tend to be more physical, while girls bully each other more indirectly, using relationships and social media. Boys act out or get into fights whereas girls don't have the cultural consent to express anger this way, so they often show it in more covert but equally damaging ways.

Five common ways girls show relational aggression are:

- gossiping, spreading rumors, exposing confidential information
- teasing or hurtful comments about physical appearances
- attacks on sexuality
- claiming disloyalty or untrustworthiness
- making threats to physically harm the other or other's possessions

## **Targets of Female Bullying**

There seems to be no specific target for girls' aggressive behavior. It could be directed towards an unpopular, new or even very popular girl. The simplest comment, whether malicious, thoughtless, or even innocent, can provoke a well-strategized and sometimes "global" attack where one girl turns the whole group against another.

Furthermore, unlike other forms of bullying where the weak or less powerful are often preyed upon, relational aggression has less to do with targeting an external characteristic, such as being unpopular, overweight or differently-abled. Female bullying more frequently is caused by conflict that has not been able to be addressed directly and openly.

## **Silence of Victimhood**

One of the greatest fears of girls is being ostracized, so even though they may be upset, they will not express it. As a result, much of girls' aggressive behavior goes underground and causes them to use relationships as weapons against each other.

Girls are often afraid to talk to anyone about the bullying for fear it will make matters worse or they will be seen as a snitch. The difference between snitching and talking to a trusted adult is that the former is intended to get someone in trouble whereas the latter is an attempt to get help.

Ignoring the problem rarely works, and sometimes gives permission for the mistreatment to continue. Besides, when being bullied, it is all a girl can think about even if she isn't talking about it. Rachel Simmons, who wrote *Odd Girl Out*, interviewed hundreds of girls, asking them what they wished their parent would have done to help. Overwhelmingly, girls said they wished their parents had not trivialized their pain, said it was a phase and would pass, or told them to lighten up. They wanted parents to listen, take it seriously and acknowledge how devastated they felt.

Approaching teachers is no easy task either. It is important for a parent to be calm and factual in her approach in order to avoid getting pegged as the "overprotective" or "hysterical" parent who is overreacting to her child's social misfortune.

Unfortunately once that happens, many teachers just turn off. Sometimes switching classes can help eliminate the problem altogether since a great deal of social chemistry forms along classroom lines. Note that switching desks is often futile since girls can send mean looks anywhere and the teacher often misses what is happening.

### **Life Long Scars**

Many adult women who were bullied as children report that they still carry strong memories of victimization. They recall the incidents with unusual clarity, remembering the exact words spoken to them, clothes they were wearing, and even food they were eating. They reported a life filled with troubled relationships with other women and trusting other females afterward was most difficult.

### **Strategies to Protect Against Bullying**

The best defense against bullying is twofold. One, the victim should talk to a trusted, proactive adult who can help her come up with a plan with multiple ways of addressing the mistreatment.

The other is to make sure it's addressed on a school level. Harassment and anti-bullying policies should include relational aggression (i.e. ganging up, sustained negative body language, rumor spreading, etc.) Most schools only deal with physical aggression, missing the forms of mistreatment done by girls that can effect and haunt a victim for life.

Bullying in schools among girls continues to be a pervasive problem. Staying silent about mistreatment only gives permission for it to continue. It is essential that girls speak up and schools address female forms of bullying - it can protect a girl's well-being and possibly even save a life.

## **Reaching The Bully-helping make a change**

Remember that youth who bully may come from homes where there is little warmth and parental attention, and where parents discipline inconsistently using physical punishment and emotional outbursts. They may have little empathy or trust and little ability to delay gratification.

Structured counseling and education that stresses acknowledging actions, empathy development, and restitution is likely to be effective if it follows consistent negative consequences for the aggressive behavior. Bullying youth often need to recognize that their behavior will continue to lead to consequences until they change it before using any counseling.

Requests to apologize, self-esteem-building, asking why, pleading, and expressions of frustration are unlikely to help and may make things worse.

### **Useful questions to ask youth who bully:**

- What did you do?
- Was that a bad thing to do?
- Who did you hurt?
- What were you trying to accomplish?
- Next time you have that goal, how will you meet it without hurting anybody?

### **Youth who bully often need to learn to:**

- Acknowledge their own actions.
- Acknowledge the results of their behavior on themselves.
- Develop anxiety ("I broke a rule and got in trouble. I don't want to go through that again!").
- Change their actions to stay out of trouble.
- Find other ways to get their needs met
- Acknowledge the results of their behavior on others.
- Develop guilt ("I hurt someone").
- Learn to trust others and delay gratification.
- Form relationships with helping adults.

Many young people showing antisocial behavior will get stuck part-way through this sequence. Where they get stuck is where you need to focus with them to help them move on. Think of this sequence as being like a developmental sequence in learning to read. When children learn to sound out letters we know they are on the path to reading and we solidify those skills with them before moving on. We also appreciate their progress. Seeing signs of progress in the behavior of antisocial children is what keeps us going. More important than that, seeing signs of progress is what keeps us liking them. And they will only work with and for us if they know we like them.

The word "discipline" comes from the same root as the word "disciple" and means "to teach."

We are most likely to succeed in helping young people change their aggressive behavior when we use the principles of good teaching in our discipline interventions.

We start with the ABCs:

**A. Respect young peoples' Autonomy.** We can't make them change. We can increase the cost of their existing behavior by following through consistently with consequences. We can build supportive relationships so they want to be contributing members of the school. We can recognize their positive actions. They will choose their behavior; we can help them see they have a choice and help them find the best choices for themselves.

**B. Maintain young peoples' sense of Belonging.** When we welcome youth to school each day; when we build mentoring relationships; when consequences are seen as being earned instead of being given in anger or rejection; when we avoid taking their misbehavior personally; and when we maintain positive feeling tone in the discipline process, young people are more likely take responsibility for negative behaviors and to change.

**C. Teach Cause and effect thinking and promote conscience development.** We help young people see the connections between what they do and what happens to them through using predictable, transparent, consistent discipline approaches. We can use praise to help them connect their positive behavior with positive outcomes. We can help them discover the positive and negative effects of their actions on others through observation and reflection. We can use questions instead of statements whenever possible so young people learn to think about their own goals and about their behavior.

