

Bullying Prevention Information: Resources for Schools

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For more information and other resources,
consult www.respectandthefacts.com

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FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES

The following suggestions and information was adapted from a variety of sources. A source list is included at the end of the paper. Educators at all levels are welcome to further adapt these ideas and resources to suit your particular needs and group of children. The paper is presented as a service to give educators ideas to combat instances of bullying in schools. Most of these materials will be most suitable for middle school children although they could be useful with some high school groups as well.

There are many programs available today and we recognize that many of them have great information and useful suggestions. To help evaluate a bullying or harassment prevention program, I suggest some common principles.

1. Bullying is real and requires vigorous, sustained intervention.

Rationale: Being bullied is not a “rite of passage” to be endured as an aspect of development. Schools cannot provide a safe learning environment without an intentional approach to bullying prevention. Students must be oriented yearly concerning the school policies regarding bullying.

2. Successful bullying prevention programs most often require collaboration between school and home.

Rationale: Students should not avoid telling parents about being bullied at school because they fear repercussions or worry their concerns will not be taken seriously at school. Parents must be informed and where appropriate take an active part in the school’s anti-bullying program.

3. No group or student should be marginalized or maligned to promote another group.

Rationale: Many anti-bullying books, programs and lesson plans use story lines or materials that attempt to cast certain groups as the bad guys. For instance in the book, *The Misfits*, people holding traditional values, cheerleaders, and sports players are often scapegoated as a group. These kids were stereotyped and cast as foils to the heroes of the book, who were called the “misfits.” In the story *Buddha Boy*, the main story teller, engages in multiple stereotypical statements concerning popular kids, athletic kids, and so on. While we feel that for individual students such stories may be encouraging in the short run, we discourage educators from employing this approach in a group setting as an anti-bullying technique. There are no data suggesting this strategy is effective and may indeed result in a sense of shame and frustration on the part of kids who meet the demographic description of the stereotyped groups but do not engage in harassment. Further, if the objective is to create a social situation where students are truly accepting of differences, it does not seem reasonable to marginalize any group based on activity preferences or ability levels.

4. Bullying policies should provide protection for all students.

Rationale: Some bullying policies contain a list of student characteristics that are protected by the policy. We believe such lists are unnecessary. Research suggests that nearly all students are potential victims of bullying. Thus, anti-bullying policies and laws do not need lists of student categories to protect all students.

5. We believe the objectives of a school anti-bullying program should be to reduce instances bullying and harassment each semester until there are none.

Action objectives that have been derived from research regarding bullying prevention include:

- To annually survey students concerning the prevalence and severity of bullying.
- To communicate a clear moral position against bullying and harassment.
- To implement bullying prevention principles with students, parents and educational staff.
- To establish, where absent, consistent, enforceable rules pertaining to bullying.
- To annually communicate these policies to students, parents and educational staff.
- To integrate the bullying prevention principles in class room instruction where possible
- To recruit peer helpers to communicate rules and principles to incoming students.
- To train peer helpers to use anti-bullying intervention skills in real life situations
- To provide skills for students to deal with bullying.¹

Bullying Defined: *Exposing another person to either verbal or physical harm, or threatening to harm another person with the purpose of controlling the other person's thoughts and/or actions.*

I encourage educators and parents to review the online training course provided by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention of the US Department of Health and Human Services called *The ABCs of Bullying: Addressing, Blocking, and Curbing School Aggression*. You can find this course at http://pathwayscourses.samhsa.gov/bully/bully_intro_pg1.htm.

¹ From the Action Plan at the Grove City Middle School, Grove City, PA.

I have also included three lesson plans, two for middle and one for high school. These plans can be used and adapted by teachers and school counselors. The lesson plans contain elements that are original and some that have been derived from public domain sources. The Handouts may be reproduced and the lesson plans may be used by teachers and counselors with proper attribution.

