

BULLYING BASICS

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Defining Bullying

The word “bully” appears to be a simple little five-letter word yet its connotation evokes fear and misery in the hearts of many people both young and old. Bully may be used as a noun – The bully wanted to hurt someone, an adjective – The bullied child was crying, and as a verb – She was being bullied. Its form of usage may include bully, bullying, bullied. The definition of bully is complicated.

Webster’s Online Dictionary defines the word bully as
(v) 1. To intimidate, browbeat, daunt, frighten or overawe 2. To bluster 3. To force or pressure 4. To scare 5. Present participle conjugation of the verb bully **(v)** Be bossy towards **(n)** The act of intimidating a weaker person to make them do something **(adj)** 1. Noisily domineering; tending to browbeat others 2. Being frightening, terrifying or startling 3. Being intimidating or daunting 4. Being truculent, savage or barbarian 5. Being rough, brutal, brusque or inhumane 6. Being annoying or vexing 7. Being agonizing or excruciating 8. Being violent or fierce **(base)**1. Discourage or frighten with threats or domineering manner; intimidate 2. To intimidate with threats and by an overbearing, swaggering demeanor; to act the part of a bully toward 3. to act as a bully 4. Base verb from the following inflections; bullying, bullied, bullies, bullier, bullies, bullyingly and bulliedly

Ironically, the word “bully” did not begin as a threat or a threatening figure but quite the opposite. The word’s roots are Dutch and German and evolved from words for “lover” and “friend.” Therefore, its earliest meanings were extremely positive! The Oxford English Dictionary cites its definition as meaning “a term of endearment and familiarity” which was originally applied to either males or females. Later in the 1500s, bully was used when addressing men only and implied friendly

admiration: a good friend, fine fellow, even a gallant male.

In the 1600s, the word began to take on more ominous meanings that were more indicative of the use of the word bully today. The Oxford English Dictionary then recorded that the word could mean a ‘swash-buckler,’ but it was closer to the aggressive bully in action. By the 1700s, OED defined bully as “a tyrannical coward who makes himself a terror to the weak.”

It is interesting to note that throughout history the word “bully” is often still used in its original meaning of the 1500s. Theodore Roosevelt was often quoted using the word bully: “President Roosevelt was sitting at his desk when he suddenly stopped writing, swung round in his swivel chair and said ‘I suppose my critics will call that preaching, but I have got such a bully pulpit!’”¹

What is Bullying?

Bullying is a problem that affects the lives of thousands of young people daily. Consider the list given below, and it quickly becomes apparent that bullying is not an isolated event in our schools and in our cultures. Be aware that both the child who is bullying and the child who is being bullied need are in need of help.

1. 1 out of every 4 students will be abused by another student.
2. 1 out of every 5 admits to be a bully, or “doing” some bullying.
3. A child is bullied on the playground every 7 minutes. More youth violence occurs on school grounds as opposed to on the way to school.
4. 280,000 are physically attacked in secondary schools every month.
5. 160,000 students miss school each day for fear of being bullied.
6. 77% of students are bullied mentally, verbally, and physically. Cyberbullying statistics are rapidly approaching similar numbers.

¹ www.pbs.org

7. 43% fear harassment occurs in the restroom at schools.
8. The most common form of bullying are: hitting threatening, intimidating, maliciously teasing and taunting, name-calling, making sexual remarks, and stealing or damaging belongings or more subtle, indirect attacks (such as spreading rumors, or encouraging others to reject or exclude someone.²

These figures illustrate bullying is a huge problem in the American school system. In a recent survey, the fact was shown that teens in grades 6 through 10 are the most likely to be involved in activities related to bullying. Approximately 30% of all students in the United States are involved in bullying on a regular basis either as a victim, bully or both.³

The Most Common Form of Bullying

Verbal bullying is the most common type of bullying with about 77% of all students being bullied verbally in some way or another. This includes not only verbal abuse but also mental bullying. Verbal bullying often includes such items as rumors, yelling obscenities or derogatory terms based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc.

Of that 77% bullied, 14 % have a severe reaction to the abuse that results in poor self-esteem, depression, anxiety about going to school and suicide This results in students not attending school. School bullying statistics reveal that teens, ages 12-17, believe they have seen violence increase in schools and feel that the most violent altercations involving bullying occur on school grounds rather than on the way to school. Perhaps the most disturbing trend noticed is the fact that in 85% of the bullying cases noted, no intervention or effort was made by a teacher or administrator to stop the action from taking place.

Why People Bully

- **Cultural Causes of Bullying** In a culture that is fascinated with winning, power, and violence, some experts suggest that it is unrealistic to expect that

people will not be influenced to seek power through violence in their own lives. Researchers point to the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) as glorification of bullies in the name of entertainment and point out that the high rate of domestic violence means that many young people grow up expecting that violence is an acceptable way to get what one wants.

- **Institutional Causes** If the institution at which the bullying takes place does not have high standards for the way people treat each other, then bullying may be more likely and/or prevalent and have an influence on why people bully.
- **Social Issues** The fact that one gets more social recognition for negative behaviors than for positive ones can also contribute to reasons why people bully. Situation comedies and reality television, as well as real life situations in schools, for example, show that acting out is more likely to get noticed than behaving oneself civilly and courteously. Jealousy or envy and a lack of personal and social skills to deal with such feelings can also be reasons why people bully.
- **Family Issues** Families that are not warm and loving and in which feelings are not shared are more likely to have children who bully, either within the family home or in other locations in which the children meet others. Another home environment that is prone to producing bullies is one in which discipline and monitoring are inconsistent and/or a punitive atmosphere exists.
- **The Bully's Personal History** Children who experience social rejection themselves are more likely to "pass it on" to others. Children who experience academic failure are also more likely to bully others.
- **Having Power** Some research indicates that the very fact of having power may make some people wish to wield it in a noticeable way, but it is also true that people may be given power without being trained in the leadership skills that will help them wield it wisely. Either situation can contribute to why people bully others.
- **Provocative Victims** People who are annoying and condescending to others and/or aggressive verbally, or in other ways that are not picked up by those in

² bullyingstatistics.com

³ SAFE.com

authority, may contribute to the dynamic that can be characterized as bullying by one individual but actually grows out of provocation by another individual.⁴