## **STAY ALERT ... STAY SAFE BULLYING QUIZ** (intermediate grades)

1. Bullying is a problem that affects ...
  - a. victims
  - b. bullies
  - c. communities
  - d. all of the above(answer = "d")
  
2. By definition, bullies are ...
  - a. generally aggressive toward their classmates, teachers, parents, siblings, and others
  - b. happy children who just like to tease
  - c. caring, sensitive people(answer = "a")
  
3. If you are being bullied, you should ...
  - a. start crying
  - b. fight back
  - c. ignore the bully, walk away, and tell an adult
  - d. laugh at the bully(answer = "c")
  
4. Victims of bullying are generally known to ...
  - a. deserve what they get
  - b. be unpopular at school
  - c. none of the above(answer = "c")
  
5. Bullies tend to pick on ...
  - a. kids who are older and bigger than they are
  - b. kids who are all alone
  - c. kids who play together in a group
  - d. kids who play close to the teacher(answer = "b")
  
6. The following behavior may prevent you from becoming a victim ...
  - a. becoming a bully yourself
  - b. walking tall and with confidence
  - c. playing by yourself at recess(answer = "b")
  
7. The reason that people observe and don't stop the bully is because:
  - a. they don't know what to do
  - b. they are afraid of what might happen to them
  - c. they may not like the person getting picked on
  - d. all of the above(answer = "d")

## UNDERSTANDING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE VICTIM

Definition- *"A person who is consistently victimized by other people and prone to being bullied."*

### Types of Victims?

- Passive victim- most targeted. Does not use strategies for reducing bullying.
- Provocative victim- more assertive, but lacks social skills and effective approaches. Usually verbally put down, but then left alone.

### Who are Victims?

- New person in school
- Different religion, color, belief system
- Child who is quieter, shy, isolated, or withdrawn
- Physical characteristics such as tall, short, skinny, fat, etc.
- A person with physical, mental, or emotional challenges
- One who is an extreme (gifted, slow, too loud, too soft)
- A person who doesn't conform to traditions and norms

### Characteristics of Victimized Individuals

- Seems to be more emotional and anxious
- Afraid to be around certain people or attend school
- Prefer the company of adults rather than peers (fear based)
- Getting teased in extreme ways
- Coming home with unexplained bruises and scratches
- Spending significant time alone
- Sudden or constant deterioration in school work

### Why are they constant targets?

- They feel a sense of shame and therefore feel a sense of deserving the actions
- They are afraid of retaliation if they tell an adult
- No one appears to be able to help them
- No one appears to want to help them
- They believe that bullying is just a normal part of growing up
- Telling on peers is seen as negative social action and will result in further isolation

## **VICTIM SUPPORT APPROACHES**

**1. Share your role with the person.** Let the student know what to expect from you and how you can be a resource.

IDEAS: Report the incident to administration, call parents, talk to the bully, consequences and boundaries, what next.

**2. Skill instruction and practice.** The child should be taught various skill strategies for future situations.

IDEAS: Use various curriculums to teach about bullying.

[www.respectandthefacts.com](http://www.respectandthefacts.com)

[www.bullypolice.org](http://www.bullypolice.org)

[www.cfchildren.org](http://www.cfchildren.org)

**3. Set up adult support.** Help the bullied person have support systems.

IDEAS: A place for the student to connect with an adult, place to hang out, other people to talk to, help the student develop a plan.

**4. Self-Esteem building opportunities.** The bullied person needs help with strategies and practicing successful prevention.

IDEAS: Learn phrases to say during bullying times "Stop it," "Leave me alone," "Whatever."

**5. Teach basic self-management skills.** Give alternatives to the individual. The more options they have, the better they will feel about situations.

IDEAS: Make a list of strategies, act and look confident, be observant, tell friends, be assertive, remain calm, keep a safe distance, stay in groups.

**6. Take control of your life.** It is important for the person to become empowered in life. Encourage them to be pro-active in life.

IDEAS: Teach others how to treat you, keep a record or journal of events, meet with someone regularly, ask for help (and continue) until you are helped, leave the area, practice treating others with kindness.

## **ADULT RESPONSES TO VICTIMS**

### **Create an open door policy**

- Be available to students
- Educators should remember that they are not the solution, but are available to help students learn effective strategies that lead toward solutions
- Set ground rules in classes, hallway, cafeteria, in front of school, etc.

### **Respond to reports of minor incidents**

- Listen, listen, listen and avoid shutting the "victim" off
- Discern whether this is a major or minor incident. It will help decide the next course of action (levels of communication and involvement)

### **Take the incident or report seriously**

- Validate the child's feelings. Help him/her sort through fear, embarrassment, frustration, etc.
- Be sure the child understands that staying silent only encourages bullying

### **Take action with the bully as soon as possible**

- Be open with disagreement or disapproval of the bullying tactics
- Set clear boundaries and limits. Refer to rules and guidelines (which should be written out)

### **Offer concrete help, advice, and support to the victim**

- What will happen next time?
- How will the child (bullied person) respond next time?
- What prevention can occur prior to another incident (teaching skills)?

### **Provide follow-up support for the victim**

- Check in with the student on a regular basis
- Set up a time for them to share future issues or concerns

### **Examine your own attitudes about the victim**

- Look in the mirror and examine your own perspective about the bullied child. Be careful not to blame them or become frustrated with their passive approach in life

## **COMEBACK LINES TO SAY TO BULLIES**

"You're good at this."

"Very good ... you must have had a lot of practice."

"What? Again?"

"Okay, I'm hurt. Is that what you wanted?"

"Aren't you tired of this?"

"This ... again?"

"Thank you for thinking of me."

"That one hurt. Mission accomplished."

"You are wasting your time on me."

"Okay, I agree, you are stronger."

"Oh, new material?"

"Are you really this mean or is this only for me?"

"That was kind of funny, but now please stop."

"I hope no one is treating your friends or family this way."

"Ouch!"

Comebacks are not for everyone. They should be practiced with adults to be sure the correct inflection and attitude is used. They are not intended to insult or put down the bully. They are to increase the child and his/her confidence and discourage the bully. However, they don't stop bullying behavior, as the bully may just go on to someone else. The key is to be calm and cool when delivering the line. They are not effective for everyone nor should they be used in all situations. Remember: if another student is threatening physical violence toward someone, he/she should not say anything-do the best to get away from the situation and tell an adult.

