

The following material was taken from: Mayer, G. R., & Ybarra, W. J. (2003). *Teaching Alternative Behaviors Schoolwide: A Resource Guide to Prevent Discipline Problems*. Downey: LACOE, Safe Schools Division.

Bullying

“It is really a fundamental democratic or human right to be spared this kind of humiliating, degrading treatment, which makes life miserable for thousands and thousands of young people for no good reason.” – Dan Olweus, University of Bergen, Norway

Bullying is a serious aggressive problem and needs to be addressed schoolwide. Bullying is a major breeding ground for juvenile threats, violent retribution, and suicide (Cornell, 2002). The following suggestions on bullying assume that the organizational activities listed above, and in Chapters 1 and 3, are in place, and are based on material developed by Mayer, Ybarra, and Fogliatti (2002). Other aggressive behaviors, such as defiance, profanity, or swearing, are addressed in *Classroom Management: A California Resource Guide* (a companion resource guide - Mayer et al., 2000).

What Is Bullying?

Arnette and Walsleben (1998) point out that in this country, bullying has traditionally been viewed as some perverse sort of child’s play, its occurrence usually being responded to by the common phrase, “kids will be kids.” Today, bullying is rightfully being recognized for what it is: Acts that can lead to suicide or violent retribution. Bullying is:

- The intentional victimization over time that causes injury, discomfort, fear, and suffering to the victim
- An imbalance of power between the bully and the victim (Silvernail, Thompson, Yang, & Kopp, 2000), which often appears as different emotional tones (i.e., the victim will be upset whereas the bully is cool and in control)
- Aggressive behavior that can lead to greater and prolonged violent behavior by the bully and/or victim

Facts About Bullying

It is not just the large, insecure child who bullies, but popular and small children bully. In fact, some researchers have found that 80% of children bully at some level.

- Two to three students in the average elementary school classroom are afraid because of bullying. Some avoid the cafeteria, restrooms and/or hallways for fear of being bullied
- Bullies also report being victimized
- Bullying can come from an individual or a group of students. In fact, its organized manifestation occurs through gangs
- Bullying occurs more frequently and with greater lethality today than in the 1970s and 1980s, as illustrated with it being associated with school shootings (e.g., the incidents in Littleton, Colorado, and in Santee, California)

- Bullying affects 5 million elementary and junior high school students in the United States (Batsche & Moore, 2000)
- Some urban junior and high school students (8%) miss one day each month because they are afraid (Skiba & Fontanini, 2001)
- Teachers intervened in only 4% of cases that were reported (Skiba & Fontanini, 2001)
- Bullying is highest among 6th through 8th graders (Nansel, et al., 2001)
- Bullying is the best predictor of adult criminality (Silvernail et al., 2000)
- Bullying is associated with poor psychosocial adjustment (Spivak & Prothrow-Stith, 2001)
- Many (20%) of the high school students surveyed reported avoiding restrooms out of fear of being bullied (Daleo, 2001)
- Bullying often takes on different forms among boys as compared to girls

Reasons Students Fear Reporting Bullying

- They believe the bullying will become worse if they tell
- They are embarrassed or ashamed
- They feel nothing will be done (Silvernail et al., 2001)
- The bully's peer group support the bullying behavior (Batsche & Moore, 2000)
- Most students (69%) believe that their school responds poorly to bullying (Daleo, 2001)

Also, if they do tell, a common response is: "You are old enough to solve your own problems. Work it out!" However, victims of bullies are not old enough, nor competent enough, to defend themselves.

Bullying Is Learned

Bullying behavior is learned directly through the interactions students have in their environment, or vicariously by observing another's actions and the consequences of those actions. For example, if a student observes another student using force to obtain access to a swing and he is successful at it, then the student who observed the act may have learned that this is an effective way of getting what he or she wants (Newman, Horne, & Bartolomucci, 2000).

Who Gets Bullied?

