

Bullying Today: *What To Do About It*

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Bullying Today: Overview

What is Bullying?

Who Does It?

What are the Effects of Bullying?

What to Do About It?

*What is Bullying?

- An imbalance of both power and victimization
- Repeated and systematic harassment and attacks on others
- Perpetrated by individuals or groups

Widmeyer Communications Environmental Scan for the National Bullying Prevention Campaign, 2002

What is Bullying?

Takes many forms:

- Physical violence
- Verbal taunts, name-calling, and put-downs
- Threats and intimidation
- Extortion or stealing of money and possessions
- Exclusion from the peer group
- Technological harassment (via email, text messaging, etc.)*

*Source: London Family Court Clinic, London,
Ontario, Canada*

Who Bullies?

Someone who:

- Wants power
- Is willing to use others to get what he wants
- Is concerned with his own desires rather than thinking about anyone else
- Finds it difficult to see things from someone else's perspective
- Can come from any economic, cultural, religious background.*
- Is often in middle school grades.*

*Who Bullies?

(cont.)

Someone who:

- Has average/above average self-esteem
- Has a positive attitude toward violence
- A quick temper and difficulty conforming to rules
- Gains satisfaction from inflicting injury and perceives "rewards" (prestige, etc.) from their behavior

Source: Widmeyer Communications Environmental Scan for the National Bullying Prevention Campaign, 2002

*Who Is Bullied?

Often it is kids that are stand out as "different" in some way due to:

- Appearance (weight, clothes, disability, etc.)
- Sexual orientation
- Intellect
- Socio-economic background
- Cultural background

Bullying Can Lead To...

- Shyness
- Low self-esteem
- Poor academic achievement
- Isolation
- Depression
- Threatened or attempted suicide

Source: London Family Court Clinic, London, Ontario, Canada

*Stats: Bullying and School Violence

- Almost three-fourths of attackers felt persecuted, bullied, threatened... prior to engaging in an incident of school violence. ¹
- Students in grades 7-12 say revenge is the strongest motivation for school shootings- 86% percent said "other kids picking on them, making fun of them or bullying them" causes teenagers to turn to lethal violence in the schools. ²

1. U.S. Secret Service and Department of Education. (May 2002). *The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in The U.S.*
2. Cerio, Ph.D., Jay, Edward Gaughan, Ph.D., Robert Myers, Ph.D. *Lethal Violence In Schools: A National Study, Final Report.* Alfred University: Alfred, NY. 2001.

What to Do About It?

- Take the problem seriously
- Learn to identify potential bullies
- Learn to identify potential victims
- Learn to identify and address risk factors
- Support prevention programs

Taking the Problem Seriously: A Few Stats About Kids and Bullies

- More than 43% of middle school students (grades 6-8) have threatened to harm another student.
- One in every eight middle school students has been regularly harassed or attacked by a bully, twice the rate for high school students.
- The National Association of School Psychologists estimates that every day 160,000 children miss school because of fear of bullying.

Stats: Youth and Bullies

- Nearly 50 % of teens (12-17 y.o.) witness at least one bullying or taunting incident in school every day.
- About 66 % of teens witness bullying or taunting at school at least once a week.

Bullies Have Many Faces

Extrovert Bullies

- Are outgoing, aggressive, and active
- Use force to get their way
- Are angry and mean on the surface
- Have feelings of inferiority and insecurity

Bullies Have Many Faces

Extrovert Bullies

- Rebel to achieve a feeling of superiority and security
- Reject rules

Source: Helping Kids Handle Conflict, NCPC

Bullies Have Many Faces

Introvert Bullies

- Are reluctant to rebel
- May not want to be recognized
- Conform to society
- Control by smooth-talking, saying the “right” thing, lying, just to get their way

Bullies Have Many Faces

Introvert Bullies (cont.)

