

# An Introduction to Bullying

## IMBULLYFREE.org (501c3)

### Anti-Bully Programs

2014



**Bully Bear Needs Your Help to STOP BULLYING**



### Objectives

Successful bullying prevention includes education, preparation, and teamwork. We provide specific education, activities, and insights to address your bullying issues. This information is designed especially for children and parents of preschool and school-age children. Personnel will find this information useful for child care programs, afterschool, youth programs, and camps.

**This information will help you:**

- 1** Understand the extent, seriousness, and dynamics of bullying
- 2** Recognize and respond early and effectively to bullying, be proactive not reactive to bullying
- 3** Learn how to control bullying
- 4** Prepare children to recognize and respond effectively to early bullying behavior
- 5** Teach children how everyone—bullies, victims, bystanders, and supportive adults—can help control bullying
- 6** Create an environment where everyone understands that bullying behaviors are unacceptable, harmful, and preventable
- 7** Empower yourself and children to actively intervene to prevent and stop bullying



**Introduction.....page 5**

**Mission Statement.....page 6**

**Section 1 What is Bullying .....page 7**

Introduces the issue of bullying and answers the question “What is bullying?” An activity encourages adults and children to share their own experiences with bullying.

**Section 2 My Child is Being Bullied.....page 15**

Explains why bullying can sometimes be difficult to see. Children often do not tell their parents that they are being bullied because they are embarrassed or frightened. If you [suspect your child is being bullied](#) or your child brings it up, consider these steps:

**Section 3 The Bully, Victim, and Bystander.....page 21**

We will discuss what the victim and bystander. It includes what the victim and bystander may encounter or perceive during a bullying incident...

**Section 4 Cyberbullying.....page 24**

We will discuss the general issues of cyberbullying. This may be the new problem for our kids because of the extent the social media can affect our children. We will discuss some of the legal issues that may help.

**Section 5 Risk Factors and Warning Signs.....page 35**

We will discuss the Risk factors for suicide includes demographics such as age, race, and sexual orientation. If your child is at risk, this will give the parent some good insight.

### **Introduction:**

**Bullying can happen anywhere children gather. Every day we get phone calls from parents asking what they can do when their child is bullied. With better understanding of the extent, seriousness of this problem, the parent and child can take these lessons and help reduce the impact when bullying does occur. Bullying not only affects the child, but in a lot of incidents the whole family.**

- Together with parents, teachers, and other professional that are working with child care programs, afterschool and youth programs, and camps can play crucial roles in bullying prevention.
- You are the eyes and ears and likely to see bullying when it occurs. You establish the first line of defense to prevent all types of bullying.
- You are the adults our children turn to for help; you can no longer ignore the problems. By taking this training, you have accepted the challenge of taking on bullying
- Bullying has been ignored for a very long time. By putting up posters and having pep rally may help some, but we need professionals that understand bullying and are working daily to stop this serious problem.



## **Mission Statement**

**I'm Bully Free's mission is to be a Center of Excellence and provide support and raise awareness to all organizations that have declared a commitment to creating and maintaining a Bully-Free, Safe and Secure environment.**

**I'm Bully Free has schools, universities, corporations, and supporters around the world! Our stakeholders includes schools, students, teachers and community members that work together to ensure that everyone feels respected, safe, and valued.**

**Is your child being BULLIED by another student or staff member? Is the School District helping the situation? We can help! Call us at 713-478-3049. We will help!**

## SECTION 1

# What is Bullying?



Information for this section was developed by using the guidance from the [Stopbullying.gov](http://Stopbullying.gov) web site

**Aggressive behavior may be bullying depending on what happened, how often it happens and who it happens to. Find out what bullying is and what the different types are. You can also learn more about other topics related to bullying.**

### **Bullying Definition**

**Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Both kids who are bullied and who bully others may have**

**Serious, lasting problems.**



**HAS THIS HAPPENED TO YOU**

## Have You Been Bullied or Witnessed a Bully Incident?

- **Have you been repeatedly teased, humiliated, or shut out of a group?**
- **Where you forced to do something you didn't want to do by someone you considered more powerful than you?**
- **How did you feel when you were bullied?**
- **How did you feel when you witness bullying? What did you do to stop the incident?**
- **If you are like most people, you remember... and these memories can last a lifetime.**