Other Factors

Bullying provides young people with a sense of power and that power pulls a group of young people together by putting someone else out of it. Soon a bully recognizes that they possess power over others. When allowed to repeatedly bully others and when no attempt is made to stop the bullying, the bully is satisfied that bully is fine. At this point, the bully perceives his/her power and realizes that popularity and a high social status as a reward for his behavior. The bully also perceives that he is disliked by many, but popularity overpowers any negative feelings. Research has consistently shown that the bully actually has average or above average self-esteem. Through the years the primary feeling that bullies were not liked at all and could not establish dominance or control by humiliating or tormenting others was the popular opinion. However, it is now known that there is a peer socialization process that allows bullies to tend to have more friends.⁵

Processes of Bullying

The processes for bullying may be broken into even more identifiable groups. Many people bully in order to attract attention from others. They always want to be in the limelight, and make a good impression on other individuals. Such behavior may even lead to a big fight if the person who is getting bullied is one who normally is the center of attraction. It is certainly not a good thing particularly if the bullying is taking place in a corporate environment.

A person also bullies others because he may think that he is much superior to them. He may consider superiority in terms of intelligence, social status, financial status, and some similar factors. In such a case, bullying can be done by being rude and even beating up others.

Some people bully others because they desperately want something they cannot achieve or obtain - something which other individuals have, such as study notes or electronic gadgets. A person may also bully to become more popular in his locality. Such bullies generally form groups and fight clubs and create nuisance in public. A bully might even try to prove to his friends that he is the boss and has authority over other individuals.

A majority of people bully due to their mental state. They either have some problem in their way of thinking or mindset, or have some social insecurity. They like to be rude and rebellious towards others. Jealousy is also one of the major reasons why people bully. They try to punish and hurt others whom they are jealous about for various or even a single reason.⁶

The research staff from the website www.notcooltobecruel.com asked the children themselves why they chose to bully. Their answers were astounding:

- Peer pressure forcing them into bullying others
- That everyone does it and it's a normal and natural thing to do
- The way that bullies behave towards others is just the same as adults behave
- That it's enjoyable and fun to bully
- That the victims of bullying deserved to be bullied

Unfortunately, children who bully don't view their behavior to be wrong or harmful to others, and they base it on something their victim is or may do. Examples may be:

- "He's just so fat"
- "He's stupid"
- "Her face looks strange"
- "They are just so smart"

These differences between the bully and victim may include height or size (weight), accent, religion, appearance, physical disabilities or problems such as eyesight (wearing glasses etc.), intelligence,

⁴ ag.ndsu.edu

⁵ www.news.discovery.com

⁶ www.buzzle.com

shyness or any other minor or major difference the bully may find. Even if there is no reason, the bully will invent an excuse for their abuse. They say it is the victims fault they bully because of a 'difference,' and they justify their actions on this basis.

In some cases, children who are bullies do this because they been a victim of bullying of in the past. This may have caused them to bully others so they could regain their loss of confidence and therefore made them feel powerful and in control.⁷

What Goes On In The Brain of a Bully?

Recently research on the brains of the bullies has improved as bullying has escalated in society. Researchers from the University of Chicago used brain scan technology to find what goes on inside the brain of a bully. Their object was to learn whether the brain of an aggressive youth responded differently to violence than the brain of someone who is not a bully. In a chilling finding, the researchers found aggressive youths appear to enjoy inflicting pain on others. The researchers compared eight 16 to 18 year old boys who were unusually aggressive to a control group of the same age boys with no unusual signs of aggression. The aggressive youth had already been diagnosed with extremely aggressive disorder. The youth were tested with functional magnetic resonance imaging to see how their brains reacted while watching video clips which showed people in pain as results of accidents – dropping a hammer on a foot. Then they showed clips of intentional acts- deliberately stepping on another person's foot.

When shown the intentions producing pain, the aggressive youth showed a response in the part of the brain associated with reward and pleasure. The youth who were not aggressive did not show the same brain response. This study suggests that the brain's natural impulse for empathy may be disrupted in the brain of a bully, leading to increased aggression.⁸

Although this was a small study, the striking differences shown in the brain scans suggest that bullies may have

major differences in how their brains process information compared to non-bullies.⁹

How Society Views the Bully

- has never learnt to accept responsibility for their behavior
- wants to enjoy the benefits of living in the adult world, but who is unable and unwilling to accept the responsibilities that are a prerequisite for being part of the adult world.
- abdicates and denies responsibility for their behavior and its consequences (abdication and denial are common features of bullying)
- is unable and unwilling to recognize the effect of their behavior on others
- does not want to know of any other way of behaving
- is unwilling to recognize that there could be better ways of behaving.

Secondary Characteristics of the Bully

Bullies are also more likely to smoke, abuse alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults, get bad grades, and drop out of school.¹⁰ Teen boys who bully are more likely to engage in other antisocial/delinquent behavior such as fighting, vandalism, shoplifting, truancy, and drug use. They are four times more likely than non-bullies to be convicted of crimes by age 24, with 60% of bullies having at least one criminal conviction. 40 percent had three or more convictions. Bullies were four times as likely as their peers to have multiple convictions. Young bullies are more likely to be abusive later in their lives toward their romantic partners, spouses, or children as adults.¹¹

Bullying is obsessive and compulsive; the bully **has to have** someone to bully and appears to be unable to survive without a current target.

Despite the facade that such people put up, bullies have low self-confidence and low self-esteem, and thus feel insecure. Low self-esteem is a factor highlighted by all studies of bullying. Because such people are inadequate and unable to fulfill the duties and obligations of their position (but have no hesitation in accepting salary),

⁹ [The New York Times](#), Monday, February 06, 2012

¹⁰ [Journal of the American Medical Association](#)

¹¹ Olweus Bullying Prevention Group

⁷ www.notcooltobecruel.com

⁸ [Journal of Biological Psychiatry](#)

they fear being revealed. This fear of exposure often borders on paranoia.

Bullies are seething with resentment, bitterness, hatred and anger, and often have wide-ranging prejudices as a vehicle for dumping their anger onto others. Bullies are driven by jealousy and envy. Rejection (which cannot be assuaged) is another powerful motivator of bullying.

