

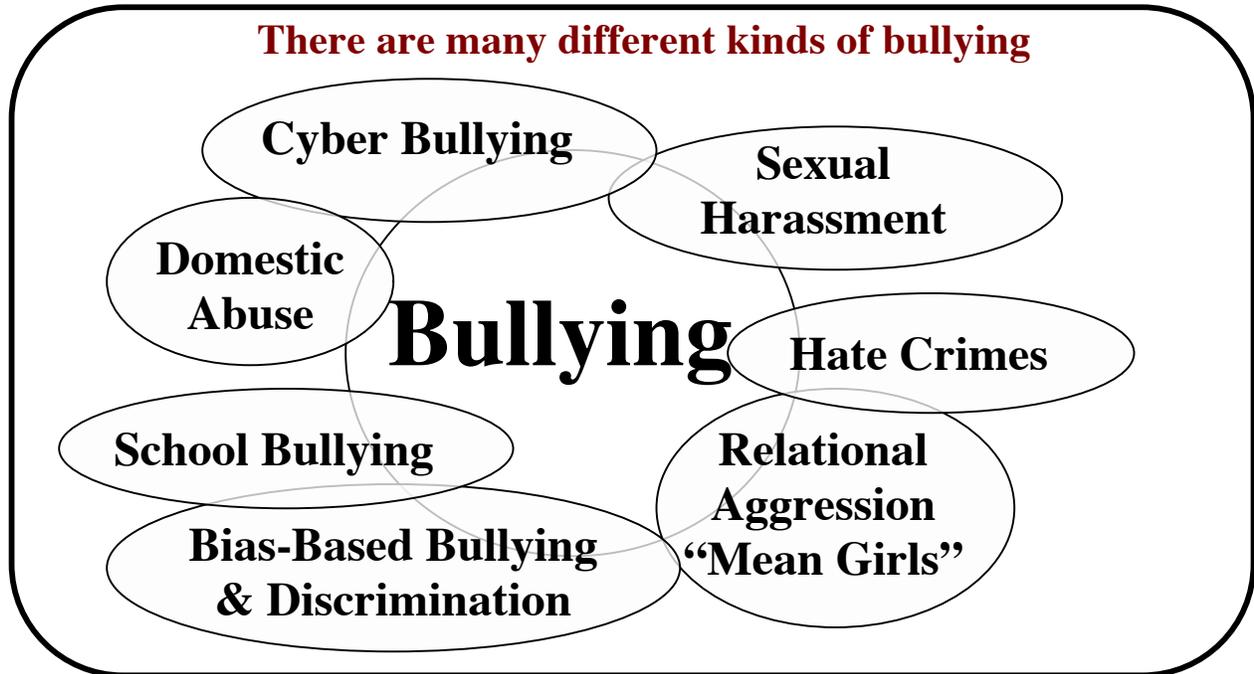
BULLYING 101

What It Is & What to Do about It

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What is Bullying?

There are many different kinds of bullying



How Is Bullying Different from "Conflict"?

- Bullying is different from a "disagreement," a conflict of interests, or a "fight" between people who mutually dislike each other or treat each other badly.
- Bullying is a one-sided situation in which one person (or group) hurts another emotionally or physically.
- Bullying is often intentional, and often occurs repeatedly, but not necessarily
- Bullying involves a power dynamic; power used to hurt others
- Bullying involves three types of people:
 - The Bully/Aggressor
 - The Victim/Target
 - Bystanders/Witnesses

Where does Bullying Occur?

- **In the Workplace.** Bullying at work creates an unpleasant work environment, impacts the families and friends of victims, reduces productivity. When it involves sexual harassment or bias motivation, it creates a "hostile environment" which is discriminatory and illegal.
- **At Home.** Bullying at home includes domestic abuse between adults, abusive sibling behavior, abusive parenting techniques.
- **In School & Other Youth Programs.** Bullying among youth today is not like the playground bullying that most parents remember from their own school days. Schools today are faced with a very different problem.
- **Our Community.** In any public place, especially places where diverse individuals come together, there is a potential for offensive behavior. Sometimes offensive behavior is unintentional, but can be harmful nevertheless.

How Serious is Bullying?

Ask the Victims!

- **Small offenses lead to larger problems;** if we don't take the "little stuff" seriously, and if we don't take bullying seriously among very young children, small problems lead to larger problems.
- **Retaliatory violence.** Remember the Columbine Tragedy.
- **For victims:** Fear, Long-term anxiety and depression, Suicide
- **For bullies:** Youthful bullying sets the stage for adult bullying, including domestic violence, increased risk of criminal convictions, and workplace harassment.
- **The Effects Are Real:** Ryan Patrick Halligan, Victoria Lindsay, Lawrence King, Carl Walker-Hoover.