LESSON PLAN – A Bully Free School

This outline is intended to be used as a guide. The lesson plan provides a suggested outline for presenting general information regarding a bully free school. As with any resource, it is important that you review the plan and assess its appropriateness for your particular group.

Target

Middle School

Objective

- To explore the experience of a bully free school

Activities – Bully Free School

Ground Rules – 2 minutes

Publicly sharing opinions can make students feel vulnerable. Before you begin the activity, set the following ground rules to ensure that students and others are not ridiculed, embarrassed or degraded for their opinion. This may be redundant if your class already has ground rules such as these:

- Listen to each other
- No put downs or name calling
- Questions are welcomed
- Respect each other

Procedures – 30 minutes

- Introduce the definition of bullying to the class:

Exposing another person to either verbal or physical harm, or threatening to harm another person with the purpose of controlling the other person's thoughts and/or actions.

- Discuss the meaning of the words and ask:

What would a bullying free environment look and feel like?

- Have students brainstorm answers to this question. Either lead a class discussion using the board or use Handout 1 (Bully Free School T-Chart) and allow students to independently complete the handout.
- Discuss the following question:

Does our school look and feel like the descriptions of a bully free school?

Students will have varying perceptions and this is a time to emphasize that you want to hear all viewpoints.

- Use Handout 2 (What if my school was a place where...) to discuss the effects of mutual respect.

Summary – 5-10 minutes

- Conclude discussion with a summary of the definition of bullying, what a bully free school would feel like and how it would feel to be in a school where mutual respect was the norm. Students will rate the school in varying ways and this can be helpful in knowing where trouble spots are and how to intervene.

LESSON PLAN – A Bully Free School, Part two

This outline is intended to be used as a guide. The lesson plan provides a suggested outline for presenting general information regarding a bully free school. As with any resource, it is important that you review the plan and assess its appropriateness for your particular group.

Target

Middle School

Objective

- To identify bullying
- To become aware of how to respond to bullying as an individual
- To become aware of how to respond to bullying as a bystander
- To commit to bully free school

Activities – Bully Free School, Part two

Ground Rules – 2 minutes

Publicly sharing opinions can make students feel vulnerable. Before you begin the activity, set the following ground rules to ensure that students and others are not ridiculed, embarrassed or degraded for their opinion. This may be redundant if your class already has ground rules such as these:

- Listen to each other
- No put downs or name calling
- Questions are welcomed
- Respect each other

Procedures – 30 minutes

- Ask students to define or describe bullying. They may remember the definition from the first lesson or something close to it. You can refer to this definition as a reminder.
- Ask students to describe examples of bullying. Make a list on the board or break the class into small groups and have each group make a list to share with the class. See Teacher Resource 1 for a list of types of bullying if needed to supplement the class list.
- An important question to discuss is: how should a student react to being bullied? Have classroom discussion regarding this question and then distribute Handout 3 (Strategies to Stay Bully Free).

- Review Handout 4 (What If Strategies Aren't Enough?) and discuss the suggestions supplied.
- If your class has potential to profit from role playing, then you can use volunteers to role play some of the types of bullying and the strategies for addressing bullying situations.

Summary – 5-10 minutes

- Re-read Handout 2 (What if Our School Was Like This...). Summarize the benefits of mutual respect and the strategies for dealing with disrespect. The consider offering the Responsible Relationship Pledge. I suspect this is best to be voluntary although some teachers will want to emphasize this more than others.

I _____, pledge to treat others the way I want to be treated by them. I further pledge to do my part to make my school a bully free school.

HANDOUT 1

Bully Free School

Looks Like

Feels Like

Handout 2

What if Our School Was Like This...

Everybody dressed the same

Everybody believed the same things

Everybody thought the same way

Everybody though only of themselves

Everybody didn't dress the same

Everybody didn't believe the same things

Everybody didn't think the same way

Everybody respected personal differences – even those with whom we disagree

Everybody looked out for everybody else – even those not in our circle

Everybody treated each other the way we want to be treated

What if everybody was in our circle?