Though anyone can be subjected to bullying, bullying occurs more frequently when the victim does not act or appear normal (according to norms adopted in a particular social group). He or she may be very short, of a different race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation, wear a hearing aid, have poor coordination, cry or become emotionally distraught easily, lack social skills, have difficulty in picking up social cues, be insecure or have a low self-concept, wear different clothes, or have other atypical physical or behavioral attributes. For example, 85% of the children who stammer are bullied or seriously teased (Mestel & Goves, 2001).

Characteristics of Bullying

Bullying often, but not always, takes on different forms among boys as compared to girls. (Thus, a few girls will demonstrate the bullying characteristics of boys, and a few boys will demonstrate the bullying characteristics of girls.)

Characteristics of Bullying for Boys

- Intimidation
- Control
- Humiliation
- Power domination
- Threats to one's safety

Tactics Used by Boys

- Name calling
- Shoving
- Fistfights
- Extortion (money, belongings)
- Defacing victim's property
- Pushing
- Spitting
- Kicking
- Repeated physical attacks
- Inappropriate sexual behavior

Characteristics of Bullying for Girls

- Social cruelty
- Manipulation
- Hurt feelings
- Subtle rejection or ostracism
- Character assassination

Tactics Used by Girls

- Name calling
- Isolating the victim ("Don't talk or play with her.")
- Ethnic slurs
- Spreading false rumors

Warning Signs of a Child Being Bullied

Children may be victims of bullying if they:

- Seem afraid to go to school or complain of frequent headaches or stomachaches that are not medically related
- Have few, if any, friends with whom to play
- Seem depressed, anxious or moody
- Come home from school with torn or dirty clothing or damaged possessions
- Have cuts, bruises or scratches

Short- and Long-Term Consequences for the Bully, Victim, and Bystanders

The Bully

Bullies are at risk for truancy, dropping out of school, violence, and delinquency. They are much more likely than non-bullies to be involved in:

- Fights
- Theft
- Vandalism
- Drunkenness

Bullies also are 5 to 6 times more likely to have serious criminal records by young adulthood. Olweus (1993) found that 60% of those characterized as bullies in grades 6 through 9 had at least one criminal conviction by age 24.

The Victim

Victims may:

- Experience physical and psychological problems
- Experience depression, low self-esteem, and other mental health problems as adults
- Experience difficulty making friends
- Fear riding the bus, using the school restroom and entering the locker room
- Cut school for fear of being bullied
- Change schools
- Drop out of school
- Seek revenge [A Secret Service Study (2001) concluded, after reviewing 37 U.S. school shootings, that being bullied played a key role in many of the attacks.]
- Attempt Suicide

Bystanders

Bystanders may:

- Fear that association with victim(s) may bring bullying their way
- Learn that bullying is a way to gain prestige and attention
- Fear reporting bullying incidents because they may be labeled a “snitch,” “tattler,” or “informer”
- Experience feelings of guilt or helplessness for not assisting the victim

Interventions

Reasons to Intervene

The entire staff at the school should be provided direction as to what steps will need to be taken to prevent bullying, because of:

- The harmful and frequently enduring effects on bullies and their victims
- The high frequency of bullying among students
- The detrimental effects on the school’s learning environment
- Violent retribution by victims
- The fact that it is a human right to be spared this kind of humiliating, degrading treatment.

The Function of Bullying

Whenever possible, base the interventions on the purpose that bullying serves. That is, try to remove or deny the purpose from the bully. There are several reasons or purposes of bullying:

- Attention/recognition/prestige/acceptance in peer group. By creating a climate that does not tolerate bullying, the social power of the bullies will be taken away. Students who are not involved in bullying need to be encouraged to tell teachers when they witness bullying and to include the victims in their social group.
- Access to activity or item. Some students use bullying to get what they want (e.g., extortion, intimidation).
- A lack of understanding of social/cultural, psychological, or physical differences.

What Can Administrators Do?

