

## Making Schools a Bully-Free Zone



## Bullying is more than teasing

- “Bullying among children is commonly defined as **intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words, or other behavior, such as name-calling, threatening and/or shunning** committed by one or more children against another.”

*Bullying: A Manual for Schools and Communities,  
United States Department of Education*

# Types of Bullying

- **Physical Bullying** – is **action oriented**. This type of bullying includes **hitting** or **kicking** a victim, or taking or damaging a victim's property
- **Emotional Bullying** – uses **words to hurt or humiliate** another person. This includes **name-calling**, **insults**, making racist comments, and constant teasing
- **Social Bullying** – causes harm to one's **group acceptance**. This includes spreading **rumors and gossiping**
- **Sexual Bullying** – causes harm to female or male by **forcing** one to engage in **sexual activity**. This includes **unwanted kissing, touching, or sex**.
- **Cyber Bullying**- Cyber bullying is the use of **Internet e-mail, instant messaging, chat rooms, pagers, cell phones, or other forms of information technology** to deliberately and repeatedly hurt, taunt, ridicule, threaten or intimidate someone .

## Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullies sometimes leave their “**electronic finger prints**” behind. Electronic messages such as IM's and emails leave "fingerprints" -- nine-digit numbers recorded with your ISP ([Internet Service Provider](#)). See [ISP Tracker](#)

## What is the most common form of abuse?

- **Verbal Abuse** is the **most common** form of abuse.

### Verbal abuse:

- intends to **harm**, to **cause pain**
- involves **intensity** and **duration**
- is used to **gain power** over another person
- attacks** the **vulnerability** of the victim
- leaves a victim feeling **isolated** and **exposed**
- escalates**, leading to **physical consequences**
- is a form of **sexual harassment**



Source: Bullies & Victims: Helping Your Child Through the Schoolyard Battlefield, Fried, 1996

## Yesterday's and Today's Bullies

- **Yesterday's Bullies**
  - ✓ Threatened by name-calling
  - ✓ Ignored someone
  - ✓ Damaged their victim's property
- **Today's Bullies**
  - ✓ More violent
  - ✓ Humiliate and manipulate
  - ✓ Isolate and ostracize their victims



Source: [www.bullyfree.org/about.html](http://www.bullyfree.org/about.html) 8/26/02

# Bully incidents at school

The **National Education Association**:

- estimates that **525,000 attacks, shakedowns, and robberies** occur in an average month in public secondary schools.
- reports that everyday, **6,250 teachers** are **threatened** with **bodily injury** and **260** are **physically assaulted**.



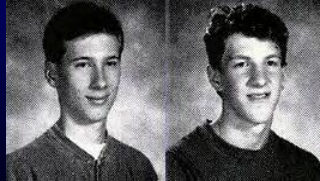
Source: Bullies & Victims: Helping Your Child Through the Schoolyard Battlefield, Fried, 1996

## Victims

- In the most extreme cases, concerned victims fight back with **firepower, killing** their tormentor or committing **suicide** (Adapted from Bully Free for Me! Action Plan, 2002)

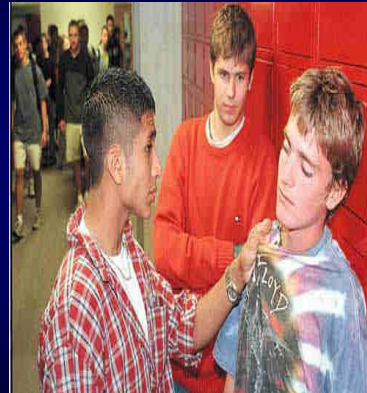


## Where are Some of These Victims Now?



## Statistics

- **One in seven** school children is a bully or a victim
- **160,000** students **skip** school daily because of bullying
- Research shows that the effects of bullying persist into adulthood, with victims being at greater risk for **depression**, and bullies being at four-times greater risk for **criminal behavior**



Sources: National School Safety Center & National Education Association

## Statistics

Almost 30% of youth in the United States (or over 5.7 million) are estimated to be involved in bullying as either a bully, a target of bullying, or both. In a recent national survey of students in grades 6-10, 13% reported bullying others, 11% reported being the target of bullies, and another 6% said that they bullied others and were bullied themselves.

Source: Nansel, T.R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R.S., Ruan, W.J., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. Bullying Behaviors Among US Youth: Prevalence and Association With Psychosocial Adjustment., 285(16), 2094-2100. 2006

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## Where Does Bullying Occur at School?

- 81% of students surveyed, reported bullying occurs on the playground
- 57% in the hallways
- 50% in the classrooms
- 37% in the lunchroom
- 35% on the way home from school
- 28% in the bathrooms
- 25% on the way to school



Source: Facing the Schoolyard Bully: How to Raise an Assertive Child in an Aggressive World, Zarzour, 2000

## Children Who are the Most Vulnerable

- **ANYONE** can be a **VICTIM**. Children are victimized because of:
  - ✓ Physical appearance, mannerisms, or just because they don't fit in
  - ✓ A disability or chronic illness
  - ✓ A perception of being different
  - ✓ A sensitive nature
  - ✓ Poor social skills
  - ✓ Being gay or lesbian
  - ✓ Talents/intelligence



## Children's Attitude on Bullying

- Children who watch other children being bullied are **afraid to speak out**
- Children are **afraid of rejection**, being treated like they have a disease
- "Most students are not involved in bullying. They are neither a bully nor a target of bullying. They know it's wrong, but **unless they are made to feel they have a genuine responsibility or duty to act**, they will silently collude with the abuse." Bully-Free for Me! Action Plan, 2002.