HANDOUT 3

STRATEGIES TO STAY BULLY FREE

- Avoid bullies and where they hang out
- Act and look confident
- Be observant
- Tell your friends
- Tell many adults
- Be assertive
- Stay calm
- Keep a safe distance
- Walk away
- Say “Stop it!”
- Say “Leave me alone!”
- Say “Whatever!”
- Use humor
- Use “I messages” – “I do not like to be treated this way.”
- Travel in a group
- If you’re in danger, RUN

HANDOUT 4**What if strategies are not enough?****VICTIMS AND BYSTANDERS MUST REPORT THE BULLYING OR HARASSING TO A TEACHER, SCHOOL COUNSELOR, OR THE PRINCIPAL****HOW TO REPORT****FOR VICTIMS**

- Report the incident to a teacher, counselor, or principal.
- Your name should be kept confidential; make sure you are promised this.
- Write down what was done or said to you and how you responded. Bullies will often try to shift the blame.
- Make a list of witnesses.

FOR BYSTANDERS

- Intervene in the situation. Tell the bully to stop and comfort the victim.
- Stand up to the bully and support the victim.
- Report it to a teacher, counselor, or principal.
- Your name should be kept confidential; make sure you are promised this.
- Write down what was done or said.
- Write down everyone who witnessed the situation.

**“BULLIES PREVAIL WHEN GOOD PEOPLE
STAND BACK AND DO NOTHING.”**

TEACHER RESOURCE 1

TYPES OF BULLYING

Direct Bullying

Physical Aggression

- Pushing
- Shoving
- Spitting
- Kicking
- Hitting
- Defacing Property
- Stealing
- Physical acts that are demeaning and humiliating but not bodily harmful
- Locking in a closed or confined space
- Physical violence against family or friends
- Threatening with a weapon
- Inflicting bodily harm

Verbal Aggression

- Mocking
- Name-calling
- Dirty looks
- Taunting
- Teasing about clothing or possessions
- Teasing about appearance
- Verbal threats of aggression against property or possessions
- Verbal threats of violence or of inflicting bodily harm

Intimidation

- Threatening to reveal personal information
- Graffiti
- Publicly challenging to do something
- Defacing property or clothing
- Playing a dirty trick
- Taking possessions (e.g. lunch, clothing)

Indirect Bullying

Social Alienation

- Gossiping
- Embarrassing
- Setting up to look foolish
- Spreading rumors

Ethnic slurs
Setting up to take the blame
Publicly humiliating
Excluding from the group
Social rejection
Maliciously excluding
Manipulating social order to achieve rejection
Threatening with total isolation by peer group

LESSON PLAN – How to Respond to Bullying

This outline is intended to be used as a guide. The lesson plan provides a suggested outline for presenting general information regarding how to respond to bullying in a high school setting. The lesson conveys basic information regarding school bullying but is primarily designed as a guidance lesson that can be adapted to a variety of settings. As with any resource, it is important that you review the plan and assess its appropriateness for your particular group.

Most of this lesson was developed to be used as a Power Point presentation. I would like to thank Wayne Houk, student at Grove City College for developing most of the Power Point presentation. Some of the slides are reproduced here as handouts. The Power Point file is available for free download at www.respectandthefacts.com or by contacting Dr. Throckmorton.

Target

High School

Objectives

- To identify types of bullying
- To become aware of how to respond to bullying as an individual
- To become aware of how to respond to bullying as a bystander
- To commit to a bully free environment

Activities – Bully Free School, Part two

Ground Rules – 2 minutes

Publicly sharing opinions can make students feel vulnerable. Before you begin the activity, set the following ground rules to ensure that students and others are not ridiculed, embarrassed or degraded for their opinion. This may be redundant if your class already has ground rules such as these:

- Listen to each other
- No put downs or name calling
- Questions are welcomed
- Respect each other

Procedures – 30 minutes

- Open discussion by asking how the class would define bullying. Take several definitions and offer this definition as a summary of the discussion.