Because bullying occurs so extensively in our schools, the school climate must be changed. It is NOT just a few problem students causing the problem. The problem is pervasive and needs to be addressed schoolwide. *The school administration has the responsibility to assure that all students are provided an opportunity to attend school free from fear and intimidation.* The school administrator can:

- Assess the level of bullying at the school by conducting focus groups, surveys, and class meetings
- Clearly convey to students the consequences of violating school rules
- Notify students and parents of the school rules regarding harassment, intimidation, and assaultive-type behavior. (Ensure that the school has all legally required policies and grievance procedures for such acts)
- Help to establish a climate throughout the school that promotes understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of individual differences
- Encourage the development of a school environment that provides positive recognition of inclusive, cooperative, respectful, and caring student behaviors
- Provide close monitoring of cafeterias, playgrounds, and “hot spots” where bullying is likely to occur away from direct adult supervision
- Encourage students to report serious acts of bullying and other forms of aggressive behaviors to an adult
- Hold formal student focus groups on the topic
- Establish a confidential reporting system
- Encourage teachers to develop classroom rules that address bullying
- Encourage parents to discuss bullying with their children and the consequences of being a bully and a victim
- Receive and listen receptively to parents and students who report bullying
- Establish procedures whereby reports of bullying from parents are investigated and resolved

What Can Teachers Do?

Teachers are the single most effective deterrent to bullying. Schools that are “Bully Proof” contain teachers who know how to recognize bullying and how to safeguard their students against it.

Teachers can:

- Post and discuss clear rules as to how to behave (consider making the illustrative classroom rules number 6 and number 7 below into schoolwide rules)

ILLUSTRATIVE CLASSROOM RULES

1. Bring books, pencil, and paper.
2. Be in your seat when tardy bell rings.
3. Follow directions.
4. Complete assignments.
5. Show courtesy and respect to others.
6. **We will help others who are being bullied by getting adult help and/or speaking out.**
7. **We will try to include ALL students in activities.**

- Be sure to reinforce students who follow the rules and for positive inclusive behavior. In addition to praise and social recognition (see Mayer et al., 2000, for suggestions), consider sending home certificates or positive notes that might address one or more anti-bullying behaviors, such as the following –
“Today, (Child’s Name) engaged in the following respectful, caring behavior:
--Included a child who was left out, -- Spoke out for a child who was being mistreated, -- Helped to stop the spread of a rumor, -- Got adult assistance for a child who was being bullied -- displayed caring by (Specify). Your child is a person who cares for others, and is someone whom we can all be very proud of, and is now a select member of our ‘Caring Club.’”
(Both the teacher and school principal might sign the note.)
- Conduct class meetings to discuss bullying and what to do about it (weekly at first, and then gradually reduce their frequency)
- Promote a classroom environment that promotes understanding, acceptance, and appreciation of individual differences
- Model respect for individual differences
- Explain that telling and tattling are not the same. The major purpose of telling is to help someone, while the purpose of tattling is to obtain teacher attention or to get someone else in trouble who is not mistreating another student
- Pair isolated students with friends, outgoing prestigious peers, or an older student, and do not include victims and bullies in the same group. (Be sure the buddy has been taught the importance of reporting any instance of bullying to teachers.)
- Have individual serious talks with bullies, victims, and the parents of the involved children

- Confront bullies in private. Challenging a bully in front of his/her peers may enhance his or her peer status and lead to further aggression
- Positively recognize bullies for improvements (e.g., reduced incidents of bullying, increasingly longer periods of no bullying)
- Have a “bully box” available for students to report bullying behavior in a confidential manner
- Teach bystanders to befriend the victims
- Create peer pressure against bullying by creating a climate of respect and caring
- Involve members of the student success team in working with victims and bullies through counseling and social skills training sessions (Mayer et al., 2000)

What Can Parents Do?

Parents need to support the school’s efforts in: (1) recognizing that bullying is intolerable and (2) constructively addressing the problem.