# **HOW TO WIN THE VERBAL WAR WITH A BULLY**

## **Strategies For Students**

1. Agree with the bully. "You're right" "That's true."
2. Poke fun at yourself. If he calls you fat, say "You're right, I can't believe how much I weigh. I hope I can get down to your weight." "Pizza face? That's good. I actually thought I looked more like the potholes of our streets."
3. Question the bully. "What do mean by wimp?" "Does that mean I am not strong or does that mean I can't play sports?"
4. Use phrases like a broken record. "That's your opinion." "It really doesn't matter to me." "I guess you're right." "Possibly, that's true." Or "What else can I say?"
5. Stand up to the bully, but avoid confrontation and challenging him/her. "No, you can't have my money until after I use it for lunch." "Sorry, I need my pencil for class, but after I am done you can have it."
6. Give them permission to hassle you. "What you say may be true and I have heard it all before."
7. Get to the bottom line. "Look, you have called me those names before. What is it you want me to say?"

### **COMMON SENSE TIPS TO SAFEGUARD YOURSELF**

- Vary your routine. Change your patterns in life.
- Pay attention to your intuition. If you think the bully is getting angrier, back off.
- Don't overload yourself with carrying books or materials.
- Check your surrounding when walking or getting in or out of the car.
- Go places in groups, with peers or adults.
- If you feel in danger, get help.
- If something occurs, let an adult know.

## **TRUE OR FALSE BULLY QUIZ** (primary grades)

1. Bullying is just like teasing people.  
**False** (teasing is usually fun, while bullying hurts people)
2. Some people deserve to be bullied by others.  
**False** (no one ever deserves to be hurt. Bullies often go after people who are different and being different is not a reason to be picked on)
3. Bullying does not have to be a part of the school.  
**True** (bullying can be helped by adult supervision and students talking to adults)
4. Only boys are bullies.  
**False** (girls can be bullies too. They may use words while boys may use physical strength ... but both can bully)
5. People who get bullied may feel sad and hurt for a long time.  
**True** (some people become sad, afraid, drop out of school, or stop wanting to be with people when they get bullied. It causes harm for a long time)
6. People who complain about bullies are just babies.  
**False** (people who tell adults about bullies are brave and want to help stop others from being hurt by the bully)
7. Fighting back with a bully will probably make the situation worse.  
**True** (if you fight with a bully, you may get hurt or get the bully more upset. It is smart to tell an adult and get some help)
8. It's tattling when you tell an adult about a bully.  
**False** (tattling is done to get someone in trouble. Telling an adult to help and protect people is smart)
9. Bullies don't have any friends and that is why they pick on people.  
**False** (bullies may have many friends, be popular, and active in school)
10. Bullies may be smart, good looking, and friendly to people.  
**True** (a bully may be anyone. They need help to change and telling an adult will allow for some help)

## UNDERSTANDING THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE OBSERVER

Definition- *"A person who supports the actions of a bully through non-action of his/her own."* They are a supporting cast that may get caught up in the bullying behavior, join in on the behavior, or stand by and watch.

### Are They Really Observers?

- Observers were involved in some capacity in 85% of the bullying behavior
- Peers reinforced the bullying in 81% of the episodes
- Peers were more respectful and friendly toward bullies than the bullied
- Observers were active participants in 48% of the episodes
- In only 13% of the episodes did peers intervene in the bullying

### The Mindset of the Observer

- They are fearful to take a stand or choose sides due to potential repercussions from the bully
- Many people are unsure or uncertain as to what to do in situations
- Observers may be concerned that they will make things worse by saying or doing something
- The observer feels it is not their issue (not their problem)
- The person may take the perspective of being on the outside of the situation.

### Observer Excuses

- The bully is my friend
- It is not my problem (or not my issue)
- The bullied person is not my friend
- He/she asked for it
- We don't interfere or tell on each other
- If I am not involved directly, I won't be noticed (or picked on)

*"This is not my fight," "She is not my friend," "He's a loser," "He deserved to be bullied, he asked for it," "Bullying will toughen him up," "The bully is my friend," "It's not my problem," "Kids have a deeply embedded code of silence," "It's better to be in the in-group than to defend the outcasts," "It's too big a pain."*

## **HELPING THE OBSERVER TO GET INVOLVED**

1. **WHAT IS PREVENTING THE OBSERVER FROM INTERVENING?** This question needs to be addressed with the observer. Make a list of areas discussed.  
IDEAS: Go over the list with the person, strategize solutions for each area, and find out if the person wants to change or be involved.
2. **WHAT THOUGHTS ARE GOING THROUGH THE MIND OF THE OBSERVER?** It is common for negative thoughts to be going through the mind. Teach them skills to calm themselves down and re-focus energy.  
IDEAS: Practice breathing, positive self-talk, teach phrases to be repeated in the mind.
3. **WHAT PART DOES PEER PRESSURE PLAY IN THE OBSERVER'S INACTION?** This is especially difficult for older children. While some people may feel comfortable with a direct approach, others may need help to find more subtle ways to help.  
IDEAS: Teach statements such as "Let's leave," or "Let's go get help." Another strategy is to re-direct the attention to somewhere else, another activity, or other people.
4. **HOW DOES THE OBSERVER GET HELP?** Reporting to another person or getting help is not always easy. Unless we have a plan in place for the person, the chance of initiating help is minimal.  
IDEAS: Write out an action plan for help, pick adults that the person feels comfortable with, meet periodically to go over the plan.
5. **IS THE PERSON CONCERNED ABOUT OTHERS?** Some people stand by because they have minimal compassion for the bullied person. Connecting the observer to the people involved may be helpful.  
IDEAS: Have the observer and others involved in group activities, find common interests for the students, facilitate an opportunity for them to learn from one another, teach social skills, nurturing strategies, and empathy skills.
6. **DOES THE OBSERVER HAVE THE NECESSARY SKILLS?** The person may lack the social skills necessary to reach out and get help.  
IDEAS: Practice statements and phrases. Role-play situations and have the person get help. Journal successful stories and teach social stories to them. Use of movies is one way to teach skills. It is easier for a person to gain knowledge by watching others than to examine oneself.