## Story Time and Reflection

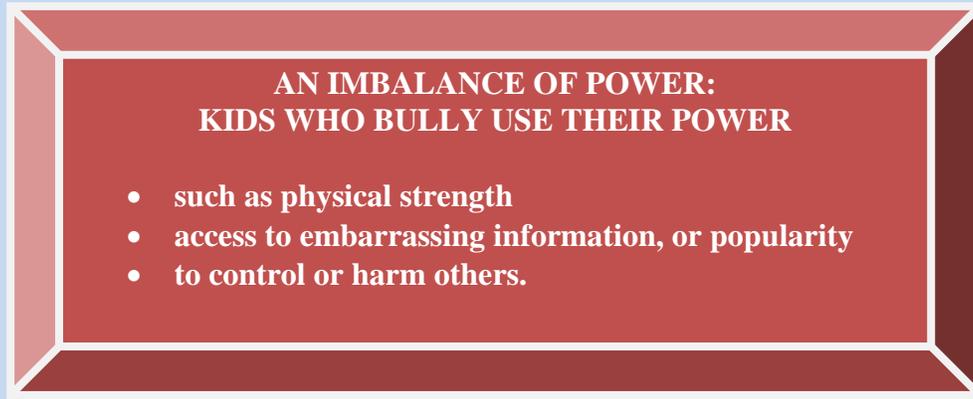
**TALKING ABOUT BULLYING CAN HELP. WE HAVE INTERVIEWED A LOT OF KIDS DURING OUR EVENTS AND SOMETIMES CHILDREN MAY BE RELUCTANT TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE THEIR SITUATION IS UNIQUE, SHAMEFUL, OR UNIMPORTANT.**

We have been very successful once we get the kids and parents talking about their experiences.

The statistics show that you are more likely to have been bullied or witnessed bullying sometime in your life.

**IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED BULLYING**

**The Behavior Must Be Aggressive And Include:**

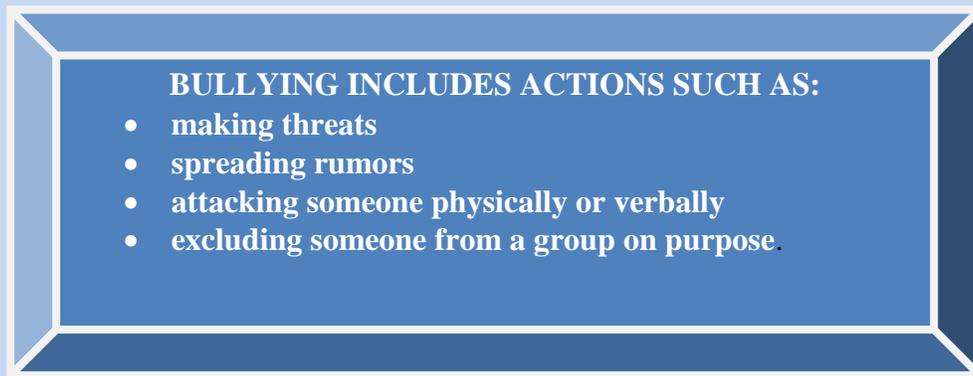


**AN IMBALANCE OF POWER:  
KIDS WHO BULLY USE THEIR POWER**

- such as physical strength
- access to embarrassing information, or popularity
- to control or harm others.

**Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.**

**Repetition: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.**



**BULLYING INCLUDES ACTIONS SUCH AS:**

- making threats
- spreading rumors
- attacking someone physically or verbally
- excluding someone from a group on purpose.

## Types of Bullying

### **There are three types of bullying:**

**Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things.**

**Verbal bullying includes:**

- **Teasing**
- **Name-calling**
- **Inappropriate sexual comments**
- **Taunting**
- **Threatening to cause harm**

**Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships.**

**Social bullying includes:**

- **Leaving someone out on purpose**
- **Telling other children not to be friends with someone**
- **Spreading rumors about someone**
- **Embarrassing someone in public**

**Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions.**

**Physical bullying includes:**

- **Hitting/kicking/pinching**
- **Spitting**
- **Tripping/pushing**
- **Taking or breaking someone's things**
- **Making mean or rude hand gestures**

**Exercises that the audience can use to show them,  
THEY ARE NOT ALONE WHEN IT COMES TO BULLYING**



**NOTE**

**We suggest that you use as many of the exercises to get the point across to your audience**

**1** Remember your own story of initiating, experiencing, or witnessing bullying.

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2 Share your story with their and have them explain how it made you feel then and now.

(FOR TEACHERS or CARE GIVERS)

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3 Ask the children to share their own bullying story.

Remember, children might feel embarrassed or afraid to recount their experience in front of others.

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## 14 IMBULLYFREE.org Anti-Bully Programs

**4** Brainstorm the group and ask them how they would stop or prevent bullying, using the stories they told as examples. Write down their responses. Later, after they have worked through the program, return to this exercise to see how their responses may have changed.

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**5** Invite the group to write a story or video about a bullying experience. Encourage young children to draw pictures. We have noticed that sometimes children are shy and drawing pictures and asking them specific questions about the pictures make them more at ease.

### Frequency of Bullying

There are two sources of federally collected data on youth bullying:

The 2009 [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) indicates that, nationwide, 20% of students in grades 9–12 experienced bullying.