Exposing another person to either verbal or physical harm, or threatening to harm another person with the purpose of controlling the other person's thoughts and/or actions.

- We are discussing bullying because it happens and is harmful. Note the following:
 - Bullying is likely associated with school violence
 - Many people remember bullying or being bullied even through adulthood
 - Most students report being bullied during their school career.
 - Some are bullied for specific reasons: A government sponsored survey reported that four percent of respondents said that hate related words were directed at them that concerned their race, about 3 percent each reported that insults related to their ethnicity or gender, and between 1 and 2 percent each reported that the insults were related to their religion, disability, or sexual orientation. We will learn however, that bullies can be from any group and those bullied can be from any group.²
 - Bullying decreases the sense of safety needed to really get a good education – you can't learn when you are afraid for your safety.
 - Go over your school policy concerning harassment and any relevant state laws that apply to your school (www.bullypolice.org is a good reference for this information).
- Tell the class that bullying seems to be about controlling others. As such, bullying can take place anywhere, school, work, recreation, etc.
- Ask the class why they think bullies bully. Summarize with the following points:
 - They may have been bullied themselves. These are generally angry children who are easily spotted. They've been hurt and they feel a sense of relief and power from hurting others.
 - Lowering others makes them feel elevated or somehow better about themselves. These children may feel insignificant for a host of reasons and find a sense of significance via controlling others.
 - Group think. Some kids who would never bully outside of a group get caught up in the sense of significance associated with being in the majority. Some are afraid they will be hurt themselves if they do not side with the group.

² US Dept of Justice, National Crime Victimization Survey, 2001, Table 14-1.

- Whatever the emotional or social reasons, *bullies bully because they can*. Many bullies actually have good self esteem as measured by tests but their bullying is related to the power they feel from manipulating others. Bullies sometimes use status differences (bigger, from a certain social group, etc.) they may have to derive a sense of power over others. The status characteristics are not the causes of the bullying but a means to an end. Just like the victims; bullies can be anyone from any social grouping.
- Ask students to give examples of bullying – Use Teacher Resource 1 as an aid to summarize the lists made via small groups or classroom discussion. Enlist examples from films such as *Napoleon Dynamite*, *Back to the Future* and *Mean Girls*. With adequate time, clips of these or other films could be shown as illustrations of various types of manipulation, both overt and subtle.
- Ask the class, what can people who are bullied do about it? What should they do? Summarize with by suggesting that objects of bullying can:
 - Name the problem and legitimize yourself - Be honest with yourself and others. Whether it is bullying, psychological harassment, or emotional abuse, seek information and support from others.
 - Expose the bully - In order to prevent bullying from continuing, bullies should be recognized for who they are. It is important to avoid retaliation for the wrong that was done, or the cycle of bullying will continue.
- Use Handouts 4 and 6 to summarize the discussion in concrete terms about what students can do who are being bullied in school.
- Ask the class what should bystanders do? Again summarize with the procedures outlined on Handout 4.
- Note that challenging bullying may be a marathon and not a sprint. Distribute Handout 5 (Stages of Challenging a Bully)³ and discuss the process that often occurs in putting an end to bullying.

Summary – 10-12 minutes (there are several options for ending this lesson. Educators/counselors can choose based upon perceived needs of the class)

- Review the lesson by asking these thought provoking questions:
 - Have you ever seen someone being bullied?
 - What was your response?

³ Workplace Bullying and Trauma Institute - <http://www.bullyinginstitute.org/home/twd/bb/bbstudies/goliath.html>

- Have you ever been bullied?
 - What did you do about it?
- Have you ever bullied someone?
 - What was your reasoning for it?
- Handout 2 (What if Our School Was Like This...) can be used as a means of summarizing the benefits of mutual respect.
- Review the school policy concerning harassment. If your school does not have a policy then summarize the suggested procedures for students to follow if they are being bullied or observe bullying.