## **CLASSROOM LEVEL STRATEGIES**

1. Class rules- *are your class rules geared toward the way children treat each other? Focus on reducing put downs and negative comments.*
2. Consequences (immediate) for infractions- *when bullying occurs, is there an immediate response? Help each child see that bullying is not tolerated and will be dealt with quickly.*
3. Classroom discussion about what constitutes bullying- *educate the children on bullying and strategies for responding to it.*
4. Locate "hot spots" in the school where bullying occurs- *hallway, bathroom, cafeteria, in front of school, etc. By identifying problem areas, children can learn to reduce their vulnerability. This will also give you ideas as to where supervision needs to be increased.*
5. Allow students input regarding ideas to decrease bullying behaviors- *brainstorm strategies within the classroom and school. Give them ownership into the solution. This will empower the children who feel bullied and victimized.*
6. Teach strategies on friendship- *how to make friends, what to look for in a friend. This may help the bully as well as others.*
7. Agree on a "no bully day" or time frame- *help the children practice successful ways to handle bullying. Use rewards for positive responses.*
8. Journaling- *have students write out their thoughts for the day or the week. Ask them to evaluate a time they were happy, sad, frustrated, etc. This will give the foundation for evaluating feelings and social skills deficits.*

9. Weekly evaluation of the safety factor within your class- *use of ongoing discussions and ways to evaluate success will help children utilize strategies.*

10. Set up process for student communication- *use of a discussion box, complaint box, mail box, bully box, or some other form of communication helps children to share. Some may have difficulties approaching an adult. Being able to write it out or draw a picture will help with their communication.*

11. Teach choices and options- *social skills approaches for dealing with frustration, anger, rejection, and other emotions are essential. Help children to learn to process emotions without hurting other people.*

12. Teach assertive skills- *How do I stand up for myself? Each child needs replacement skills for their current patterns.*

### QUICK REMINDERS

- Intervene immediately
- Talk to the bully and victim separately
- Remind the bully about the classroom rules and expectations
- Reassure the victim that prevention of a repeat incident will be worked toward and emphasize the importance of safety
- Make other students aware of the consequences for bullying behavior
- Phone both the parent(s) of the bully and the victim
- Monitor behavior closely for the next few days
- Contact the administration when necessary

**CHOOSE ONE STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR SCHOOL OR IN ANOTHER SETTING.**

# **INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR THE CLASSROOM**

## **Take steps to create a positive environment**

- Seating approaches. Are children visually available?
- Give frequent encouragement and positive feedback
- Emphasize that the classroom is a safe environment

## **Establish and enforce classroom rules**

- What are your rules?
- Are students clear on your consequences? Rewards?
- What rules are commonly violated in class? What is your response?

## **Act quickly to intervene**

- Confront the situation immediately. Make sure the students know you reacted and responded to their concerns.

## **Use positive interpersonal skills with all students, even bullies**

- "I would like ... ", "I expect. .. ", "The rules are ... "

## **Examine your own response to bullying incidents**

- What are your personal attitudes about bullying?
- What types of discussions occur in the staff room or amongst colleagues?
- Are we looking to solve the problems or just vent about them?

## **Provide students with a way out of conflicts and confrontations**

- Give options and choices
- Teach problem solving solutions and strategies

## **Teach positive ways to feel powerful**

- Use phrases and responses so children know what to say
- How does your student population relate to one another?
- Are you teaching friendship skills, how to get along, and ways to deal with frustration/anger?

## **Teach self-talk**

- "I have choices", "I can do this", "I know what to do"

## **DEVELOPING SCHOOL PROCEDURES**

- CLEAR DEFINITION OF BULLYING (versus teasing)
- REPORTING PROCESS FOR TEACHERS (to family, to administration)
- REPORTING PROCESS FOR STUDENTS (who to tell, how)
- NO TOLERANCE BALANCED WITH COMMON SENSE
- WHAT ARE STAFF ROLES? (to check out situations)
- WHO WILL FOLLOW UP?
- CONSEQUENCES (based on frequency, duration, severity)
- RECORD KEEPING

## **STRATEGIES**

1. Survey for students to fill out- what is the real problem?
2. Assembly (convocation)- share rules, guidelines, expectations.
3. Handbook for students- written clearly (may want input in writing process from students).
4. Increase supervision- adults need to be more visible in key areas.
5. Monthly discussion in each class with written follow up.
6. Signs, posters, and pictures throughout school- student involvement and feedback to one another.
7. Phrases (for de-escalation) hanging throughout school- once again, written by students for students.
8. Engage community speakers.
9. Teach strategies and concepts to all school personnel- training is the key for all adults.
10. Explain process of reporting to students- be sure all students understand what to do when there is an issue.

## **SCHOOLWIDE INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE BULLYING**

1. Gathering information about bullying at school directly from students. *Use of surveys, class discussions, writing assignments, peer counselors/mediators.*
2. Establishing clear school wide and classroom rules about bullying. *Rules should be universal ... in all classes and throughout the school (or district). Use of assemblies to disseminate information. No tolerance policy.*
3. Training all adults in the school to respond sensitively and consistently to bullying. *Staff training, ongoing discussions at staff meetings, plan for social skills teaching within the school.*
4. Providing adequate adult supervision, particularly in less structured areas, such as on the playground and in the lunchroom. *Establish written schedule for adult supervision. Be visible throughout the school (before, during, after school).*
5. Improving parental awareness of and involvement in working on the problem. *Develop strategies for parent involvement, parent meetings, speakers, send home articles.*
6. Set up positive rewards and clear consequences for all students. *School wide positive plan for success involvement of students.*

## **BEWARE OF THE INTERNET (cyber bullying)**

### What Kids Encounter Online (National Center for Missing & Exploited Children)

A survey regarding Internet use among youth revealed in one year:

- 13% of youth have received an unwanted sexual solicitation or approach.
- 81% of those propositioned were 14 or older.
- 70% of those reporting a sexual advance were female and 30% male.
- 37% occurred while in a chat room; 40% came through an instant message program.
- 79% of incidents happened at home.
- 31% of the solicitations were aggressive meaning the perpetrators made, or attempted, offline contact with youth. In aggressive solicitation incidents: 75% asked to meet the youth in person; 34% called youth on the telephone; 18% came to youths' home; 12% gave youth money and/or gifts; 9% of the youth received mail and in 3% youth received a travel ticket.
- 34% of the youth surveyed had at least one unwanted exposure to sexual pictures.