The 2008–2009 [School Crime Supplement](#) (National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice Statistics) indicates that, nationwide, 28% of students in grades 6–12 experienced bullying.



## Section 2

### My Child is Being Bullied

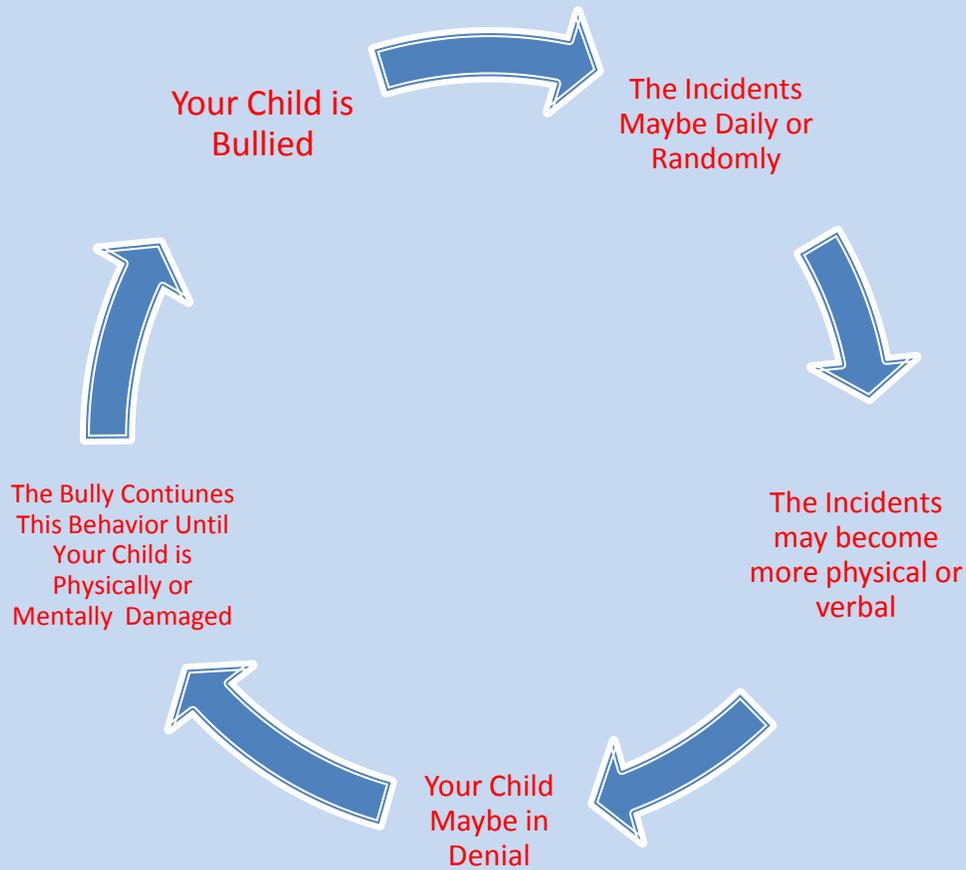


When children are involved in bullying, it is important for parents to be willing to take action.

**Children often do not tell their parents that they are being bullied because they are embarrassed or frightened. If you [suspect your child is being bullied](#) or your child brings it up, consider these steps:**

- **Talk with your child.** Focus on your child. Express your concern and make it clear that you want to help.
- **Empathize with your child.** Say bullying is wrong, that it is not their fault, and that you are glad they had the courage to tell you about it.
- **Work together to find solutions.** Ask your child what they think can be done to help. Reassure them that the situation can be handled privately.
- **Document ongoing bullying.** Work with your child to keep a record of all bullying incidents. If it involves cyber bullying, keep a record of all messages or postings.
- **Help your child develop strategies and skills for handling bullying.** Provide suggestions for [ways to respond to bullying](#), and help your child gain confidence by rehearsing their responses.
- **Be persistent.** Bullying may not be resolved overnight.
- **Stay vigilant to other possible problems that your child may be having.** Some of the [warning signs](#) may be signs of other serious problems. Share your concerns with a counselor at your child's school.