Handout 5

Stages of Challenging the **BULLY**

- Being Bullied?
 - The immediate pain of harassment may leave you feeling victimized and hopeless. Move on to the next step; do not give up!
- Power Surge
 - Once you find a strategy and information on dealing with bullies, you may feel hope and a sense of direction. Exposing the bully or developing a plan often leads to the next stage.
- Vulnerability
 - If the bully poses a counter-attack to retaliate against your new plan, you may reconsider your actions and wonder whether or not you should have just kept quiet. Remember that bullies have weaknesses too. You are dealing with these weaknesses, and they won't like it.
- Isolation/ Abandonment
 - You may feel alone if not supported by friends, especially as the bully shows some muscle. Refuse to be alone. Take the initiative: start a support group for bullied peers; gather strength in numbers.
- Anger
 - Why did this have to happen to you? Why do you have to take the initiative? Where is your support? Defuse this anger by staying focused on the facts of your mission. Bullying is wrong and destructive. You are changing the way people approach bullies by living out a testimony of attacking problems at their root. Channel your anger into energy instead to create new ways of dealing with school violence.
- Resolution
 - You fought for a cause and have found that many others share the same plight. In victory you can become a forgiver of your enemies and reverse the process of bullying



From the Workplace Bullying and Trauma Institute – www.bullyinginstitute.org

Handout 6

Being Bullied? Here are some tips...

- **Teach others how to treat you.** We all deserve to be treated well. We teach others how to treat us by our reactions to them. If bullies insult someone who doesn't care what they think, they've wasted their time.
- **Keep a record of events.** It can help to express your feelings by writing them down, and if things get too bad, showing someone the diary is a good way to help someone understand what you are going through. It can also be good evidence if ever needed to support your case.
- **Talk to someone.** As well as asking for help, just sharing your feelings and knowing that you are not alone is very important. Ideally, this should be a trusted friend you feel comfortable with. If you don't have any friends you feel you can trust, go to an adult in a position of responsibility such as a parent, teacher, spiritual leader or school counselor.
- **Ask for help, and keeping asking until you get it.** If you are being bullied at school, tell a teacher, counselor, school nurse or administrator. You could also get your parents to write to them. Educators have a legal responsibility to look after you while you are at school, and all schools should have an anti-bullying policy. This isn't just for your own sake. It's very rare that a bully only has one victim, and by demanding that the people in charge deal with the situation, you may be able to save others from going through what you've had to suffer. You can even call the media or a lawyer if all else fails.
- **Leave.** If the school won't stop you being bullied, ask about changing schools. It doesn't mean that the bullies have won. Getting away from them and from schools which tolerate their bad behavior makes you the winner.
- **Treat others the way you want to be treated.** Model for all how relationships should go. Being the victim of a bully is rarely, if ever, something that you can control, but you can control your own responses to others.

SELECTED RESOURCES

The ABCs of Bullying: Addressing, Blocking, and Curbing School Aggression.
http://pathwayscourses.samhsa.gov/bully/bully_intro_pg1.htm

Bully Police – www.bullypolice.org

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program - <http://www.clemson.edu/olweus>

Peretti, F. (2003). *No more bullies: For those who wound or are wounded*. Nashville: W Publishing Group.

Respect and the Facts – www.respectandthefacts.com

U.S. Department of Education. (1998). *Preventing bullying: A manual for schools and communities*. (Publication No. EQ0118B) Washington, DC: Author.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Center for Mental Health Services. (2003). *Bullying is not a fact of life*. (CMHS-SVP-0052) Washington, DC: Author.

Workplace Bullying and Trauma Institute - <http://www.bullyinginstitute.org>