Bullies are people who have not learned the lesson of consequences, ie; that if they behave well there are good consequences (reward), but if they behave badly there are bad consequences (restriction, sanction, punishment, etc.) Since childhood, bullies have learnt that they can avoid the unpleasant consequences of bad behavior through the instinctive response of blame, and feigning victimhood.¹²

Six Types of Bullying

Physical Bullying

Physical Bullying includes any physical contact that would hurt or injure a person like hitting, kicking, punching, etc. Taking something that belongs to someone else and destroying it would also be considered a type of physical bullying. For example, if someone was walking down the street and someone came up to them and shoved them to the ground, which would be physical bullying. In elementary and middle schools, 30.5% of all bullying is physical. Physical bullying is a serious problem, affecting not only the bully and the victim, but also the other students who witness the bullying. There are many types of negative physical interactions that can occur between young people, including fighting, practical jokes, stealing, and sexual harassment. These things are not considered physical bullying unless:

- The same victim is targeted repeatedly
- The bully or bullies intend to hurt, embarrass, or intimidate the victim
- The actions occur in a situation with a real or perceived imbalance of power, such as when the

bully is stronger than the victim or has a higher social standing.¹³

Physical bullying may also cross the line into sexual harassment or sexual assault. Physical bullying occurs most often at school, though it can also occur on the way to and from school and after school, and is more likely to occur among males, though females may also be the perpetrators or victims of physical bullying.

Victims of physical bullying are usually physically weaker than the bullies, and also may be socially marginalized for some reason, including weight, ethnicity, or other characteristics that make it harder for them to fit in. Bullying can have serious consequences for the victim, leading to low self esteem, depression, trouble at school, and sometimes even violent behavior.¹⁴

Signs of Physical Bullying

- Coming home from school with bruises, cuts, or other unexplained injuries
- Having damaged clothing, books, or possessions
- Often "losing" things that they take to school
- Complaining of frequently not feeling well before school or school activities
- Skipping certain classes
- Wanting to avoid going to school or going to school a certain way, such as taking strange routes home from school or not wanting to ride the bus
- Acting sad
- Withdrawing from others
- Saying they feel picked on
- Displaying low self esteem
- Mood swings, including anger or sadness
- Wanting to run away
- Trying to take a weapon to school
- Talking about or violence against others. Victims of physical bullying are usually physically weaker than the bullies, and also may be socially marginalized for some reason, including weight, ethnicity, or other characteristics that make it harder for them

¹² www.bullyonline.org

¹³ www.thinkquest.org

¹⁴ www.thinkquest.org

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Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying is name-calling, making offensive remarks, or joking about a person's religion, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or the way they look. For example, if there was a group of kids who made fun of another kid because he couldn't run as fast as everyone else, it would be an example of verbal bullying. 46.5% of all bullying in schools is the verbal type. Verbal aggression is when a bully teases someone. It can also include a bully making verbal threats of violence or aggression against someone's personal property. When most people think of bullying, they think of physical bullying. However, bullying goes beyond the physical and can encompass the verbal. It may seem strange, but verbal bullying can be just as harmful - in different ways - as physical bullying. With verbal bullying, the goal is still to degrade and demean the victim, while making the aggressor look dominant and powerful. All bullying focuses on creating a situation in which the victim is dominated by the aggressor. And this can happen verbally as well as physically.¹⁶

In many cases, verbal bullying is the province of girls. Girls are more subtle (and can be more devastating), in general, than boys. Girls use verbal bullying, as well as social exclusion techniques, to dominate others and show their superiority and power. However, there are also many boys with subtlety enough to use verbal techniques for domination, and who are practiced in using words when they want to avoid the trouble that can come with physically bullying someone else.

Many victims of verbal bullying are affected in very real ways. Verbal bullying can affect someone in emotional and psychological ways. This type of bullying can lead to low self-esteem, as well as depression and other problems. It can aggravate problems that a victim may already be experiencing at home or in other places. In some cases, verbal bullying can reach a point where the

victim is so depressed, and wants to escape so badly, that he or she may turn to or - in some extreme cases - suicide. In the end, words have a power all their own, and the realities of verbal bullying can have very physical consequences, even if the aggressor never lays a finger on the victim.¹⁷

Indirect Bullying

Indirect bullying includes spreading rumors or stories about someone, telling others about something that was told to you in private, and excluding others from groups. An example would be if you started a rumor that a boy in your class likes playing with dolls, and if the reason that you made up the story was because you thought it was funny. This would be indirect bullying. Indirect bullying accounts for 18.5% of all bullying. Direct bullying usually involves hitting, kicking, or making insults, offensive and sneering comments, or threats. Bullying between girls, however, involves less physical violence and can be more difficult to discover. Girls tend to use indirect and subtle methods of bullying, such as exclusion from a group of friends, backbiting, and manipulation of friendships. Indirect bullying is characterized by threatening the victim into social isolation. This isolation is achieved through a wide variety of techniques, including any or all of these actions:

- spreading gossip, lies, rumors,
- name-calling, silent treatment,
- staring,
- giggling, laughing or mocking at the victim,
- refusing to socialize with the victim,
- bullying other people who wish to socialize with the victim, and
- criticizing the victim's manner of dress, race, religion, disability, appearance, height, or weight et cetera.¹⁸

Social Alienation

Social alienation is when a bully excludes someone from a group on purpose. It also includes a bully

¹⁵ www.bullystatistics.org

¹⁶ www.thinkquest.org

¹⁷ www.teenaddiction.com

¹⁸ www.bullyfree.org

spreading rumors, and also making fun of someone by pointing out their differences.¹⁹

Girls are usually both the bully and the bullied in social alienation. From the outside looking in it can be hard to tell a group of girls who are bullying apart from a group of girls who are innocently standing around. Girls socialize differently than boys. As girls get older their peer interactions become less physical and more cerebral. Girls engage in verbal bonding by sharing stories, hopes, and dreams. Since girls bond differently than boys it makes sense that when they bully it would be different too. Teachers and parents tend to talk about the obvious when they talk about bullying. Playground scuffles, name calling, stealing personal items and damaging property are commonly cited examples of bullying behavior. But when girls bully they aren't so obvious. Girls can be quietly vicious with their victims and adults often fail to treat their behavior as bullying.