When Your Child Is Being Bullied:

- Find out in detail what happened
- Contact your child’s teacher, counselor/psychologist, and administrator to alert them and to request their assistance
- Avoid blaming anyone
- Look at your child’s behavior, dress, and style of interacting. If appropriate, help the child make reasonable changes, but do not convey to the child that something is wrong with him or her. The bully’s behavior is the problem
- Do not encourage your child to be aggressive or to strike back
- Discuss and role-play with your child assertive alternatives to responding to bullies (e.g., have your child practice not reacting, saying “You’re right,” walking away—see below for additional suggestions for what victims can do)
- Be patient. It often takes awhile to resolve the problem
- Contact an attorney or local law enforcement officials if the problem persists or escalates. Acts of bullying should not be tolerated in the school or in the community

When Your Child Is the Bully:

- Find out in detail why your child is being called a bully
- Make yourself listen (the discussion is about the well-being of your child)
- Do not blame (others or your child)
- Point out that bullying is NOT acceptable in our family or in society
- Specify the consequences if the bullying continues
- Teach, including role-playing, and reward appropriate behavior and improvement (see section below on “Bullies should be”)
- Teach your child to speak out on behalf of anyone he or she observes being bullied

What Can Students Do?

It is important that students learn social skills that address bullying. (Members of the student success team can be involved in assisting students to learn many of the skills listed below, and in ensuring that the students receive positive recognition for engaging in the following skills.)

Victims Should Be Taught to:

- Ignore the bully's behavior when possible
- Leave the situation
- Rebuff in a firm manner
- Protect self
- Request that the bully stop, and then walk away; if this does not work, then tell the teacher
- Agree with the bully (this takes the power away from the bully)
- Use humor
- Spend time in groups
- Practice what to say in front of a mirror or with friends
- Dress appropriately
- Ask bully to repeat what they said

Victims Should Be Taught Not to:

- Cry or act hurt
- Lose their temper
- Escalate
- Return the aggression
- Get others to gang up on the bully
- Tease back
- Call the teaser names
- Bring weapons to school

Bullies Should Be:

- Taught social skills, such as assertiveness, negotiating, sharing, taking turns, inviting others to participate, assisting others, asking for permission, in place of aggression and intimidation
- Monitored and rewarded for appropriate behavior and for improvements (e.g., reduced incidents of bullying and increasingly longer periods of no bullying)
- Given clear sanctions for acts of bullying (However, because some bullies are also victims, punishing bullying behaviors without acknowledging victim experiences can foster increased frustration and subsequent aggression. Thus, be sure to support bullies when they are victims.)

Bystanders Should Be Taught to:

- Request that the bully stop
 - Seek adult help if the bully does not stop
 - Speak up and/or offer support to the victim (e.g., pick up their books, offer words of kindness)
 - Take the bully aside and ask him or her to “cool it”
- For, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said: ***“It is not malicious acts that will do us in, but the appalling silence and indifference of good people.”*** For additional resources on bullying, see Appendix H. Also, see Appendix P for things students can do to stop violence.

Appendix H: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BULLYING

The following form, a modification of one developed by Larry Epstein and Lana Hansen, can be used to foster alternative behaviors to bullying: *Caring for Others*.

Caring for Others

Date

Today, I observed _____ engaging in the following caring behavior:

_____ Sticking up for a child who was being treated unkind

_____ Including a child who had been left out

_____ Helping to stop the spread of a rumor

_____ Getting adult assistance for a bullying situation

_____ Other:

Your child typifies the kind of student we value at

(Name of School)

His/her behavior indicates that he/she has gone above and beyond the call of duty in demonstrating caring for others. His/her name will go on our Caring Board. Please take a few minutes to discuss this admirable behavior with your child.