# YOU HAVE TO BREAK THE CYCLE



**Table 1 The BULLY CYCLE**



## Working with Your Child's School

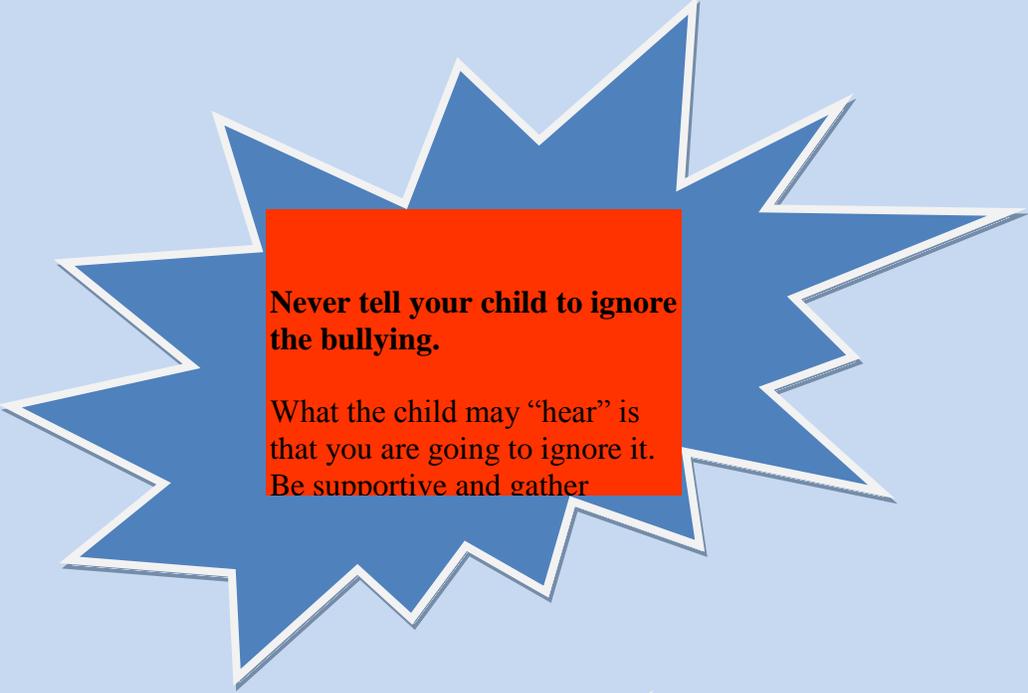
Parents are often reluctant to report bullying to school officials, but bullying may not stop without the school's help. Parents should never be afraid to call the school to report that their child is being bullied and ask for help to stop the bullying.

In later sections of the work book there will discussion dealing with:

- How to file a School Grievance
  - What are your rights
- **Know the school policies.** Ask for a copy or check the student handbook to see whether your school has standards in place that will help resolve the situation.
  - **Open the line of communication.** Call or set up an appointment to talk with your child's teacher or school counselor and establish a partnership to stop the bullying.

- **Get help for your child.** Seek advice from your child's guidance counselor or other school-based health professionals. They may be able to help your child cope with the stress of being bullied.
- **Commit to making the bullying stop.** Talk regularly with your child and with school staff to see whether the bullying has stopped. You may need to seek an attorney's help or contact local law enforcement officials if the bullying persists or escalates.