### TYPES OF CONTACT

Chat Rooms- Communication with one or more users via text. Chat rooms pose the biggest risk to teens. Several people can be in a chat room at once. You can never know who is in the chat room, or if someone is really who he or she claims to be. Anything you type in a chat room can be seen by everyone who is using the chat room.

Instant Messaging (IM)- A private messaging option in which two individuals can communicate in real time. IM is available through most email accounts, social networking sites and online gaming like XBOX.

Social Networking- Websites providing various ways for users to interact such as chat, messaging, email, video, voice, file sharing, blogging, etc. Some popular sites include MySpace, Facebook, and many more. Many children and teens are not aware that they are putting themselves in danger by giving out too much personal information online.

Peer-to-Peer File Sharing- Peer-to-peer (P2P) is a type of network that allows users to connect with each other and directly access files from one another's hard drives. Some of these programs include LimeWire, BearShare, and Kazaa. Use of these networks could allow unlimited access to illegal or pornographic material, copyright violations, or identity theft.

## **WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO LIMIT CYBER BULLYING**

- Talk with your child about online dangers, including sexual victimization.
- Spend time online with your child exploring positive sites and teaching responsible use of the Internet.
- Set limits with your child, determining when and how long to surf the Internet.
- Protect your password, which should be required to go online, and enter your child each time the Internet is used.
- Station computers with Internet access in the family areas of your residence-not in your child's bedroom.
- Utilize blocking software or filtering services offered by many Internet Providers.
- Always maintain access to your child's online account and randomly check his/her email and Web browser history. (This may seem too intrusive for some parents, but for others, it has saved their child from potential pain and harm. Obviously, we each need to make a decision in this area).
- Never give a child your credit card number (this does not include your spouse ... sorry!). If necessary, enter the number for your child if he or she is making an online purchase.
- Find out what computer safeguards are utilized by your child's school, public library, and at the home of the child's friends-all places where your child may encounter an online bully or predator.
- Talk with your child about bullying and what it is and what it isn't. Be sure they feel comfortable approaching you about issues without a parental over-reaction.
- Parents need to communicate with other parents if there are concerns about cyber bullying. Talk to the school and other social organizations that your child may be involved in such as church group, scouts, sports, drama, dance, etc.
- Teach your child about the dangers of gossip, criticism, and negative talk. It is not okay to write harmful words about others ... they may end up reading them.

*"Write your compliments in marble and your criticisms in dust"*

## **PARENT TIPS FOR BULLYING BEHAVIOR**

1. **Watch For Signs**-Mood swings, "not feeling well" every morning, coming home from school with torn clothing or unexplained bruises, lack of interest in friends or school could be red flags. Gentle probing, especially at bedtime can often draw out the information you need to help your child.
2. **Listen Carefully**-Take the child's concerns seriously. Be sure they know the difference between "tattling" (reporting behavior only to get someone in trouble) and "telling" (reporting behavior to protect the rights or safety of others or themselves). Let them know how pleased you are that they came to you and encourage them to do so anytime.
3. **It Is Never Okay**-Children need to know that it is never all right to harass, threaten, or harm another person. And teach your children where to go for help (such as a teacher, principal, or other trusted adult). Hitting back should be a very, very last resort as it may aggravate the bully and increase the violence.
4. **Be Willing To Tell**-If you know of an incident at the school, inform a teacher or the principal. Ask about the school's bullying policy and for a specific action plan. Some schools have peer mediation programs, an excellent way to model and experience nonviolent conflict resolution. If the school doesn't have one, there are plenty of resources on the internet.
5. **Get More Advice And Help**-Read books on the topic and help educate your family. Besides causing physical and emotional harm, bullying and harassment increases the chance that a student will perform poorly in school and even drop out later in life. Taking it seriously before those self-destructive dominoes begin to fall could be the best thing you ever do for your child. It's also a great way to let him/her see that open parent-child communication can lead to positive results-an attitude that can come in very handy down the line.

## PARENT APPROACHES THAT HELP REDUCE BULLYING

- Set standards of behavior, limits, and clear expectations for the child, in and out of school.
- Provide a secure attachment for the child.
- Be as positive as possible with the child. The goal for parents is to provide five positive comments for every negative one directed at a child.
- Monitor their own behavior and aggression. Demonstrate behavior at home between adults that is not bullying or aggressive. Children copy parents' behaviors--good and bad.
- Provide appropriate models of conflict resolution.
- Model empathetic behavior.
- Offer suggestions/advice for dealing with problematic peers.
- Encourage children who are observers to act upon the situation.
- Be concerned and responsive regardless of whether the child is the reported bully or the victim. Offer support, but do not encourage dependence.
- Become involved in the child's school life by reviewing homework, meeting teachers, talking with the child, and attending school functions.
- Build a network of other adults, parents, and students to discuss school safety and other issues.
- Give children the social skills they need to navigate through their own school experience.
- Teach children to have respect for differences.
- Explain the difference between an assertive and an aggressive response.
- Be an advocate for bullying prevention in scout groups, athletic programs, and other youth activities.
- Share stories about their own childhood experiences with bullying.

## **ASSISTING PARENTS TO UNDERSTAND BULLYING ISSUES**

**What is bullying?** Hitting, name-calling, exclusion, or other behavior that is meant to hurt another person. Bullying is often carried out by someone who has more power against someone who has less power. Bullying is like child abuse, rape, sexual harassment, and racism in these ways: there is an imbalance of power; the aggressor blames the target for causing the harassment; targets often come to blame themselves.

**Do we have to know that someone means to hurt someone else before we can discipline for behavior that hurts?** No. When we discourage unacceptable peer-to-peer aggression we also deal with bullying.

**What are the effects of bullying?** Bullying affects both targets and youth who bully. Targets of bullying are more likely to grow up depressed and anxious unless the bullying is stopped. Youth who bully are much more likely than non-bullies to become adult criminals.

**Why not just tell kids to stand up for themselves or pretend it doesn't bother them?** They've most likely already tried both of these interventions before asking us for help. If these strategies worked, they would already have solved the problem.