(Teacher's Signature)

(Principal's Signature)

Resources

Curriculum developers and publishers now offer a variety of materials on prevention and intervention to eliminate bullying from the school campus. At least three criteria should be considered when selecting a program (Colvin et al., 1998):

- Is the program supported by research studies?
- Does the program emphasize teaching pro-social behavior to replace bullying?
- Is the program based on sound behavioral principles?

See the additional resources listed below for a brief description of several programs to eliminate bullying. There also are many others available as well as several bullying assessment instruments (see Colvin et al., 1998, for a review).

- Canter, L., & Petersen, K. (1995). *Teaching students to get along: Reducing conflict and increasing cooperation in K-6 classrooms*. Santa Monica, Ca: Lee Canter & Associates.

Chapter 7 addresses “Standing Up to Bullying Behavior.” At the end of the chapter are classroom lessons for students on “Identifying Bullying Behavior,” and (2) “Responding to Bullying Behavior.”

- Garrity, C., Jens, K., Porter, W., & Sager, N., & Short-Comilli, C. (1994). *Bully-Proofing your school*. Longmont CO: Sopris West.

Key elements of this program include conflict resolution training for all staff members, social skills building for victims, positive leadership skills training for bullies, intervention techniques for those who neither bully or are bullied, and the presence of parental support.

- Greenbaum, S., Turner, B., & Stephens, R. D. (1988). *Set straight on bullies*. Malibu, CA: National School Safety Center.

They provide a student survey on bullies that will help provide a clear picture of the extent of the problem in a class or school and the characteristics of the students involved.

- Johnson Institute. (1996). *The no-bullying program: Preventing bully/victim violence at school*. Minneapolis, MN: Johnson Institute.

This program pinpoints the “tell or tattle” dilemma facing many victims of bullying. Teachers are given step-by-step guidelines on how to teach students the difference between telling and tattling. Teachers also are shown how to establish and use immediate consequences when dealing with bullies.

- Olweus, D., Limber, S., & Mihalic, S. F. (1999). *Blueprints for violence prevention, book nine: Bullying prevention program*. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.

This program targets elementary, middle, and junior high schools and includes school wide components, classroom components, and individual components. The Bullying Prevention Program has been shown to result in a substantial reduction in boys’ and girls’ reports of bullying and victimization, a significant reduction in students’ reports of general antisocial behavior such as vandalism, fighting, theft, and truancy and significant improvements in “social climate.”

- Sharp, S., & Smith, S. K. (1994). *Tackling bullying in your school: A practical handbook for teachers*. New York, NY: Routledge.

This book is designed for teachers to use in their classrooms but includes whole school interventions as well. Included is a survey to be used in the classroom to identify the extent of the problem and identify bullies and victims. Tips are provided for developing your own survey. Curriculum ideas are included as well as scripts to use when meeting with a bully and a victim after an incident of bullying. This is a handy resource for teachers interested in implementing class meetings and curriculum interventions in dealing with the problem of bullying.

- Sjostrom, L., & Stein, N. (1996). *Bully-proof: A teacher’s guide on teasing and bullying for use with fourth and fifth grade students*. Wellesley, Ma: Wellesley College Center for Research on Women and the NEA professional library.

This book offers 11 lessons to be taught in the classroom on the subject of bullying. Included are writing activities, reading assignments, class discussions, role-plays, and homework assignments.

WEB SITES FOR BULLYING

- ***Safeguard Program: Bullies Page***. *The Coalition for Children, Inc.*
<http://www.safeguard.org/bullies.htm>

A website designed for parents to help them deal appropriately when their child is a bully or if their child is being bullied.

- ***You Can Beat Bullying-A Guide for Young People. Kidscape.***
<http://www.kidscape.org.uk/kidscape/>

A website designed for children. Includes sections such as: What can I do if I am being bullied? Why do some people bully? If I sometimes bully people, what can I do?

- ***Take Action Against Bullying.***
<http://www.bullybeware.com>

This site includes programs, tips, and strategies for preventing bullying.