The tactics used by girls who bully are distorted versions of some normal mechanisms of social development. According to research done by Lagerspetz, Bjorqvist and Peltonen at the University of Miami, when girls bully they use things like alienation, ostracism, deliberate and calculated random exclusions to harass their peers. Girls get other kids to gang up on one or more peers as a way of exerting control. Sometimes they incite other children to act out aggressively and sit back to watch the show. They form groups that pick and choose members at random and exclude others without real reason. They form alliances with other social groups in an effort to jockey for popularity and positions of power among peers. All too often the bullying tactics used by girls are brushed off as cruel but normal social interactions.²⁰

Intimidation

Intimidation occurs when a bully threatens someone else and frightens that person enough to make him or her do what the bully wants. Bullying is repeated

aggressive behavior or, quite simply, unprovoked meanness. It's a form of intimidation, which is behavior designed to threaten, frighten, or coerce someone. When teens intimidate each other, they may attack with bats, knives, guns, or other weapons. The psychological stakes are high too. Physical assaults, vicious taunts, and exclusion from groups can - and have - led to depression and even suicide. Intimidation peaks in junior high. It continues through high school and even into the workplace. Intimidation is not just 'boys being boys.' Studies show that girls intimidate other students at least as much as boys. Boys use more physical force. Girls rely more on teasing, taunting, or excluding others from groups. Intimidation occurs for different reasons. Hate, prejudice, immaturity, a distorted self-image, or lack of respect can underlie harassing behavior. Some teens pick on others simply to increase their own sense of power.²¹

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is done by sending messages, pictures, or information using electronic media, computers (email & instant messages), or cell phones (text messaging & voicemail). For instance, if you sent a picture of a snake in an email to a person because you know that they are afraid of snakes that would be an example of cyberbullying. According to a survey done in 2003 only 4% of bullying is listed as "other types" and this would include cyberbullying. Even though this number seems small, the growth of this type of bullying is going up fast because of the spread of technology around the world.²²

Bullying obviously didn't start on the internet; however it has become a huge problem with every new technological innovation. User names and a computer screen may make some users feel invincible and it is hard to relay emotions through net conversations. Many may not think it is a big deal; however the repercussions of an IM gone wrong could be fatal. Cyber bullies are known for sending harmful and hurtful messages along with extreme cases of deception and

¹⁹ www.thinkquest.com

²⁰ teenadviceabout.com

²¹ www.tripod.com

²² www.thinkquest.com

lies. Most of these bullies really just want the victim to suffer. However, since humans cannot communicate face to face through the internet (usually cyberbullies would not interact this way with a victim), many bullies have no idea how far is too far.²³ Being a victim of cyberbullying can be a common and painful experience. Some youth who cyber bully pretend they are other people online to trick others, spread lies and rumors about victims, trick people into revealing personal information, send or forward mean text messages, and post pictures of victims without their consent. When teens were asked why they think other cyberbullying, 81% said that cyber bullies think it is funny. Other teens believe that youth who cyber bully don't think it's a big deal, don't think about the consequences, are encouraged by friends, think everybody cyber bullies, or think they won't get caught.²⁴

The Effects of Bullying

Bullying is an experience that can definitely cause lasting damage to its victims. Research is now being done to not only stop bullying but to also study the effects of bullying. A child/person does not have to be physically harmed to order to suffer lasting harm. Words hurt as much as blows. Cuts heal and bruises fade, but when the self-concept is damaged, the healing does not always occur. When a child is the repetitive target of bullying, their ability to view themselves as desirable, capable and effective is damaged. The bullied becomes depressed and/or angry and/or bitter. They have been taught that they are undesirable, not safe, and powerless to defend themselves. Helplessness is learned and the bullied person comes to believe that there is nothing they can do to change the situation. The bullied person begins to see himself as a weak, pathetic loser. He is no longer a part of a group but an outcast – an outsider of society. These thoughts may very well turn to depression, thoughts of revenge fantasies, anger and feelings of rage.

When a child's self-concept is damaged, that child finds it hard to believe in himself. This creates a situation where the child will have a difficult time working through difficult situations and circumstance. The

outcome will be poor performances in school work and may ultimately end with the child dropping out of school as soon as possible.

The sensitive child is always the child that is singled for teasing. Most cry easily which makes them easy targets for bullying. These children see themselves as too sensitive and will try to avoid any sensitive situation and channel that situation into revenge fantasies or anger. The bullied child may internalize negative attitudes which set them further apart from other. When this occurs, a lifelong tension may be set up within that person. These children will have a greater incidence of illness and may have suicidal thoughts and feelings.

The Physically Bullied Victim

The physically bullied victim is most likely a male. However, physical bullying by female students is on the rise according to a study done by Dr. Mona O'Moore, an anti-bullying expert. One in five girls in primary schools, and one in seven in secondary schools have been physically hurt by other girls. Whereas the level of physical bullying by boys has remained the same – one in three boys is physically hurt in schools – it has increased among girls who become more physically aggressive with age. Two possible reasons for the increase in female bullying are: (1) the media's portrayal of women as pushy and ambitious in achieving their aims, and (2) the decline in "gender differentiation" between boys and girls. Both girls and boys include all forms of direct physical aggression such as pushing, poking, hair-pulling, hitting, spitting, biting, scratching, head-butting and tripping.²⁵

Inaction is not an option when a person is being physically bullied. This sort of behavior is primarily associated with the school playground, but it is certainly not confined to it. Physical bullying is highly visible, but often children live in constant fear of physical bullying. They need and want help but are ashamed to ask for it because they see themselves as weak. They also fear further repercussions from the bully if they tell anyone. The victim of physical bullying is specifically targeted by a stronger or more socially dominant child or group of children.