## What Not to Do

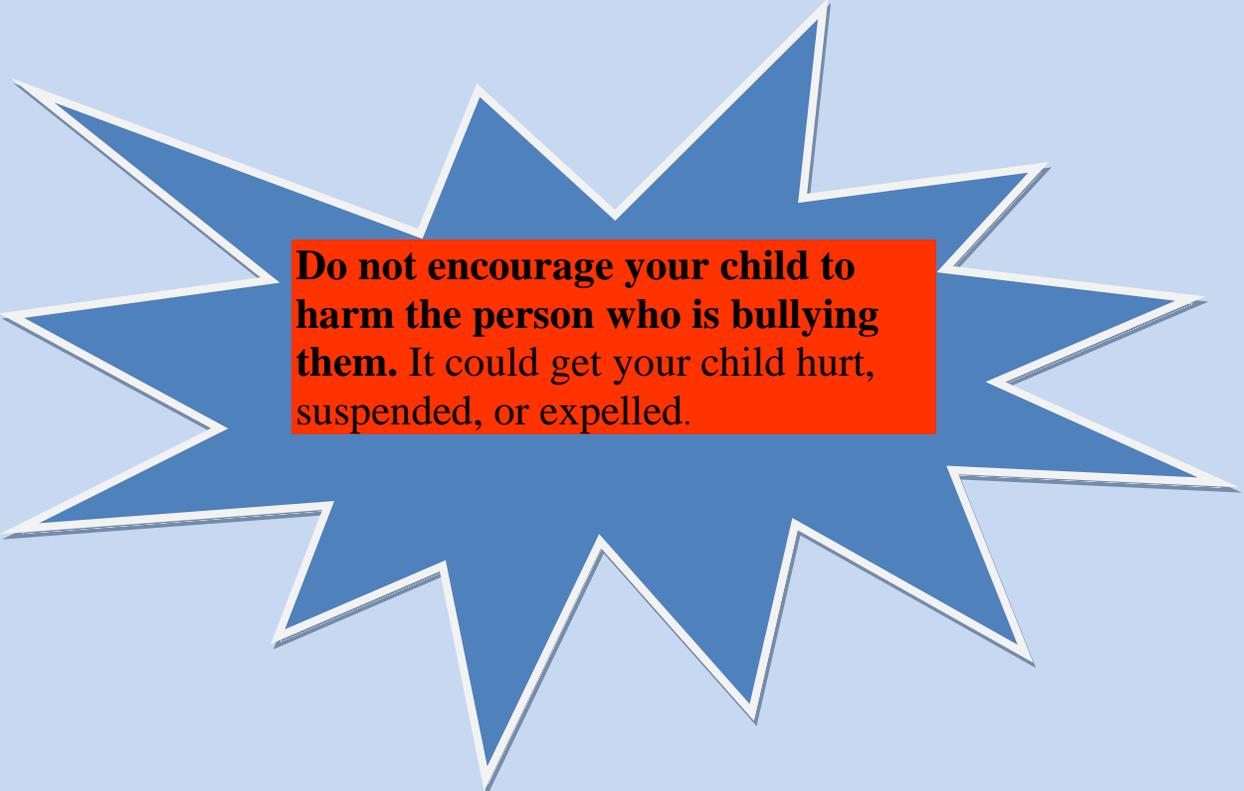


**Never tell your child to ignore the bullying.**

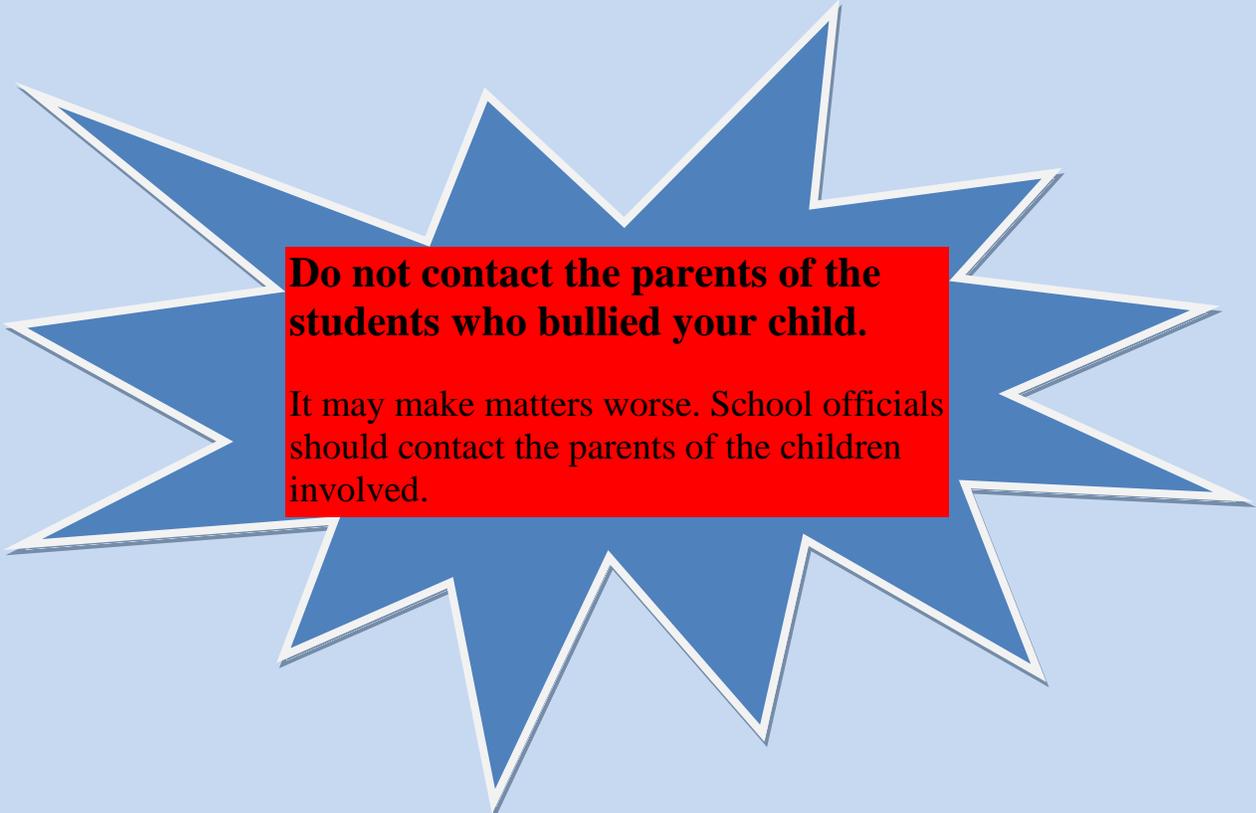
What the child may “hear” is that you are going to ignore it. Be supportive and gather