- ***Preventing Bullying: A Manual for Schools and Communities***
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/spbranch/ssp/bullymanual.htm>

Addresses the problem of bullying in schools. This pamphlet defines bullying, discusses the seriousness of this behavior and the effectiveness of a comprehensive approach, and presents strategies for administrators, teachers, students, and parents to use when dealing with bullying situations. It also provides examples of innovative and successful approaches used by schools in different parts of the country.

- ***Recognizing and Preventing Bullying***
http://www.safetyzone.org/publications/fact4_index.html

A fact sheet created by the National Resource Center for Safe Schools, a project of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, is jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice.

- ***Bullying: A Survival Guide***
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/archive/bully>

Contains guidelines for dealing with all aspects of bullying from school to work. It includes facts, stories, organizations and resources.

- ***Bullying at School Information***
<http://www.scre.ac.uk/bully>

This site provides information about bullying: what families can do, what schools can do. It also provides sample policies and ideas for in-service.

- ***Bullying Prevention Program***
http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/model/ten_bully.htm

A universal intervention for the reduction and prevention of bully/victim problems, the program is one of ten "blueprints" for violence prevention identified in a project initiated by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (CSPV) with funding from the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice and the Centers for Disease Control (and later from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency). The "blueprint" is designed to be a practical description of a bullying prevention program that meets a very high scientific standard of program effectiveness.

- ***Hate Motivated Behavior in Schools***
<http://www.alameda-coe.k12.ca.us/acoef/HATECRIMES/index.htm>

The web site of the Hate Motivated Behavior in Schools Program of the California Task Force on Hate Crime. This site is designed to provide the latest information and response strategies relating to hate incidents occurring on California's public school campuses. Their goal is to promote awareness and provide resources for responding to and preventing hate behavior.

- ***No Bull***
<http://www.nobully.org.nz>

This site is part of the Telecom/Police STOP BULLYING Campaign. Spot and Bo are used to show you around the site. Information for kids, teachers, and grownups.

- ***SafetyZone***
<http://www.safetyzone.org/home.html>

The National Resource Center for Safe Schools works with schools, communities, state and local education agencies, and other concerned individuals and agencies to create safe learning environments and prevent school violence.

AUDIO-VISUAL FOR BULLYING

Nobody likes a bully. Narrated by Bill Cosby (film, 15 minutes). Available from: School of Education, Winthrop College, Rock Hill, SC 29733 803-323-2151 Cost: \$100

Set straight on bullies. Film and videotape, 18 minutes. Available from: National School Safety Center, 16830 Ventura Blvd., Suite 200, Encino, CA 91436. Cost: VHS and Beta videotape, \$40; 16 mm film, \$200.

YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION

National Youth Violence Resource Center: 1-866-SAFEYOUTH; www.safeyouth.org
This resource has fact sheets, best practices and research information regarding youth violence and suicide interventions.

Appendix P

TEN THINGS KIDS CAN DO TO STOP VIOLENCE

1. Settle arguments with words, not fists or weapons. Don't stand around and form an audience when others are arguing. A group makes a good target for violence.
2. Learn safe routes for walking in the neighborhood, and know good places to seek help.
3. Report any crimes or suspicious actions to the police, school authorities, and parents.
4. Don't open the door to anyone you don't know and trust.
5. Never go anywhere with someone you don't know and trust.
6. If someone tries to abuse you, say no, get away, and tell a trusted adult. Trust feelings, and if you sense danger, get away fast. Remember: violence is not the victim's fault.
7. Don't use alcohol or other drugs, and stay away from places and people associated with them.
8. Stick with friends who are also against violence and drugs, and stay away from known trouble spots.
9. Get involved to make school safer and better. Hold rallies, counsel peers, settle disputes peacefully. If there's no program, help start one.
10. Help younger children learn to avoid being crime victims. Set a good example, and volunteer to help with community efforts to stop crime and prevent violence.

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