²³ cyberbullyingblogspot.com

²⁴ www.ncpc.org

²⁵ www.independent.com

The victims of bullies are often targeted for physical bullying because they show/have a physical weakness themselves or because they are different from the norm in some ways. The victims may suffer from depression or self-esteem issues. They often lie or cover up what has happened to hide their undeserved sense of shame at being victimized.²⁶

Methods of Stopping the Physical Bully

- The child needs to tell someone about the bullying incidents. This person must be a person they trust – favorite teacher, parent, doctor, etc. This action worries the bully who relies on the child being bullied not to tell anyone.
- It's OK to scream. If a child is being hurt, a loud voice certainly draws attention to everyone around him!
- The child may need to change his response toward the bully. Bullies try to manipulate. They may be nice to the victim at times gaining the victim's trust. The victim needs to stay in the company of people that he can trust and avoid being alone with the bully.
- Parents need to know the school's or organization's anti-bully policy. This policy will outline the reporting procedure. Older students have access to this policy and may read it. If incidents happening to them follow the guidelines in the book, they need not be a victim or be intimidated by anyone.
- Parents of younger children should encourage their child to participate in activities which will build their self-esteem. By being confident, the child will be more confident. Older children need to be counseled to take the same steps. An improved confidence will help any child realize that he does not have to suffer at the ego of a bully.
- A bully should not be allowed to dominate any child's life. Remind the child that the bully only has as much power as they are allowing him to have. Remind all children not to let themselves become too depressed or scared before they tell someone.

- If the parents of a child believe that child is in real danger, it is right to call the police. The same criteria may be used by the older child.²⁷

The Verbally Bullied Victim

The effects of **verbal bullying** leave scars that can last for years. These are psychological scars that follow youngsters into adulthood. They leave the verbally abused unsure of himself, unable to recognize his own value or his talents. Often these victims are unable to adapt to the many challenges of life. The old adage "sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me" is a fallacy. Words most certainly do hurt and can be just as damaging as or more so than physical blows. Yet many parents and teachers do not recognize the occurrence of verbal abuse unless one child calls another a name. As a whole, verbal abuse is not taken as seriously as other forms of bullying, but it is the most common form of bullying. This is probably because verbal bullying is hard to actually see instead it must be heard.

A verbal abuser may use one or all of these weapons to control another person whether he is young, a teenager, or an adult.

- Countering – put downs, arguing any point or idea If a person says she is cold, the bully is apt to say "No, it's not. It's just you."
- Withholding – bully refuses to share feelings, thoughts, etc. "I don't want to talk to you any more." Or "I'll call you when I want to."
- Discounting – A person may say "Oh, I'm glad I got a "B" on that test!" The bully may respond: "That's nothing. I got an "A" and I didn't even study."
- Verbal abuse disguised as a joke – "You should have seen how Mary's hair looked! She was so silly-looking."
- Blocking and diverting – creating road blocks to change the conversation. The child may say, "Please

²⁶ howtodealwithbullies.com

²⁷ ehow.com

don't call me names." The bully's answer, "Oh, grow up."

- Accusing and blaming – The bully blames the bullied for his actions. The victim: "I wish you would play with me." The bully: "I would if you weren't so stupid."
- Judging and criticizing – put down of thoughts, actions, and feelings. Victim: "Look at this neat pencil I just got." Bully: "I can't believe you bought that junk."
- Trivializing – nothing about the victim counts. Victim: "I'm scared of the lightning." Bully: "I can't believe you're scared of storms."
- Undermining – killing self-confidence and self-esteem. Victim: "I think we should color the biggest house blue." Bully: "Don't listen to her. She wants everything to be blue."
- Threatening – implying harm. Victim: "Let me fix your hair." Bully: "Don't you dare touch my hair, you pervert."
- Name calling – destroys identity. Bully: "You're a jerk. Stupid, no-good jerk."
- Chronic forgetter – always forgets the other. Victim: "We were supposed to meet at the game." Bully: "What? Am I supposed to follow you everywhere?"
- Ordering – dominance and control. Bully: "If you're going to be my friend, you can't be friends with him."

Methods of Stopping the Verbal Bully

Because verbal bullying tends to be invisible, tactics different from physical bullying must be used. Both teachers and parents are unaware that verbal bullying is occurring to a child. Also, verbal bullying is more predominant in the older, preteen children. There are various tactics to use against verbal bullying that will require keeping records. Parents are encouraged to step in quickly when their child is being attacked by verbal bullies.

- Remember – a bully is not going to confront anyone he/she considers more powerful. Stand straight, act confidently even though confidence may not be felt. Take pride in being a person. Use pride like a suit of armor. Try to be friendly if possible.
- Do keep a lot of records. Record the date and the time when all verbal bullying incidents occur. Use a

cell phone to take pictures. Save all notes, letters, emails, voicemails, and text messages. They are time and date stamped by the computer. If it is felt necessary, use home answering machines or tape record all incidents. It is a law that you tell the person that they are going to be recorded. Messages on the answering machine can be used in court without telling a person he/she is being recorded.

- Nerve is definitely needed but it is best to just walk away and ignore the bully. The bully wants fear. Turning your back on a bully denies him/her that opportunity.
- Although it is difficult, ignore the desire to fight back or to get angry. Anger in any form may antagonize the bully which will cause the bullying to get worse. Bullies tend to lose interest in anyone who doesn't show fear and who doesn't react to taunts.
- Parents often need to intervene in cases of verbal abuse because these cases may not be seen by school officials. Give your child assurance and help with coping skills. Also, help your child set up systems for recording messages and help log in and record all incidences of bullying.²⁸

The Indirectly Bullied Victim

Like verbal bullying **indirect bullying** is hard to recognize as it is usually an "undercover" operation. Also indirect bullying is harder to recognize because is most often carried out behind the bullied student's back in the form of rumors, mimicking, jokes, and quietly encouraging others to exclude the bullied person. Indirect bullying becomes a distinct attribute of girls at the fifth grade level. Boys occasionally indulge in this type of bully but not to the extent that girls do. It often begins with the words "I hear that...", and a rumor is born. The rumor may be based on truth, but from that point on the rumor escalates and the person who started the rumor allows the escalation. These rumors often encompass boys the girl may like, occurrences with boys, and also rumors about the parents. These rumors may include debasing another's cleanliness, weight, and home life. It may involve others making

²⁸ www.stopbullying.org

“faces” behind the bullied child back or excluding the child from birthday parties, etc. Again, this is the type of rumor that parents may have to intercept and help.

Stopping the Indirect Bully

Because this type is more discreet than verbal bullying, it is not easily seen. Parents and teachers may not know of its existence unless it becomes overwhelming. As in verbal bullying, recording dates and times may be necessary. A parent or teacher will find it difficult to talk to other students about the incidents as the incident quickly may become a “she said – he said” situation. Tactics to dissuade this activity are few. Getting the bullied child into other activities and away from the bullying group is always a good outlet. Also time is a factor. Young girls do not have a very long attention span and will soon move on to someone else. Support at home and from teachers is most helpful.