**How can I set up a family discipline program that is consistent and effective?** It's best to start with no more than five specific house rules that all the adults in the home agree are important and that apply to everyone. Some examples of house rules are: "No hitting or teasing;" "Do your homework and your chores on time;" "Follow directions after one reminder without screaming or whining." Then make a list of all the privileges your children have, including TV, phone, rides, Clothes of their choosing, video games, and other things you let them do or do for them. Take out of the list everything that has to be free for the child- those privileges, like sleeping in a bed or eating, that every child deserves- no matter how they act- without having to earn them. List the other privileges - at least 12- in order based on how much YOU would be unhappy if your child did not earn those privileges. Now you are ready to begin. After you explain the rules and the behavior system to them, every time children break a house rule they move down one level on the privilege chart. They can now stop bullying and raise responsible, caring children- a guide for parents have the privileges below that level, but not the ones above. A White board and markers are useful tool in making this clear. For young children (age 5-7), allow them to earn back one level every two days based on behavior. For young people age 8 and above, allow them to earn back one level each Friday based on behavior through the week. Privileges can be lost at any time, but only earned back one at a time at these specified times. Avoid warning, threatening, begging, second chances, arguing, or using anger. Instead, calmly let your child lose privileges every time he or she breaks a house rule.

Remember to give lots of positive attention and spend time playing with, reading with, and enjoying your child whether she is misbehaving or not. Love does not have to be earned.

**What is the one most important thing for parents to do?** The more time you spend with your children- at every age- doing things you both enjoy, the closer you will be to them and the happier they will be. Schedule special times for each child and stick to the schedule. Cut back dance, clubs, or sports if necessary to make that happen.

**What kinds of praise work best?** Praise is important. General, non-specific praise like "you're so smart" or "Good job" doesn't help young people see what they did right and

may make them afraid to risk failure if they think they can only be smart when they do something right. I message praise "I'm so proud of you when you .... " tells young people that they are responsible for our feelings and thus may lead to dependency or rebellion. Telling young people **exactly what they did, and what positive results their actions have**, empowers them and helps them be proud of their own behavior. "I noticed you helped your brother get dressed for school. He was smiling after you did that." "You studied the last three nights- and you got a 95 on this test!" "I saw you control yourself when Suzie yelled at you- and you stayed out of trouble." **How can I talk with my child if he or she bullies someone else?** Help your child tell you exactly what he or she did, without excuses or blaming others. Remember that even if the other student involved did something, your child made a choice to do what he did. Encourage her to talk about how that behavior affected the other person. Help him find the goal he was trying to reach through hurting the other person- Did he want attention? Power? Fun? To be left alone? And help her find other ways to reach that goal without hurting others. If your child has been punished at school, it will probably not be necessary to punish again at home (unless the behavior was severe). Encourage your child to behave better next time.

Stopping bullying and raising responsible, caring children- a guide for parents

**How can I support my child if he or she is bullied at school?** Avoid blaming your child for what others have done to him or her. Think twice before giving advice- your child may have already tried the strategies you are going to suggest. Get as much information as you can. Talk with your child's teacher, principal, or counselor and ask them to help your child be safe. Their intervention may include consequences for the student who bullies, increased supervision, and helping your child make more friends if he or she is isolated. Ask your child what she has already tried to resolve the problem. Praise her for all the things she has tried. Give him permission to stop doing the things that haven't worked to stop the bullying. Encourage him to keep telling you and other adults. Help him to think about what has worked- or what might work. If your child is isolated, help her make connections through activities, hobbies, or clubs. Help your child to heal through art, hobbies, positive relationships at school and away from school, and through helping your child see the cruel behavior as a choice made by those who bullied him or her, rather than as something he or she caused.

**What if my child is in an abusive friendship with someone who hurts him or her?**

Both girls and boys sometimes get into friendships with someone who is a friend one day and mean the next; who talks behind their backs; and who makes them feel that this mean behavior is somehow their fault. The best way for young people to protect themselves from this hurt is to move on to other friendships, knowing that a real friend doesn't hurt you. Trudy Ludwig's wonderful book *My Secret Bully* is a great help in talking about this issue with young people.

**How can I encourage my child to speak up about bullying that he or she sees?**

Encourage your children to join with others in telling adults when they see bullying and in reaching out in friendship to isolated youth. Praise your children when they do these things. Remind them that they have the power to help.

### **SAMPLE ACTION PLAN (assignment #9)**

This plan is just an example of one approach to use when doing this assignment.

You may deviate from this sample as long as you develop an approach for reducing bullying in the school or chosen environment.

#### **INDIVIDUAL APPROACH**

1. Discuss "bully spots" within the school.
2. Provide a listening ear and emotional support. Direct child toward people who are supportive (adults, children, parents).
3. Write out ideas and strategies for avoiding bullies and for responding to bullies.

#### **CLASSROOM APPROACH**

1. A "buddy system" that pairs students with a particular friend or an older student.
2. Behavior contracts signed by students and parents.
3. No put down rule within the class. Rewards and consequences for behavior.
4. Weekly discussion on "the state of the school" in the area of bullying behaviors.

#### **SCHOOL APPROACH**

1. Rules against bullying that are publicized, posted school-wide, and accompanied by consistent sanctions.
2. Student and adult mentors who assist victims to build self-esteem and to foster mutual understanding of and appreciation for differences in others.
3. Discipline policies that emphasize positive behaviors rather than punishments for wrong behaviors.
4. Training for all adult supervisors in cafeterias, playgrounds, or other "hot spots" where bullying is known to occur.

**Bullying among children**  
**Childhood Education      Author: Janis R Bullock**

Most teachers are aware that bullying begins early, yet many appear to believe the myth that children "picking on" or teasing one another is a "normal" part of childhood. Six-year-old Sam is barely eating. When asked by his dad what is wrong, he bursts into tears. "The kids at school keep calling me a nerd, and they poke and push me," he sobs. "There's a kid at school no one likes," 7-year-old Anika shares with her parents. "We all tease her a lot. She is a total dork. I would never invite her to my birthday party."

Bullying is a very old phenomenon; European researchers have studied its effects for decades. Until recently, however, the issue has received less attention from researchers in the United States, perhaps because of the prevailing belief that bullying among children is inevitable. Considering that bullying often is a sign that aggressive or violent behavior is present elsewhere in children's lives-young children may be acting out at school what they have observed and learned in the home-and the fact that bullying among primary school-age children is now recognized as an antecedent to progressively more violent behavior in later grades, it behooves teachers to take notice.

