



Bullying 2012: A Volunteer Guide to Understanding and Intervention

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What is at risk if we don't stop bullying behaviors before they advance?

- Decreased rates of collaborative learning and academic and scholastic success.
- Escalating violence and perpetration
- Increased rates of depression and suicide and homicide.
- Lawsuits
- Anti-social behaviors resulting from the life-long consequences of believing we have to force others to get our way.



Learn strategies to
communicate with your
youth about bullying

Learn the hard truths...

- 160,000 students avoid school daily in fear of being bullied (U.S. Dept of Justice and National Association of School Psychologists)
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- 1 in 3 students experienced bullying in 2007-2008 school year (Federal Report “Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2010”)

Without intervention:

- There are negative consequences:
 - Academic Success/Outcome
 - Increase/escalation in violence
 - Psychological vulnerability (victim)
 - Wasted community resources (e.g. Litigation)
 - Risk of developing psychopathology (perpetrator/s)
 - Community-level dysfunction

How do I, as a CASA help?

- Identify self as a resource
- Talk with your youth about bullying
 - Causes
 - Consequences
 - Prevention and Protections
 - Detection
 - Intervention
- Use investigation to work as a team player (community member)

Talk to your youth about bullying

- Initiate the conversation
- Personal narrative
- News example
- Community example
- Mining their understanding of school, home, group home policies
- Use October National Bullying Awareness Month as a platform.

Detection:



What is Bullying?

- Harassing, persecutorial, or intimidating behavior motivated by an actual or perceived characteristic—
 - Ethnicity
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Lifestyle
 - Gender
 - Disability

Target

- Object of the bully's aggression.
- Scapegoat.
- Little means of defense or...
- defenses that might be taken are somehow blocked by the bully.

gender differences

Boys	Girls
 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physically bullied by other• Targeted mostly by other boys	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• rumor-spreading and sexual comments• Targeted by both boys and girls

(Harris, Petrie, and Willoughby, 2002; Melton et al., 1998; Olweus, 1993; Nansel et al., 2001)

Bullying is...


- aggressive behavior
- *Intention to create distress or harm*
- *imbalance of power*
- *occurs repeatedly*

(Limber, 2002; Olweus, 1993a; Nansel et al., 2001)

From the American Psychological Association's Resolution on Bullying
Among Children and Youth (2004)

What it is not...

- Harmful or demeaning conduct motivated only by another reason, for example, a dispute about relationships or personal belongings,
- or aggressive conduct without identifiable motivation, does not come within the statutory definition of bullying.

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- **Bullying** is
 - aggressive behavior
 - is intentional
 - is repeated
 - causes injury or discomfort.
 - Can be physical contact, words or more subtle actions (exclusion).

The White House Conference on Bullying Prevention, March 10, 2011

Who bullies?

- **Anyone** in a given situation has the capacity to bully others
- Often a perception of inefficacy motivates aggressive/hostile/coercive behavior
- Identify and prevent bullying behaviors at home
 - Often undetected or misinterpreted as sibling rivalry
- There are no bullies, only bullying!

What encourages bullying?

- Perceptions of lack of resources
 - *“someone has to be left out in order for me to get what I want.”*
- Social alienation or discrimination
- Inadequate emotional skills (not knowing how to process upset—or **not being allowed** to process upset).

Heuristics...

- Acceptance of violence, aggressiveness, or coercion as effective goal-oriented strategy.
- Those who bully have a hard time seeing their actions as violent, harmful, antagonistic, aggressive or hostile. “It’s a joke!”
- Misinterpret neutral or positive stimulus/interaction as negative

How the bully gets away with it...


- cutting off the target's support system
- disabling defense due to bully's timing of attack (e.g. Saved by the bell or by timed presence of others).
- Threats are later denied as serious. (e.g. "I was just playing." "That's not what I meant.")
- Recruitment and scapegoating

Protective Factors—

- Other areas of excellence
- Supportive, diverse peer group
- Strong relationship with a trusted adult
- Strong affect regulation (don't show the fear, victim response)
- Assertiveness skills (starts with personal relationship with self including self-talk)
- Communication skills
- vs. few areas/no areas of strength
- vs. few friends in closed-to-others group
- vs. only peer consultation
- vs. poor affect regulation
- vs. lack of experience negotiating and standing up for self
- vs. Communication disorder/disability

Parents of the “bullied”

- Notice: ripped clothing, hesitation about going to school, decreased appetite, nightmares, crying, or general depression and anxiety
- Help them organize their experience and don't tell them to “let it go” or “suck it up” or fight back



**Teach strategies to your youth
to assist them in preventing
bullying behaviors and
protecting them from bullying
behaviors.**

Build protections

- Prosocial role
- Find a direction
- Building a pause
- Teach, role-model,
- make explicit **ADVOCACY**

If your investigation finds...

- Minor frequently misinterpret a neutral or positive stimulus/interaction as negative
- THEN...
- Can we assist them in correctly identifying interactions with others?
- Can we encourage them to check-in when coming up with a negative?

Assessment of intent...