Bullying By Intimidation

Bullying in the form of **intimidation** is very close to indirect bullying except the limits are set much higher and are more dangerous. Signs of a child being intimidated are being afraid to go to school or being “picked on” over and over. Often this child will allow others to take his/her lunch money or possessions without fighting back or telling anyone else. They will hide from the ones who are bullying them rather than tell anyone of their plight. Recipients of this type of bullying are usually quiet, sensitive, and have a low self-esteem. These children are made to feel totally worthless and soon lose the drive to try to better themselves. They need help. Teach children to speak up. Tell someone what is happening to them. By nature, they are quiet and do not want anyone to see their plight because they feel that they are a failure. Parents and teachers must be aware that these youngsters exist and be ready to help them. By teaching children to tell others of problems, they will realize that there are times when they must ask for help. Be sure that children know the difference between tattle-telling and asking for help when it is needed. Parents and teachers alike need to intervene and help this child because he/she are unable to help.

The Cyberbullying Victim

Cyberbullying is a relatively new type of bullying as computers, cell phones, and other interactive and digital technologies have not always been in the hands of young people.

Cyberbullying is not Cyber-Harassment

There is need for clarification of cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is when a *child, preteen or teen* is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another *child, preteen or teen* using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. *It has to have a minor on both sides, or at least have been instigated by a minor against another minor.* Once adults become involved, it is plain and simple cyber-harassment or cyber stalking. Adult cyber-harassment or cyber stalking is NEVER called cyberbullying.²⁹

It isn't when an adult is trying to lure children into offline meetings, that is called sexual exploitation or luring by a sexual predator. But sometimes when a minor starts a cyberbullying campaign it involves sexual predators who are intrigued by the sexual harassment or even ads posted by the cyberbullying offering up the victim for sex. The methods used are limited only by the child's imagination and access to technology. And the cyber bully one moment may become the victim the next. The kids often change roles, going from victim to bully and back again. Children have killed each other and committed suicide after having been involved in a cyberbullying incident. Cyberbullying is usually not a one time communication, unless it involves a death threat or a credible threat of serious bodily harm. Kids usually know it when they see it, while parents may be more worried about the lewd language used by the kids than the hurtful effect of rude and embarrassing posts.³⁰

Cyberbullying may rise to the level of a misdemeanor cyber-harassment charge, or if the child is young enough may result in the charge of juvenile delinquency. Most of the time the cyberbullying does

²⁹ stopcyberbullying.com

³⁰ stopcyberbullying.com

not go that far; although parents often try and pursue criminal charges. It typically can result in a child losing their ISP or IM accounts as terms of service violation. And in some cases, if hacking or password and identity theft is involved, can be a serious criminal matter under state and federal law.³¹

When schools try and do get involved by disciplining the student for cyberbullying actions that took place off-campus and outside of school hours, they are often sued for exceeding their authority and violating the student's free speech right. They also often lose. Schools can be very effective brokers in working with the parents to stop and remedy cyberbullying situations. They can also educate the students on cyber ethics and the law. If schools are creative, they can sometimes avoid the claim that their actions exceeded their legal authority for off-campus cyberbullying actions. We recommend that a provision is added to the school's acceptable use policy reserving the right to discipline the student for actions taken off-campus if they are intended to have an effect on a student or they adversely affect the safety and well-being of student while in school. This makes it a contractual, not a constitutional, issue.³²

Stopping the Cyber bully

As the text above states, cyberbullying results are demeaning and dangerous. Stopping a young person from being cyberbullied, requires assistance from parents and sometimes from higher authorities. Parents may prevent cyberbullying from ever happening to their child by educating them about how it works and how it can be avoided. Instruct the young person to first tell you when they receive a threatening message or a message that angers. **Teach the "back off" theory. Stop and think about the email/text. Consider where it originated. Delete. It is far better to delete than to escalate. Bullying cannot start if the tactic is not recognized.** Remind youngsters that they can block someone from sending them messages from any instant messaging device or from a social networking site. In the case of a suspected hacker, be sure your child knows to immediately change passwords or get a new account. Don't response to any message from an

unknown person. Be sure that your child has the knowledge to tell you if any messages threaten him/her with physical harm, illegal behavior, or that are sexual in nature. Also make note of the fact that cyberbullying often enters into the school system as it escalates.

Teacher Bullying

Teacher bullying gets little attention. There are a few bad apples in every occupation, but the vast majority of teachers go beyond the call of duty. They're very committed and altruistic. Teacher bullying is defined as "using power to punish, manipulate, or disparage a student beyond what would be a reasonable disciplinary procedure."³³

Teachers, coaches and administrators are all in a position to bully children often without any repercussions. These people are in a position of power that falls just short of absolute power. Their position of unchecked authority places them in safe position to bully. Many of these people were former bullies or, in some cases, former victims of bullying.

People in authority bully by labeling. They feel free to call a student inept, lazy, or dumb. They may accuse them of not trying or of not being smart enough or athletic enough to perform their task.

In the higher grades, teachers may post grades so others can see who made not only the highest grade but also who made the lowest grade. Coaches may do the same with times or drills. Everyone then knows who the losers are. This is an invitation for everyone to bully the loser.

There are teachers who use a fear-based environment in the classroom by using grades as leverage. Yet again, teachers may use verbal intimidation by singling out one or two students they feel are vulnerable and criticize their work or attitude in front of the class.

In particular, coaches walk a fine line between motivation and bullying. Society tends to accept criticism in sports, and it is sometimes needed. It is the method of delivery that decides whether or not the coach is motivating or bullying. In the general gym class,

³¹ stopcyberbully.com

³² stopcyberbullying.com

³³ webmed.com

there are coaches who routinely pick on the smallest or slowest athlete and criticize them harshly.