Unfortunately, teachers have differing attitudes toward children who bully. Most teachers are aware that bullying begins early, yet many appear to believe the myth that children "picking on" or teasing one another is a "normal" part of childhood. They also may believe that these conflicts are best resolved by the children themselves. Consequently, some teachers do not intervene.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF BULLIES AND THEIR VICTIMS**

Bullying refers to repeated, unprovoked, harmful actions by one child or children against another. The acts may be physical or psychological. Physical, or direct, bullying includes: hitting, kicking, pushing, grabbing toys from other children, and engaging in very rough and intimidating play. Psychological bullying includes: name calling, making faces, teasing, taunting, and making threats. Indirect, or less obvious and less visible, bullying includes exclusion and rejection of children from a group.

Children who bully are impulsive, dominate others, and show little empathy. They display an "aggressive personality pattern combined with physical strength". Without intervention, the frequency and severity of the bullying behaviors may increase. Even more disturbing, it appears that the patterns of bullying learned in the early years can set children on a course of violence later in life.

Although a longstanding characterization of children who bully points to their low self-esteem, there is little empirical evidence to support this view. In fact, more recent research suggests that an inflated self-esteem increases the odds of aggressive behavior. When a bully's self-regard is seriously threatened by insults or criticisms, for example, his or her response will be more aggressive than normal. Furthermore, bullies often report that they feel powerful and superior, and justified in their actions. Research on family dynamics suggests that many children already have learned to

bully others by preschool age. Many young children who bully lack empathy and problem-solving skills, and learn from their parents to hit back in response to problems.

Children who are bullied, on the other hand, are often younger, weaker, and more passive than the bully. They appear anxious, insecure, cautious, sensitive and quiet, and often react by crying and withdrawing. They are often lonely and lack close friendships at school. Without adult intervention, children are likely to be bullied repeatedly, putting them at-risk for social rejection, depression, and impaired self-esteem. A smaller subset of these children, known as "provocative victims," has learned to respond aggressively to perceived threats by retaliating not only against the aggressor, but also against others.

### **INCIDENCES OF BULLYING AMONG CHILDREN**

Evidence suggests that, in the United States, the incidence of bullying among children is increasing and becoming a nationwide problem. One out of five children admits to being a bully. In general, boys engage in more physical, direct means of bullying, whereas girls engage in the more psychological and indirect bullying, such as exclusion. It is reported that girls may be involved in bullying as much as boys, but are less willing to acknowledge their involvement. In addition, because indirect bullying is often less apparent, girls' bullying may be underestimated. Girls tend to bully less as they get older. The percentage of boys who bully, however, is similar at different age levels.

Twenty-five to 50 percent of children report being bullied. The great majority of boys are bullied by other boys, while 60 percent of girls report being bullied by boys. Eight percent of children report staying away from school one day per month because they fear being bullied. Forty-three percent of children have a fear of being harassed in the school bathroom. Children report that many incidents of bullying occur in situations that are difficult for the teacher to monitor, such as during playground activity.

### **THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING ON CHILDREN**

To succeed in school, children must perceive their environment as being safe, secure, and comfortable. Yet, for many children, bullying and teasing begins as soon as children first form peer groups. For some children, this is a time when patterns of victimizing and victimization become established. Consequently, the victims perceive school as a threatening place and experience adjustment difficulties, feelings of loneliness, and a desire to avoid school. These feelings may linger even when bullying ceases.

Children desire and need interaction with peers, physical activity, and time outdoors. Consequently, they often consider outside recess to be their favorite part of the school day. Sadly, however, many children who are bullied report that problems occur on the playground and view the playground as a lonely, unhappy, and unsafe environment.

If children are fearful or intimidated, they cannot learn effectively. They may react by skipping school, avoiding certain areas of the school (the bathroom or the playground), or, in extreme, yet increasingly common, cases, they may bring weapons to school. Early exposure to bullying can produce both immediate and delayed effects in children's ability to adjust to school, school staff needs to intervene as soon as problems are detected.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN**

A comprehensive plan to address the problems of bullying and teasing must involve school personnel, teachers, children, and families. Intervention must occur on three levels: school-wide, in specific classrooms, and with individuals.

### **School-wide Intervention**

School personnel must recognize the pervasiveness of bullying and teasing and its detrimental effects on children's development. Inservice training can be developed that outlines a clear policy statement against bullying and intervention strategies for addressing it. The school also can develop a comprehensive plan geared to teach children pro social behaviors and skills.

School personnel could enlist families' support and involvement by sharing details of the policy through parent-teacher conferences and newsletters. Families need to be aware of the specific sanctions that will be imposed on children who bully, and they need opportunities to offer feedback and suggestions. It is important to encourage parents to talk with their children about bullying. Children who are bullied often believe that their parents are unaware of the situation, and that their concerns are not being addressed or discussed. However, children do want adults to intervene. If families are kept informed, they can work as a "team member" with school counselors and teachers to change the school environment.

Additional sources of school-wide support for children who are bullied and teased may be developed, including mentoring programs. Teachers can identify children who need support, and find them a mentor. Children may feel more at ease and less anxious when they have a "buddy," such as an older student, who can help intervene. Counselors at one elementary school selected, trained, and supervised high school students to teach the younger children how to deal with bullying and harassment. After implementation of this program, the teachers observed a decline in reports of harassment.

Bullying frequently occurs on the playground, yet many children believe that teachers do little to stop it. Consequently, "play-time ... is more of a prison sentence than an opportunity to play and socialize". Therefore, school personnel may need to review playground design and space, children's access to these spaces, teacher supervision, and the role of the school in early intervention on the playground. Yard monitors and lunch time supervisors can be trained to watch for signs of bullying. In addition, children can be asked to identify those places where bullying most frequently occurs.

### **Intervention in Specific Classrooms**

Clearly, bullying and hurtful teasing affects children's ability to learn and enjoy play, as well as the teacher's ability to teach. Within the classroom, teachers can begin addressing the problem by creating times for children to talk about their concerns. Interestingly, one study showed that when children ages 5 to 7 years of age were asked

about assisting someone who was being bullied, 37 percent replied that it was none of their business.