**Do not blame your child for being bullied.** Do not assume that your child did something to provoke the bullying.

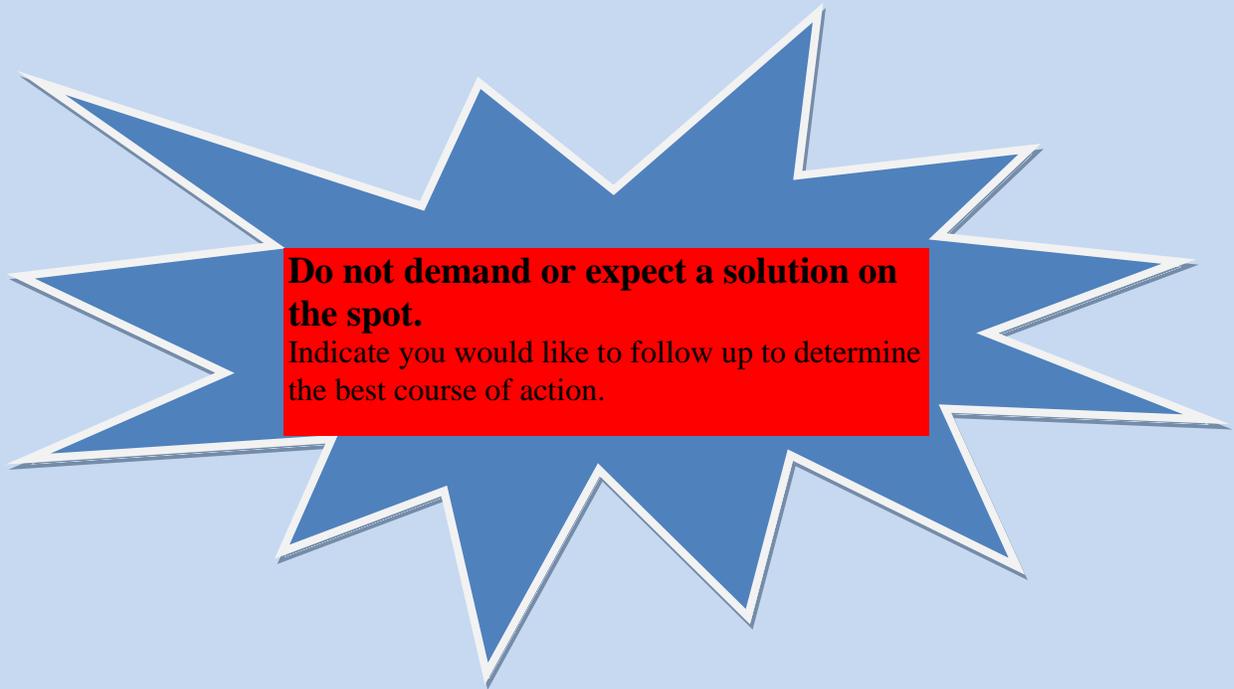


**Do not encourage your child to harm the person who is bullying them.** It could get your child hurt, suspended, or expelled.



**Do not contact the parents of the students who bullied your child.**

It may make matters worse. School officials should contact the parents of the children involved.



## **NOTE**

Also, be aware that the [law limits the ability of school personnel](#) from revealing disciplinary actions taken against other students. Just because they cannot tell you if or how another student was disciplined, does not mean action was not taken.

### Section 3

#### The Bully, Victim, and Bystander



#### The Victim

VICTIMS OF BULLYING INCLUDE GIRLS AND BOYS OF ALL AGES, SIZES, AND BACKGROUNDS.

**Some children are more likely than others to be victimized because:**

- they appear small
- weak
- Insecure
- Sensitive
- “different” from their peers.

**Victims tend to share these characteristics and tendencies:**

- Low self-confidence
- Anxiety
- Fearfulness
- Submissiveness
- Depression or sad appearance
- Limited sense of humor
- Below-average size, strength, or coordination
- Feelings of helplessness
- Self-blame for problems
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Poor social skills
- Low popularity
- Few or no friends
- Excessive dependence on adults

### Children who are repeatedly bullied tend to be;

- passive
- inadvertently reward the bully by crying
- giving over their possessions
- running away in fear
- provoke negative responses from others by behaving in socially inappropriate ways.
- may trigger conflict or ridicule and then overreact with anger and exasperation.