The teacher, coach, administrator holds a position of power and are generally able to avoid reprimand for what they do. They are likely to use a student's poor performance as justification for criticism and use the student's complaint as a try for receiving a higher grade. Other students may see the bully victim as weak or as an outcast which will make the other students less likely to confirm the abuse. At that point the entire class becomes a victim because they fear retaliation

Parents and other educational professions often find it had to obtain the necessary evidence to support claims that these people are bullying.³⁴

Children are taught to respect and obey their teachers; therefore, they are often reluctant to complain if it is the teacher who is bullying. Parents and teachers need to educate children in all areas of bullying so they understand that a bully can be anyone. Children need to be taught to speak to others when they feel they are treated badly. That someone may be a parent, another teacher, or a councilor. Parents will want to arrange a meeting or write a letter to the offending person stating their concerns. To most people in public scrutiny, this will be enough. If it continues, the parents may elect to talk to the person's superior and make the problem know. Often, the teacher is a repeat offender and the knowledge is needed by the employers. Do keep notes of what the child relates. Include dates, places, and witnesses.

Helping the Bullied Child

In general, there are guidelines that parents can use to help their child if he/she is being bullied. If your child tells you about a bully, focus on offering comfort and support, no matter how upset you are. Kids are often reluctant to tell adults about bullying because they feel embarrassed and ashamed that it's happening, or worry that their parents will be disappointed. Sometimes kids feel like it's their own fault, that if they looked or acted

differently it wouldn't be happening. Sometimes they're scared that if the bully finds out that they told, it will get worse. Others are worried that their parents won't believe them or do anything about it. Or kids worry that their parents will urge them to fight back when they're scared to. Praise your child for being brave enough to talk about it. Remind your child that he or she isn't alone — a lot of people get bullied at some point. Emphasize that it's the bully who is behaving badly — not your child. Reassure your child that you will figure out what to do about it together.

Sometimes an older sibling or friend can help deal with the situation. It may help your daughter to hear how the older sister she idolizes was teased about her braces and how she dealt with it. An older sibling or friend also might be able to give you some perspective on what's happening at school, or wherever the bullying is happening, and help you figure out the best solution. Take it seriously when you hear that the bullying will get worse if the bully finds out that your child told. Sometimes it's useful to approach the bully's parents. In other cases, teachers or counselors are the best ones to contact first. If you've tried those methods and still want to speak to the bullying child's parents, it's best to do so in a context where school officials, such as a counselor, can mediate.³⁵

The Bystander

Besides the bully and the bullied, there is a third group of people involved in the act of bullying. This is the bystander/bystanders. A bystander is someone who happens to be there when something is happening. If a person is being bullied and another person/persons observes the bullying occurring, that person/persons has four choices. They may choose to stand and watch. It is normal for people to run to a scene to see what is happening. If they see another person being hurt, it is normal for them to feel curious – why, what is this all about? The observer may feel excited as other people's emotions are 'catching.' Some will become afraid because they imagine the same thing happening to

³⁴ bullyingeducation.org

³⁵ kidshealth.org

them. However, if that observer does not help the victim, then he/she is supporting the bully.

There are observers who will support the bully because his actions make them feel powerful. They reason a. that they don't like the person being bullied, b. that the bully is their friend, or c. they are afraid that if they don't support the bully, they will be bullied. This type of observer who actually helps the bully doesn't realize that he/she is misusing their own power.

Normally anyone who is watching bullying occur doesn't want to get involved and certainly don't want to get hurt. They feel that keeping out of trouble themselves is the best thing to do. Following these thoughts and actions will keep the observer safe, but by going away is in effect telling the bully that he/she is doing the right thing and that the observer doesn't care if the victim is hurt.³⁶

Bystanders are important because bullying usually takes place in front of peers and rarely happens when adults are watching. The majority of the ones who observe do want to stop the bully, and because bullies like an audience, they will quit if other disapprove.

It is tempting for a parent to tell a child to fight back. After all, the parent is angry that his/her child is suffering and maybe they were told to "stand up for yourself" when they were young, but that is not the answer to the problem. A parent may worry that his/her child will continue to suffer at the hands of the bully. But it's important to advise children not to respond to bullying by fighting or bullying back. It can quickly escalate into violence, trouble, and someone getting injured. Instead, advise the child that it is best to walk away from the situation, hang out with others, and tell an adult.

Coping Strategies for the Bullied

- **Avoid the bully and use the buddy system.** Use a different bathroom if a bully is nearby and don't go

to your locker when there is nobody around. Make sure you have someone with you so that you're not alone with the bully. Buddy up with a friend on the bus, in the hallways, or at recess — wherever the bully is. Offer to do the same for a friend.

- **Hold the anger.** It's natural to get upset by the bully, but that's what bullies thrive on. It makes them feel more powerful. Practice not reacting by crying or looking red or upset. It takes a lot of practice, but it's a useful skill for keeping off of a bully's radar. Sometimes children find it useful to practice "cool down" strategies such as counting to 10, writing down their angry words, taking deep breaths or walking away. Sometimes the best thing to do is to teach children to wear a "poker face" until they are clear of any danger (smiling or laughing may provoke the bully).
- **Act brave, walk away, and ignore the bully.** Firmly and clearly tell the bully to stop, then walk away. Practice ways to ignore the hurtful remarks, like acting uninterested or texting someone on your cell phone. By ignoring the bully, you're showing that you don't care. Eventually, the bully will probably get bored with trying to bother you.
- **Tell an adult.** Teachers, principals, parents, and lunchroom personnel at school can all help stop bullying.
- **Talk about it.** Talk to someone you trust, such as a guidance counselor, teacher, sibling, or friend. They may offer some helpful suggestions, and even if they can't fix the situation, it may help you feel a little less alone.
- **Remove the incentives.** If the bully is demanding your lunch money, start bringing your lunch. If he's trying to get your music player, don't bring it to school. (kidshealth.org)

Bullying Laws

In order to fight bullying, many states have instated bullying laws. Bullying laws are laws that aim to or address it when it happens or both. Because they are against bullying, they are also called "anti-bullying laws" for clarity. So far, there are only state laws about bullying, but people have suggested a national law. Bullying laws often focus on schools, which are the site of a large amount of bullying behavior, with bullying

³⁶ cyh.com

being the most problematic during the middle school years (grades 6-8). Bullying laws have pursued different programs and agendas. Laws may or may not criminalize bullying, some preferring to keep the handling of such situations in the realm of families and schools (when appropriate) rather than the courts. Laws may require reports of bullying by school personnel who witness it, and prescribe responses to bullying that includes investigation and imposing disciplinary measures, notification for parents, and support and counseling of targets.³⁷