Teachers can ask children to talk about what makes them feel unsafe or unwelcome in school. The teacher then can make a list of the children's responses, discuss them (e.g., "I don't like it when someone hits me or calls me a name"), and create corresponding rules (e.g., "Hitting and name calling are not allowed in the classroom"). When necessary, the discussions can be continued during class meetings so that the rules can be reviewed, revised, and updated. The teacher can also show children what to do to help themselves or other children, and remind them of the consequences of breaking the rules. Teachers can reduce children's anxiety by setting firm limits on unacceptable behavior.

If the bullying continues, teachers may need to make referrals to school counselors who will work with children, either individually or in groups, to talk about concerns, discuss solutions and options, and give suggestions on how to form friendships. Children without close friends are more likely to be victimized and may benefit from specific suggestions for building friendships (e.g., invite a friend to your house, work together on a school project, share a common interest, play a favorite game together).

Certain types of curricula, especially those that provide opportunities for cooperative learning experiences, may make bullying less likely to flourish. Children need to be engaged in worthwhile, authentic learning activities that encourage their interests and abilities. When they are intellectually motivated, they are less likely to bully. For example, project work involves children's in-depth investigations into topics of their own choosing. As they explore events and objects around them in the classroom, in the school-yard, in the neighborhood, and in the community, they learn to cooperate, collaborate, and share responsibilities. Project work can be complemented by noncompetitive games, role playing, and dramatization to raise awareness of bullying and increase empathy for those who experience it. Some teachers use children's literature to help create caring and peaceful classrooms.

#### Intervention With Individuals

Developing both immediate and long-term strategies for identifying and working with bullies may be necessary. When teachers observe an incident of bullying, they can intervene by asking the bully to consider the consequences of his or her actions and think about how others feel. By talking calmly, yet firmly, to the bully, the teacher can make it clear that such behavior is unacceptable. Teachers can show the bully alternate ways to talk, interact, and negotiate; at the same time, they can encourage victims to assert themselves. By doing so, the teacher is showing the bully and victim that action is being taken to stop the bullying. Acting promptly can prevent the bullying from escalating.

When interacting with children on a one-on-one basis, teachers should provide encouragement that acknowledges specific attributes, rather than dispensing general praise and approval. Expressions of specific encouragement ("You seem to be pleased and very interested in your project, and it appears you have worked on it for many days and used many resources to find answers to your questions"), as opposed to general

praise, are descriptive, sincere, take place in private, focus on the process, and help children to develop an appreciation for their efforts and work. While developing children's self-esteem is a worthwhile goal, false praise may instead promote narcissism and unrealistic self-regard. Teachers should avoid encouraging children to think highly of themselves when they have not earned it.

Additional long-term strategies may include encouraging children to resolve their own problems and using peers to mediate between bullies and their targets. Furthermore, teachers can spend time helping children to form ties with peers who can offer protection, support, security, and safety, thus helping to reduce children's exposure to bullying.

### SUMMARY

Bullying and teasing are an unfortunate part of too many children's lives, leading to trouble for both bullies and their victims. Children who are bullied come to believe that school is unsafe and that children are mean. They may develop low self-esteem and experience loneliness. Children who continue to bully will have difficulty developing and maintaining positive relationships. A comprehensive intervention plan that addresses the needs of the school, the classroom, teachers, children, and families can be developed and implemented to ensure that all children learn in a supportive and safe environment.

### **POSSIBLE MOVIES TO WATCH**

The following list of movies is only a few possibilities. They are not rated or ranked by the instructor, so please investigate the movie prior to watching it. There are a variety of movies to choose from. In addition, you may substitute a television show (Examples: The Simpsons, Gossip Girls, Home Improvement) for a movie.

A Christmas Story  
Back to the Future  
Beauty and the Beast  
Big Bully  
Billy Madison  
Carrie  
D2: The Mighty Ducks  
DrillBit Taylor  
First Kid  
Harry Potter  
How to Eat Fried Worms  
The Hunger Games  
Lucas  
Mean Girls  
Never Back Down  
Odd Girl Out  
Rats and Bullies  
Revenge of the Nerds  
The Ant Bully  
The Benchwarmers  
The Breakfast Club  
The Karate Kid  
The Never Ending Story  
Twilight

A reminder☺ these movies are not endorsed for their cinematic credentials or excellent story lines. They are examples of movies that show bullying. Please review the ratings and the description prior to watching (for your own viewing pleasure).

## **BULLYING BEHAVIORS: ENOUGH IS ENOUGH**

### **Website Supports**

**[www.pacerkidsagainstabullying.org](http://www.pacerkidsagainstabullying.org)**

Website for kids against bullying. Many videos, games, and activities.

**[www.mcgruff.org](http://www.mcgruff.org)**

How can you help stop bullies? Speak up and be a friend. Follows patterns of the "Take a bite out of crime" format from McGruff. Ideas, books, guidelines for children.

**[www.cyberbullyingprevention.com](http://www.cyberbullyingprevention.com)**

Helping children and teenagers avoid bullying over the internet.

**[www.stopbullyingnow.com](http://www.stopbullyingnow.com)**

The links on this site will lead you through an exploration of interventions that work to reduce bullying in schools.

**[www.eyesonbullying.org](http://www.eyesonbullying.org)**

Strategies from teachers, parents, and care givers in reducing bullying.

**[www.bullypolice.org](http://www.bullypolice.org)**

Provides books, websites and psychologist/clinics that can help because schools can't do it all.

**[www.bullyfrog.com](http://www.bullyfrog.com)**

The Bully Frog Program is a Bullying Character Education program for both Elementary and Middle School that finally gives educators, students and parents ideas for helping children.

## **BULLYING BEHAVIORS: Enough is Enough**

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**The following two books are written by your instructor and contain a faith based perspective and biblical references.** These are available on line or through bookstores.

*What To Do When Words Get Ugly.* Michael Sedler. Revell Books, 2016 (edited/revised edition). Examines the topic of gossip and how it impacts people. (Adult) [www.bakerbooks.com](http://www.bakerbooks.com) 1-800-877-266.

*When to Speak Up and When to Shut Up.* Michael Sedler. Revell Books, 2006. Communication book discussing conflict and encouragement. (Adult) [www.bakerbooks.com](http://www.bakerbooks.com) 1-800-877-2665 **(over 300,000 copies sold).**

Both books are also available in CD as an audio book.