### Who Is Most at Risk?

- *Children who belong to a minority racial or ethnic group*
- *Children with mental or physical disabilities*
- *Children who are overweight*
- *Children who are new to the community*
- *Children who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered*
- *Children who don't "fit in"*

## Chapter 4

# Cyber Bullying

### CYBER BULLYING IS...

*Being cruel to others by sending or posting harmful material using technological means;  
When someone uses information and communication involving electronic technologies  
to facilitate deliberate and repeated harassment or threat to an individual or group.*

You may have heard this called by other names:



'Electronic Bullying' &  
'Online Social Cruelty'

## CYBER BULLIES' May use the Following Technologies

- E-mail
- Cell phones
- Pager text messages
- Instant messaging
- Defamatory personal web sites
- Defamatory online personal polling web sites
- Chat rooms



# DIFFERENCES

## BULLYING

- DIRECT
- Occurs on school property
- Poor relationships with teachers
- Fear retribution
  - Physical:** Hitting, Punching & Shoving
  - Verbal:** Teasing, Name calling & Gossip
  - Nonverbal:** Use of gestures & Exclusion



## CYBERBULLYING

- ANONYMOUS
- Occurs off school property
- Good relationships with teachers
- Fear loss of technology privileges
- Further under the radar than bullying
- Emotional reactions cannot be determined

# CYBER BULLY CATEGORIES

## "Inadvertent"

- ❖ Role-play
- ❖ Responding
- ❖ May not realize it's cyber bullying

## "Vengeful Angel"

- ❖ Righting wrongs
- ❖ Protecting themselves

## "Mean Girls"

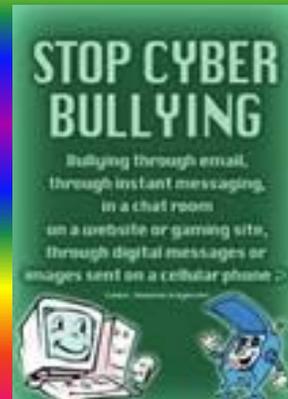
- ❖ Bored; Entertainment
- ❖ Ego based; promote own social status
- ❖ Often do in a group
- ❖ Intimidate on and off line
- ❖ Need others to bully; if isolated, stop

## "Power-Hungry"

- ❖ Want reaction
- ❖ Controlling with fear

## "Revenge of the Nerds"

- ("Subset of Power-Hungry")
- ❖ Often Victims of school-yard bullies
  - ❖ Throw 'cyber-weight' around
  - ❖ Not school-yard bullies like Power-Hungry & Mean Girls



## CYBER BULLYING TYPES

- **"Flaming"**: Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
- **"Harassment"**: Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
- **"Cyber stalking"**: Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating. Engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety
- **"Denigration"**: 'Dissing' someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships

## CYBER BULLYING TYPES

- **“Impersonation”**: Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes that person look bad, gets that person in trouble or danger, or damages that person’s reputation or friendships
- **“Outing and Trickery”**: Sharing someone’s secret or embarrassing information online. Tricking someone into revealing secrets or embarrassing information which is then shared online
- **“Exclusion”**: Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a ‘buddy list’

## **CYBER BULLYING PREVALENCE**

- **Cyber bullying typically starts at about 9 years of age and usually ends after 14 years of age; after 14, it becomes cyber or sexual harassment due to nature of acts and age of actors**
- **Affects 65-85% of kids in the core group directly or indirectly through close friends**

# CYBER BULLYING

## statistics:

- ❖ 90% of middle school students they polled had their feelings hurt online
- ❖ 65% of their students between 8-14 have been involved directly or indirectly in a cyber bullying incident as the cyber bully, victim or friend
- ❖ 50% had seen or heard of a website bashing of another student
- ❖ 75% had visited a website bashing
- ❖ 40% had their password stolen and changed by a bully (locking them out of their own account) or sent communications posing as them
- ❖ Problems in studies: not assessing the 'real thing'  
i.e. Only 15% of parent polled knew what cyber bullying was

# CYBER BULLYING LEGAL ISSUES

## Who May Be Involved:

- School Counselor
- Principal
- Resource Officer
- Police
- Attorney (School or Private)
- Superintendent
- Internet Service Provider

## School Limits:

Schools have policies against bullying

## Civil Law Limits:

Cyber bullying may also meet standards for 'institutional torts' (wrongdoings)

## Defamation

**Material that Constitutes  
an Invasion of Privacy  
(1<sup>st</sup> Amendment)**

**Intentional Infliction of  
Emotional Distress**

**CYBER BULLYING  
AFFECTS REAL LIVES !**

# CYBER BULLYING LEGAL ISSUES

## Criminal Law Limits

The following kinds of speech can lead to arrest & prosecution:

- Making threats of violence to people or their property
- Engaging in coercion
- Making obscene or harassing phone calls
- Harassment or stalking
- Hate or bias crimes
- Creating or sending sexually explicit images of teens
- Sexual exploitation
- Taking a photo of someone in place where privacy expected

## **CYBER BULLYING LEGAL ISSUES**

### **Law Enforcement should be contacted if educator becomes aware of:**

- Death threats or threats of other forms of violence to a person or property
- Excessive intimidation or extortion
- Threats or intimidation that involve any form of bias or discrimination
- Any evidence of sexual exploitation

Section 5

Risk Factors and Warning Signs



**The staff at Imbullyfree.org is extremely worried about this epidemic. Every week we find out about another young boy or girl that has decided to end the pain and suffering of their bullying by taking their life. If you suspect your child, a friend or anyone that you may come in contact is exhibiting any of the warning signs, you should immediately try to do something. Tell a parent, a teacher, a priest, or anyone that will listen. You are the first line of defense, so step up and save this CHILD. Be a Bully HERO!!!!**

# WARNING

## RISKFACORSANDWARNINGSIGNS

Risk factors for suicide include demographics such as age, race, and sexual orientation. In the 15-to-24-year-old age bracket, white males aged 18 to 19 have the highest suicide rates; African American females have the lowest.