The bullying laws in the United States are undergoing change. As of October, 2010, 45 states had bullying laws, while there were no such laws in the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Michigan, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota, with New York being one of the most recent to pass legislation. As new states continue to put bullying laws on the books, states with existing laws review and revise them. New Jersey, for example, which passed anti-bullying legislation in 2002, had an “anti-bullying bill of rights” law introduced to its legislature in October, 2010. The new law provides for the training of public school staff in addressing bullying, intimidation, and harassment, as well as in suicide.³⁸

There are also laws against cyberbullying, but it is still on the rise. In the last few years, legislation has been implemented and laws against cyberbullying are being enacted nationwide, but more needs to be done. There are currently 30 of those states have cyberbullying clauses within the laws. Most laws fall short of what needs to be done and leave dealing with this problem to the school districts. Some states, like Wisconsin, have rules that all states need to implement. According to their law, it is a misdemeanor crime to “inflict injury or personal harm through the use of email or another computerized communication system. It is illegal to harass, annoy, or otherwise offend another person electronically.” This is such a problem, that there is a need for more national laws against cyberbullying to be considered. We must protect our children from cyber

bullies and from the temptation of bullying others because they think that nothing will happen to them.³⁹

Cyberbullying presents many challenges for educators. It often feels unfamiliar and doesn't play out the way a traditional bullying case might. In addition, many educators don't understand the culture of social networking and the extreme impact that negative interactions in the online world can have on students. These incidents are occurring and growing in the online environment where there are no responsible adults present; therefore, traditional bullying prevention will not work. Most administrators want to do something when they become aware of cyberbullying whether it takes place in school or off campus, despite the legal obstacles. For proactive schools, education and prevention to combat cyberbullying are ongoing. Many schools and districts now have policies that specifically prohibit cyberbullying, spelling out its characteristics, the actions principals and other administrators may take against it, and the disciplinary actions students can expect to receive for violations. In addition, some schools and districts work closely with law enforcement on cyberbullying issues. In some cases, criminal charges—from criminal impersonation to criminal harassment—have been filed against cyberbullies.⁴⁰

Bullies Don't Wear Name Tags

There is no set size or shape for a bully. They may be found in any religion, race, income level, or family structure. Ironically they may introverts or extroverts. Some are academic achievers while others or struggling in school. Only one thing is certain: bullying is a problem all over the world and includes nearly every school system whether that system is rural or urban. Psychologists used to believe that bullies have low self-esteem, and put down other people to feel better about themselves. While many bullies are themselves bullied at home or at school, new research shows that most bullies actually have excellent self-esteem. All bullies have certain attitudes and behaviors in common. Bullies dominate, blame and use others. They have contempt

³⁷ bullyingstatistics.org

³⁸ bullyingstatistics.org

³⁹ drptconsults.com

⁴⁰ edweek.org

for the weak and view them as their prey. Most lack empathy and foresight, and do not accept responsibility for their actions. They are concerned only about themselves and crave attention. Bullies are not born bullies, although certain genetic traits are often present. Some children's personalities are naturally more aggressive, dominating and/or impulsive. Children with ADHD are more likely to become bullies. This bully will explode over little things because he lacks social skills and the ability to think in depth about a conflict. However, having such inborn traits does not mean that a child will automatically become a bully. Bullying is a learned behavior, not a character trait. Bullies can learn new ways to curb their aggression and handle conflicts.⁴¹

There are many different types of bullies. The hyperactive bully does not understand social cues and therefore reacts inappropriately and often physically. His/her immature social skills cause the belief that other children are more aggressive than they actually are. These bullies see threats where there are none, and view other children as more hostile than they are. The detached bully plans his attacks and is charming to everyone but his victims. The social bully has a poor sense of self and manipulates others through gossip and meanness. The bullied bully gets relief from his own sense of helplessness by overpowering others. Forty percent of bullies are themselves bullied at home or at school. If a child is a victim at home, he/she is more likely to be a bully at school. When he/she sees another child appear weak and cowering, he/she is disturbed because it reminds him of his own vulnerability and behavior at home.⁴²

A bully's parents may be permissive and unable to set limits on their child's behavior. The bully can do whatever he wants without clear consequences and discipline. Or the bullies parents may have been abused themselves as children and view disciplinary measures as a form of child abuse. Some bullies parents often discipline inconsistently, and he never internalizes rules of conduct or respect for authority. Self-centered, neglectful parents can create a cold, calculating bully. Since his parents do no play a part in his life, he learns

to abuse others when no authority figure is looking. Parents who are prejudiced of race, sex, wealth and achievement create children who have not learned empathy or compassion. This bully sees other as competitors who are in the way. He/she feels they must always be the best in sports or academics while others are kept in an inferior position.⁴³

Those who are involved with a bully must take the problem seriously. Others must help the child who is a bully to understand his/her faults and the necessity of changing. As stated before, children and youth who bully others often get into serious trouble in later life and will have trouble in their relationships with others.

Helping the Bully

- Talk to the bully. Keep in mind that a bully will try to deny or minimize his or her wrong-doing.
- Make it clear that you will not tolerate this kind of behavior, and discuss the negative impact bullying has on the victims. Do not accept explanations that "it was all in fun."
- Arrange for an effective, non-violent consequence, which is in proportion with the severity of the bully's actions, and his or her age and stage of development. Corporal punishment carries the message that "might is right."
- Increase supervision of the bully's activities and whereabouts, and who they are associating with. Spend time with the bully, and set reasonable rules for their activities and curfews.
- Co-operate with the school/with parents in modifying the bully's aggressive behavior. Frequent communication with teachers and/or administrators is important to find out how the bully is doing in changing his or her behavior.⁴⁴

Bullying affects more than the bully and the person who is being bullied. It affects everyone who observes it, hears of it, or lives with it. The problem is two fold. The victim must be protected and the bully must be remonstrated and reconstructed. The effort to accomplish this goal must be attained by the schools, communities, and parents working together.

⁴¹ byparents-forparents.com

⁴² byparents-forparents

⁴³ byparents-forparents

⁴⁴ lfcc.on.com