*"An Atmosphere where children worry "who will be next" encourages absences, truancy, and dropping out altogether"*

## Blaming the Victim

- **Blaming** the **victim** is a very common reaction among children
- Like many adults, children may believe that bad things don't happen to good people, so the victim must be doing something wrong to deserve the abuse

## Bullying Scenarios

Group Activity and  
Discussion....



## Scenario #1

- My daughter rides the bus to and from school everyday. Middle and high school students ride the same bus. For the past three weeks, my daughter has been harassed by several high school students who are at least 4 to 5 years older than her. They have threatened to harm her physically and constantly taunting her. The bullies are also harassing other smaller kids on the bus. The school has taken the position that they cannot suspend the kids off the bus because they have not actually carried the threats out yet. This scares me because a few years ago, another student stabbed a middle school student to death. The school took the same position then, and now this students is dead. Please help my daughter and I get through this. (www.bullying.org)

## Warning Signs: Is Your Child Being Bullied?

- **Unexplained bruises**, scrapes, torn clothing
- **Nightmares**
- **Headaches**, stomach aches
- Overtired, **not sleeping**, or not eating
- **Sullenness** or out-of-character behavior



Source: Facing the Schoolyard Bully: How to Raise an Assertive Child in an Aggressive World, Zarzour, 2000

## Warning Signs: Is Your Child Being Bullied? (Cont'.)

- **Temper outbursts**, bullies siblings
- Increased **absences** from school
- More time **spent in his/her bedroom**
- **Doesn't** want to go to **school** or take the **bus**
- Frequently **loses** toys or clothing (usually stolen by bully)
- **Starving** when he/she returns home from school (stolen lunch money or lunch pail)



Source: Facing the Schoolyard Bully: How to Raise an Assertive Child in an Aggressive World, Zarzour, 2000

## Helping the Victim

- **Be Alert**  
*(Most bullying takes place where you and other adults can't see it or hear it.)*
- **Look for Warning Signs** *(Warning Sign Checklist)*
- **Get Parents' Input**
- **Talk with other teachers and staff**
- **Examine your own beliefs**  
*(You need to believe that bullying is a problem that can be identified, addressed, and resolved.)*
- **Break the Code of Silence**
- **Act Immediately**  
*(Consult with your school's or district's policy on handling bullying incidents.)*

## Helping the Victim

- **Be a Good Listener**  
*(If a student comes to you to report a bullying incident-as a witness or a victim-the first and most important thing you should do is listen.)*
- **Send a Clear Message**  
*(Make it very clear that bullying is never caused by the victim.)*
- **Provide Counseling**  
*(Being bullied is a very traumatic experience.)*
- **Empower Parents**
- **Mobilize Witnesses**

## Warning Signs: Is Your Child a Bully?

- Commits **acts of violence** to the family pet
- Engages in **conflicts** that lead to violence with siblings or with parents
- Associates with **friends** who seem to endorse violence (you might hear them laughing on the phone over some altercations, for example)
- Complains of being **treated poorly** by teachers or other kids



Source: Facing the Schoolyard Bully: How to Raise an Assertive Child in an Aggressive World, Zarzour, 2000

## Why do We Tolerate Bullying?

- Cultural ideals about gender roles (**Boys will be Boys**)
- Cultural ideas about respect (**lack of respect** at home and/or violence at home)
- School **politics**
- Lack of **research**
- Misguided notions about **child abuse**



## Bully Prevention Programs

- Peer Mediation, Assertiveness Training, Character Education, and a consistent, organized approach to discipline are all important aspects that should be included in a bully prevention plan
- **Concerned adults CAN make a difference**



## Making a Difference – **The 3 R's**

- **Rules** – Parents and school personnel must demonstrate that they are **in charge** and **won't tolerate** any student hurting another student (physically or psychologically)
- **Rights** – Every student has the **right not to be hurt** and the right to **learn in a safe environment**
- **Responsibilities** – Educators must be **responsible for better supervision** and more **observant monitoring**. Students must be responsible for respecting the rights of their classmates and themselves

## Let's Work Together

- Bullying has a variety of causes. We need to find a variety of ways to deal with it. Let's:
  - ✓ Watch for **signs** of bullying
  - ✓ Take an active **role** in the **child's activities**
  - ✓ **Contact** the school if a child is being bullied
  - ✓ Help children **build** their **self-esteem**
  - ✓ Keep a written **record** of times, dates, and places where bullying has occurred
  - ✓ Instruct children **not to strike back**
  - ✓ Set and practice the **3 R's**



# QUESTIONS?

## Texas School Safety Center Contact Information

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[www.cscs.txstate.edu/txssc.htm](http://www.cscs.txstate.edu/txssc.htm)