Cyber Bullying

Real Bullying in a Virtual World

Some Types of Cyber Bullying are:

- Sending nasty or threatening e-mails, IMs, Wall comments, Pokes, Tweets, etc.
- Spreading rumors
- Betrayal/ Revealing Confidential Information
- Photos and Video
- Impersonation
- Griefing

Parents Beware:

- Even if your son or daughter does not have a cell phone, or internet access from home, s/he can still be cyber bullied. The only way to protect young people is through education and monitoring. Teach cyber safety. Then teach it again.
- Your kids might know more about cyber technology and cyber communication than you do. Who set up your electronic equipment at home?
- Do you know . . .
 - That your child can get a cell phone number online without having a cell phone?
 - That gaming is visual "chat" and can involve online communication with strangers even if your wireless network is secure and you haven't given your child the "key"?
 - Do you know how to read TXT and Leet Speak? What do "POS," "9," and "A/S/L/P" mean?
 - Do you know if your child is logging their online chats and IMs?
 - Do you know who is on your child's buddy lists and friend lists?
 - Do you know all of your child's online accounts and passwords?
 - Do you know how to record and check browser and form-fill histories?
 - Do you know which gaming, chat, and networking sites are monitored (Club Penguin? Facebook? YouTube? Runescape? IRCnet?)

Schools

Although schools are required to address cyber bullying, most cyber bullying occurs outside school hours & off school grounds, where schools' authority is very limited. Schools can educate students about cyber bullying, but need parents to be informed, as well.

Many Forms of Cyber Bullying Violate Criminal and Civil Laws

If you think that a law has been violated, save the evidence and contact law enforcement.

Relational Aggression a.k.a. Relational Bullying “Mean Girls”

Definition:

Relational bullying involves the **manipulation of social relationships** with the intent or effect of causing harm--usually **psychological and/or emotional harm**--to another. It includes ignoring, isolating, and excluding, is accomplished by means of gossip, rumors, teasing, alienating, censure, etc., and often involves the use of deception. It is often done by a group of friends to an outsider, to a former member, or to a current member to ensure loyalty to the group or to the group's social leader (stereotypically, the “queen bee”). Female-typical, but also found among boys and with marked similarities to gang behavior.

Bias-Based Bullying

Bias-based bullying ranges from hate crimes to offensive jokes, stereotypes, and insensitive comments.

Definition:

Bias-based bullying is any form of bullying that targets someone, or makes someone feel threatened or uncomfortable because of *who they are*, for example, because of their:

- Race, Color, or Ethnicity
- Religion
- Culture
- Ancestry or National Origin
- Sex/Gender, Gender Identity, or Gender Expression
- Mental or Physical Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Family or Marital Status
- Any other distinguishing characteristic

Some of these characteristics are named in the Law Against Discrimination, and many others are also covered under the school anti-bullying law in Title 18A.

There are no “protected classes;” everyone is legally protected from bias-based behavior, and, in certain circumstances, from bias based on “perceived” as well as “actual” characteristics.

What is a “Hostile Environment”?

A “hostile environment” at work or at school is an environment in which someone is made to feel physically or psychologically unsafe, or is harmed, because of others’ bias-based bullying and harassment. A hostile environment is a form of discrimination under the Law Against Discrimination because it differentially prevents individuals from working or learning, based on others’ bias-based harassment of them.

What Can We Do As a Community?

Speak UP!

The Importance of Bystanders. Remember Kitty Genovese

Get to Know Each Other: Replace Stereotypes with Knowledge and Understanding

As human beings, we are uncomfortable with things we don't understand. This leads to fear, and prejudice. We tend to avoid people we don't understand, so we often prevent ourselves from becoming more knowledgeable and comfortable with different types of people.

Sometimes we offend each other without intending to. Getting to know people who are different from ourselves takes a bit of extra work, because sometimes there are real differences between us, and sometimes there are histories of animosity. But the more we get to know each other as individuals, across our differences, the more we can break down the prejudices we have inherited from the past.

What Can Schools Do to Address Bullying?

Make sure school rules against bullying are clear and applied fairly. Every school is required to have an anti-bullying policy.

Use best practices to address bullying incidents, and prevent bullying by creating a school environment in which all students feel safe and respected.

What Can Parents Do to Address Bullying?

- Be familiar with your school district's anti-bullying policy and code of discipline.
- Teach your child what bullying is, and how to avoid doing it to others
- Talk to your child regularly about what is happening in school, so that if your child does become the victim of a bully, you find out about it as soon as possible.
- Tell your child what to do if s/he is bullied (walk away, tell an adult, use diffusing humor, find a friend, ignore it, etc.) Different strategies work in different situations.
- Teach your child what to do if s/he sees someone else being bullied (stand up for them, speak up, call them away, tell an adult, etc.)
- Teach your child about cultural diversity, and about mental and physical disabilities.
- Teach the difference between Respect and Agreement; you don't have to agree with someone to show respect for them as a person.
- Be a role model; let your child see you intervening on behalf of others, showing interest in different types of people, and showing respect even in disagreement.
- Make comments when you hear offensive language, including sexually inappropriate language, offensive jokes, put-downs like "retard" or "stupid," racial epithets, etc. Teach that the phrase "so gay" or "that's so gay" is offensive. "I'm only joking" or "I didn't say it to offend anyone" are not excuses for offensive language.
- If you find out about an incident at school, report it to appropriate school personnel.
- Recognize what kinds of bullying the school can address, what the school is able to do about bullying, as well as what the school cannot do. For example, school authority to address cyber bullying when it occurs off school grounds is limited. Also, discipline is confidential; school officials can't tell you what was done in response to a given incident.
- Know what the school is teaching students about bullying, so that you don't ask your child to behave in ways that violate school policy or procedure. For example, telling your child to "hit back next time" puts your child in a difficult position.
- Read the Tips Sheets on Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying. Use the resource lists provided at this workshop to learn more.