- Is it a real criticism?
- Attack on behavior or character
- Or something about them, not you...

CASAs can help minors learn how to assist/intervene in bullying

- Distract/Extract
- Walk with friends during transitions
- Know policies; be ready to reflect them in the moment.
- Report
- Accountability for response
- Empathize and Support

Successful prosecution under

- **Non-discrimination and Hate Crimes**
- **Sexual orientation**
- **Disability**
- **Gender**
- **Harassment**
- **Stalking**
- **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

CA LAWS

- California Education Code §32261-32262
- California Education Code §32265
- California Education Code §32270
- California Education Code §35294.2
- California Education Code §48900


Recent legal case examples

- Dharun Ravi/ Tyler Clementi Case (New Jersey)

Decision: May 21, 2012

Injury Ramsey case April 13, 2012

- Failure of school to keep a record of incidents
- Failure of school to impose progressive discipline of bully
- Suit involved 8 district employees (faculty members and administrators), the bully, and the school.



**Learn how to assist other
professionals (teachers, social
workers, shelter
providers/guardians in
addressing bullying.**

Assist other professionals

- Copy everything
- Keep records
- Request response
- Volunteer to fill out reports

Use of technology and laws permitting recordings

- Wiretapping
- Cell phone video
- Screen shots
- Web cam


Serious risks posed to targets

- lowered self-esteem
- higher rates of depression
- anxiety
- feelings of loneliness
- suicidal ideation and
- higher rates of school absenteeism

(Craig, 1998; Hodges & Perry, 1996 Kochenderfer & Ladd, 1996; Nansel et al., 2001 Olweus, 1993a Rigby & Slee, 1993 Rigby, 1996 Salmon 2000 Slee, 1995)

Gateway behavior?

- Vandalism
- Fighting
- Drinking
- Smoking
- Dropping out
- Risky behaviors: carrying weapon

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- Do you try to hurt other kids on purpose?
 - Do you teae other kids about how they look or act?
 - Are other kids afraid of you?
 - Do you hit, threaten, or leave kids, out on purpose?
 - Do you hurt kids mostly when adults are not around?
 - Do you take or ruin other kids' stuff?
 - Do you enjoy it when you upset other kids?
 - Do you blame other people for your problems?
 - Do you think that some people deserve to be hurt?
 - Do you say mean things about others-in person, or by cell phone, or the internet?

What to do when your child exhibits bullying behaviors...

- Assess whether the home environment tolerates or by default has encouraged aggressive or passive aggressive bxs
- Identify if your child is misinterpreting social cues (same for bullied)
- Identify and enforce consequences
- Provide and demonstrate adequate resources and opportunities for your child to voice feelings and to have an impact

Students

- Don't bully back
- Shrug it off, better yet, find the humor in the situation
- Avoid being alone
- Stick up for others who are being aggressed against
- If you didn't stand up for the target, report bullying
- Don't participate in cyber-bullying.

Parents

- I. Share your values with your kids—tell them what your family values
 1. Charity
 2. Integrity
 3. Honesty
 4. Fairness
 5. Courtesy



Connect Behavior to Values

1. Charity--
2. Integrity--
3. Honesty--
4. Fairness--
5. Courtesy--

Cyberbullying

RECENT CASES

- D.C., a minor et al. v. R.R., a minor et al. (California)
- Finkel v. Facebook
- United States v. Lori Drew (Missouri)

Federal Legislation

- Washington S. 17068(5)—policy to prevent and address acts of bullying, harassment, or intimidation via electronic means by a student on school grounds and during the day.

Social Networking Pitfalls

- Sharing too much information
- posting pictures or comments that can hurt someone's feelings or damage their reputation
- Posting inappropriate content like pictures or video

P's and Q's

- **Politeness counts**
- **Tone it down**
- **CC, BC, and Reply All**
- **Only post what everyone can see—because ultimately, they could!**
- **You often can't take it back. And how do you feel about apologizing online to everyone?**
- **Never, ever, impersonate someone else.**

How to limit the effect on your child of cyber-bullying

Change settings

- Block
- Ignore
- Save the evidence
- Report it

Bullying often stops when they can't get through

Teachers

- Be watchful for aggressive and passive-aggressive behaviors.
- Set and reinforce expectations for respectful communication.
- Allow and make room for disagreements.
- Foster apologies and repair before delving into the background.

Schools can help too!

- Identify aggressive and passive-aggressive behaviors and institute positive dispute and direct communication expectations of students, teachers, and parents.
- Promote school-wide code of ethics through positive reinforcement
- Positive, proactive intervention to prevent social discrimination/alienation

Conclusion

- Students who experience bullying may feel overwhelmed, depressed, or anxious. If your child or student is having trouble at school or with friends as a result of bullying, a mental health professional, such as a psychologist, can help your child develop resilience and confidence. This will enable your child to be more successful both socially and academically.

REFERENCES:

- <http://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/publications/>
- APA.org
- onguardonline.gov
- PATHS—Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies
- National Education Association
- <http://www.stopbullying.gov/laws/california.htm>
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