- Deceive others into thinking they mean well
- Try to be the “teacher’s pet”
- Get their power through cunning, manipulation, and deception

Source: Helping Kids Handle Conflict, NCPC

Identifying Victims:

Signs of Being Bullied

Children may:

- Be afraid of walking to or from school
- Change their usual route
- Not want to go on the school bus
- Ask you to drive them to school

Possible Signs of Being Bullied

Children may (cont.):

- Feel ill in the mornings
- Not want to go to school (*you have to...*)
- Begin doing poorly in school
- Come home with clothes or other items destroyed

Possible Signs of Being Bullied

Children may (cont.):

- Need more money than usual/losing money regularly
- Have possessions go "missing"
- Have unexplained bruises, scratches, or cuts
- Begin to bully other children or siblings

Possible Signs of Being Bullied

Children may (cont.):

- Have nightmares
- Become withdrawn
- Become aggressive and unreasonable
- Become anxious or distressed
- Attempt or threaten suicide

Individual Risk Factors for Bullying

- Active, impulsive, and hot-tempered
- Dominating personality
- Lack of empathy
- Difficulty conforming to rules

Individual Risk Factors (cont.)

- Low tolerance for frustration
- Positive attitudes toward violence*
- Physical strength (for boys)
- Decreasing interest in school

Family Risk Factors

- Lack of parental warmth and attention
- Lack of parental supervision
- Overly-permissive parenting
- Modeling of and tolerance for harsh discipline/physical punishment*

Peer Risk Factors

- Friends/peers with positive or indifferent attitudes toward violence
- Exposure to models of bullying

School/Community Factors

- Lack of supervision in the hallways, lunchroom, and/or playground
- Staff have indifferent or accepting attitudes towards bullying

What To Do About Bullying

Theory & Application

Goals of Bullying Prevention Programs

- Reduce bully/victim problems among children
- Prevent development of new bully/victim problems
- Achieve better peer relations

Goals of Bullying Prevention Programs

- Create conditions that make it possible for all children to get along and function better in/out of the school setting

Source: Susan P. Limber, PhD, Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, Clemson University

Bullying Prevention Program Elements

Establish an environment that:

- Is warm
- Is positive
- Has firm limits to unacceptable behavior

Bullying Prevention Program Elements

Establish an environment that:

- Practices non-hostile, nonphysical sanctions consistently applied when behavior is unacceptable
- Has adults actively involved as authorities and positive role models

Bullying Prevention Program

Elements Include:

- Individual intervention
- Parental intervention
- Classroom interventions
- School-wide interventions
- Community interventions

What Children Can Do

- Tell an adult
- Talk it out
- Walk away with your head held high
- Hang with friends
- Avoid the bully
- Don't be a bully
- Stick up for others who are bullied

*Tattling vs. Telling

- Unimportant
- Harmless
- Can handle by self
- Purpose is to get someone in trouble
- Behavior is accidental
- Important
- Harmful or dangerous (physically or psychologically)
- Need help from an adult to solve
- Purpose is to keep people safe
- Behavior is purposeful

*Strategies for Bystanders

- Normalize fears and worries
- Emphasize strength in numbers
- Communicate the expectation to take action
- Teach skills and strategies to take a stand
- Acknowledge and reward caring behaviors

Source: Bully proofing Your School, 2000.

What Parents Can Do

- Take complaints of bullying seriously
- Teach children to be assertive and to stand up for themselves verbally, not violently
- Ask children how peers treat them.
(Children are often ashamed or embarrassed.)

What Parents Can Do

- Increase positive social opportunities for all kids - especially kids who are picked on or victimized
- Work with the school to make sure effective consequences are applied toward bullies and that monitoring at school is adequate
- Suggest the school implement a comprehensive anti-bullying program

What Teachers/Counselors Can Do

- Ensure that students understand what bullying means; what behaviors it include; and how it makes people feel
- Develop and post class rules against bullying
- Use appropriate positive and negative consequences