

## Take Action Against Bullying

A Document Prepared by

The United States Department of Health and Human Services

Center for Mental Health Services

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*This seminar, discusses the document "Take Action Against Bullying," prepared by the United States Department of Health and Human Services (Center for Mental Health Services). The document is presented in its entirety except for group activities, graphics and list of resources which have been included by the presenter.*

There have been increasing numbers of bullies and victims of bullying in the communities, schools and even churches. What can leaders who work with children and parents do to alleviate this growing problem? What is "bullying?" What are the characteristics of a bully? How can victims and perpetrators be helped? What is our responsibility?

What is Bullying?

*Bullying involves repeated acts of physical, emotional, or social behavior that are intentional, controlling, and hurtful. Bullying is a learned behavior, evident as early as two years of age. Bullying can be either direct or indirect. Direct bullying usually is seen and felt readily.*

B. Indirect Bullying—exclusion, name calling, etc.

C. Direct Bullying ---hitting, physical threats, violence generally, overt attacks on a person

D. Consequences of bullying

1. Interference with learning
2. Fear
3. Tendency to become spousal/child abusers
4. Involvement in gang, violence, crime generally

5. Low self-esteem of the victims

6. Depression

7. Suicide

#### E. Common Targets of Bullies

1. Obese children

2. Disabled children

3. Beautiful/handsome children

4. Gifted children

#### F. Signs of being a Victim

1. Isolation/social withdrawal; has few or no friends.

2. Feels picked on or persecuted.

3. Feels rejected and not liked.

4. Frequently complains of illness.; avoids school/ certain classes

5. Brings home damaged possessions or reports them “lost.”

6. Displays mood swings and talks about hopelessness.

7. Talks about running away and/or suicide.

8. Threatens violence to self and others.

9. Displays changes in eating or sleeping patterns.

10. Takes or attempts to take, “protection” to school (a stick, knife, gun, etc.).

11. Displays “victim” body language—hangs head, hunches shoulders, avoids eye contact.

12. Displays poor social behavior

#### G. Steps to take if You Suspect Your Child is a Victim

1. Assure your child that being bullied is not his or her fault.
2. Let your child know that he or she does not have to face being bullied alone.
3. Discuss ways of responding to bullies.
4. Teach your child to be assertive.
5. Tell your child not to react, but to walk away and get help if pursued.
6. Both you and your child need to report it to the school/teacher.

#### H. Some “Don’ts” in Dealing with Bullying

1. DON’T ask children to solve a bullying problem between themselves. Bullying problems require adult intervention.
2. DON’T advise the bullied child to fight the bully—fighting is in violation of the school conduct code and the child might be seriously injured.
3. DON’T try to mediate a bullying situation. Bringing together children who are bullied and those who do the bullying, to “work out” the problems between them, generally is not a good idea. **It may further victimize a child who is being bullied.**
4. DON’T blame either the victim or the bully.

#### I. Some “Do’s” for Dealing with a Bullying Child

1. Be sure that the child knows that bullying is NOT acceptable behavior.
2. Explain the penalties for bullying and be sure that you enforce them fairly and consistently.
3. Help the child learn alternative ways to deal with anger and frustration.
4. Teach and reward appropriate behavior.
5. Work out a way for the child to make amends for the bullying.

6. Help the child develop an understanding of the impact of bullying on the target.
7. Seek help or counseling if the behavior continues.
8. Present yourself as a model of non-violent behavior.
9. Clearly state that violence is not acceptable.
10. Assist the child in finding non-violent strategies for anger management and conflict resolution.
11. Seek help from mental health/school counselors to help stop bullying and aggressive behavior

#### J. Warning Signs Indicating a Bully

1. Seeks to dominate and/or manipulate others.
2. Enjoys feeling powerful and in control (whether real or not).
3. Is both a poor winner (boastful and arrogant) and a poor loser.
4. Seems to derive satisfaction from others' fears, discomfort, or pain.
5. Is good at hiding behaviors or doing them where adults can't notice.
6. Is excited by conflicts between others.
7. Blames others for his/her problems.
8. Displays uncontrolled anger, intolerance and prejudice towards others.
9. Has a history of discipline problems. Violent and aggressive behaviors.
10. Displays a pattern of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating, and aggressive behaviors.
11. May use drugs, alcohol or be a member of a gang.
12. Lacks empathy towards others.

## K. Prevention Programs

*When developing and implementing bullying prevention programs, be sure to include the following steps:*

Increase the awareness of everyone at school (students, staff and parents) toward bullying problems.

1. Assess the scope of the problem.
2. Identify both the children who are bullying and the children who are being bullied.
3. Intervene in a timely manner with clear and consistent consequences for the child who is bullying, and with support and protection for the child who is being bullied.
4. Encourage by-standers to intervene appropriately to help stop the bullying.
5. Reward pro-social behavior of all students.

## L. Helping the Child not to be a Victim

1. Instill self-confidence in the child.
2. Help the child establish good social skills.
3. Teach the child to speak out for himself or herself.
4. Teach the child to seek help, (from you and other caring adults) if harassed.

## Our responsibility

1. Identify bullying when it is manifested.
2. Intervene promptly.
3. Educate, educate, educate.
4. Be consistent with prevention and intervention programs.
5. Be sure to enforce appropriate discipline
6. Be committed to advocacy:

**“Yes, speak up for the poor and helpless, and see that they get justice.”(Prov. 31:9, NLT)**

## RESOURCES

*[kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/behavior/bullies](http://kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/behavior/bullies)*

*[kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/bullies](http://kidshealth.org/kid/feeling/emotion/bullies)*

*[www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/HHS\\_PSA/pdfs/SBN\\_Tip\\_7.pdf](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/HHS_PSA/pdfs/SBN_Tip_7.pdf)*

*[www.consumeraffairs.com/news04/2006/08/bullyin\\_signs](http://www.consumeraffairs.com/news04/2006/08/bullyin_signs)*

*[www.itsamomsworld.com/bullyingsigns.html](http://www.itsamomsworld.com/bullyingsigns.html)*

*[www.topix.com/city/north-little-rock-ar/2009/05/anti-bullying-workshop-teaches-warning-signs](http://www.topix.com/city/north-little-rock-ar/2009/05/anti-bullying-workshop-teaches-warning-signs)*

Christian Help for Girls & Parents 6 Week Course 120% Guarantee  
*[www.sassyswans.com](http://www.sassyswans.com)*

*[Get help with bullying](#)*

Advice and support from the UK's  
leading **bullying prevention** charity  
*[www.beatbullying.org](http://www.beatbullying.org)*

*[Stand up to Bullies](#)*

Learn how to help someone being **bullied** with tips from McGruff.  
*[www.McGruff.org](http://www.McGruff.org)*

*Resources, Support and Ideas-Create  
Peace in Your Children's School Now!  
[peacefulschoolsinternational.org](http://peacefulschoolsinternational.org)*

*[Kids Against Bullying](#)*

*Be a Kid Against **Bullying**  
Kids Against **Bullying** Web Site  
[www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org](http://www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org)*

*We'll Help You Build a Positive School Environment. Contact Us Now!  
[www.YouthFrontiers.org](http://www.YouthFrontiers.org)*

*[Take Action Stop Bullying](#)*

*10 Actions You Can Take Now to  
Identify and Stop **Bullying!***  
[www.Education.com/Bullying](http://www.Education.com/Bullying)

***A guide for parents. Order online now!***  
[www.partnershipwithchildrennyc.org](http://www.partnershipwithchildrennyc.org)