The suicide rates for youth ages 10 to 14 have increased dramatically between 1981 and 2004 (51%). While we know sexual orientation places youth at increased risk, the extent is still not clear although research into this risk factor is increasing. [For more information, check out this document from the [Suicide Prevention Resource Center](#) (PDF)]

### Additional risk factors include:

**A psychiatric history of drug and/or alcohol abuse. One of the most serious risk factors is a previous suicide attempt, especially when it is combined with other risk factors**

**A family history that includes physical or sexual abuse as well as a family history that includes suicide**

**Exposure to another's suicide, even if it is through media reports**

In combination with these other factors, the experience of stressful life events can also increase risk.



Certain personality factors can also elevate risk. Students who are impulsive, immature or anxious worriers tend to have poor judgment and compromised problem-solving skills, which can increase risk. We also need to be concerned about kids who display aggressive behavior, especially outbursts of rage.

Access to means is the most preventive risk factor. A study in Illinois determined that removing access to lethal means, especially guns, was effective in lowering the rate of youth suicides. (Source: University of Illinois at Chicago, Institute for Juvenile Research.) With younger adolescents, it's also recommended to remove access to the over-the-counter acetaminophen, since it is one of the most common medications used in overdoses.

# Warning signs

Listen and look for these warning signs for suicidal behavior. Warning signs are the earliest detectable signs that indicate heightened risk for suicide in the near-term (i.e., within minutes, hours, or days), as opposed to risk factors, which suggest longer-term risk (i.e., a year to a lifetime).

## NOTE:

Aside from direct statements or behaviors threatening suicide, it is often a constellation of signs that raises concern, rather than one or two symptoms alone.

**Warning signs can be organized around the word FACTS:**

## Feelings:

- Hopelessness: feeling like things are bad and won't get any better
- Fear of losing control, going crazy, harming himself/herself or others

- Helplessness: a belief that there's nothing that can be done to make life better
- Worthlessness: feeling like an awful person and people would be better off if he/she were dead
- Hating himself/herself, feeling guilty or ashamed
- Being extremely sad and lonely
- Feeling anxious, worried or angry all the time

### **Action:**

- Drug or alcohol abuse
- Talking or writing about death or destruction
- Aggression: getting into fights or having arguments with people
- Recklessness: doing risky or dangerous things

### **Changes:**

- Personality: behaving like a different person, becoming withdrawn, tired all the time, not caring about anything, or becoming more talkative, outgoing
- Behavior: can't concentrate on school or regular tasks
- Sleeping pattern: sleeping all the time or not being able to sleep at all, or waking up in the middle of the night or early in the morning and not being able to get back to sleep

- Eating habits: losing your appetite and/or overeating and gaining weight
- Losing interest in friends, hobbies, and appearance, or in activities or sports previously enjoyed
- Sudden improvement after a period of being down or withdrawn

### **Threats:**

- Statements like "How long does it take to bleed to death?"
- Threats like "I won't be around much longer" or "Don't tell anyone else...you won't be my friend if you tell!"
- Plans like giving away favorite things, studying about ways to die, obtaining a weapon or a stash of pills: the risk is very high if a person has a plan and the way to do it
- Suicide attempts like overdosing, wrist cutting

### **Situations:**

- Getting into trouble at school, at home, or with the law.
- Recent loss through death, divorce, or separation; the break-up of a relationship; losing an opportunity or a dream; losing self-esteem

- Changes in life that feel overwhelming
- Being exposed to suicide or the death of a peer under any circumstances

## Protective Factors

Suicide risk is balanced what is called "protective factors."

*Protective factors are just that: personal, behavioral, or situational characteristics that contribute to a student's resiliency and serve as a buffer him or her against factors that can increase risk. One of the most significant protective factors for youth is a caring relationship with a trusted adult. For many youth, that person is a teacher.*

## Other Protections Include

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graph TD; A[Other Protections Include] --> B[a sense of connection or participation in school]; A --> C[positive self-esteem and good coping skills]; A --> D[access to care for emotional or physical problems or for substance abuse disorders]; A --> E[cultural or religious beliefs that discourage suicide and promote self-preservation];
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a sense of connection or participation in school

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