Anti-Bullying Tactics

Bullying, one of the most underrated and serious problems in schools today, affects 1 in 7 school children. Bullying intensifies during the middle school years. In many American high schools, bullying is a rite of passage connected to hazing and gang activities.

Both bullies and their victims suffer emotional, behavioral, and underachievement problems.

- 22% of 4th through 8th graders report lower grades due to bullying.
- 160,000 students miss school daily due to fear of bullies.
- Boys are more likely to bully physically; girls typically taunt and spread rumors.
- Bullying victims face increased mental health risks, some for life.
- By age 24, 60% of children who bully will have had a criminal conviction.

Bullying—which includes verbal and physical abuse, social alienation, and intimidation by peers—can be decreased by effective and consistent school-wide bullying awareness and prevention curricula such as “Don’t Laugh At Me” or Hazelden’s “No Bullying.”

Victims stand out in some way or appear passive and sensitive. Bullies get negative attention that they crave by bullying. Together, the two create a lose/lose situation.

**TIPS FOR PARENTS OF VICTIMS AND BULLIES**

- Teach your child self-respect and nurture confidence.
- Help your child learn to express anger, especially to you since letting your child stand up to you in an appropriate manner helps him/her stand up to a bully.
- Practice with your child showing confident body language including making frequent eye contact and using deep breathing to bolster assertive words.
- Talk with your child about the consequences of casual violence seen on television, in video games, and possibly in the neighborhood. Extend the discussion into purposeful violence such as the recent terrorist attacks on America.
- Encourage friendships since both victims and bullies tend to be loners.
- Teach your child how to solve problems, using praise when he/she follows through.
- Help your child express himself/herself clearly, using “I” statements. Children who express themselves without putting others on the defensive tend to gain friends.
- Note any disturbing behaviors in your child (frequent angry outbursts, excessive fighting and bullying of other children, cruelty to animals, fire setting, frequent behavior problems at school, lack of friends, and alcohol or drug use can be signs of serious problems) and get help immediately from a counselor or therapist.
- Listen to your child if he or she shares concerns about friends who may be exhibiting troubling behaviors. Share this information with a trusted professional, such as a school psychologist, principal, or teacher.
- Rent a video of a movie that explores intolerance (*Mask, The Elephant Man, Disney’s The Hunchback of Notre Dame, My Bodyguard, The Man Without A Face.*)
- Hold up the mirror to yourself and to your child’s teachers. Adults who demean, talk down to
and constantly demand unquestioning obedience from children foster both bullying and being victimized.

**TIPS FOR TEACHER AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL**

**Anti-Bullying curriculum requires reaching the heads and hearts of youth by:**

Enlisting the principal and other teachers to change the culture of your school and individual classrooms into one of a Ridicule-Free or Zero Intolerance Level.

- Harnessing the power of music and art to transform, inspire and build skills with students. (“Don’t Laugh At Me Project/curricula and Carol Bly’s anthology, *Changing the Bully Who Rules the World*, respectively offer transforming music and literature for younger children and for teens.)
- Incorporating conflict resolution into your curriculum, no matter the subject matter you teach. Youth need guidance in learning ways to resolve disagreements respectfully and nonviolently.
- Finding ways to connect kids to their inner selves.
- Raising awareness about the impact of ridicule, scorn, name-calling, and intolerance through guided discussions and class assignments.
- Exploring creative curricula (See Resources) and holding professional development workshops that focus on social responsibility.
- Fostering and rewarding conscious acts of caring among your students.
- Inviting community leaders and caring professionals to help extend your Zero Intolerance Zone into the larger community.

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**RESOURCES**

**Books**


**Curricula**

The Don’t Laugh At Me Project, spearheaded by Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary uses three curricula, (grades 2-5, grades 6-8 and for summer camps) can be downloaded from: www.dontlaugh.org at no charge. Includes video, CD and materials.

Hazelden’s *No Bullying* Curricula uses a multifaceted approach for K-1, 2-3, 4-5 and 6-8 graders. Contains worksheets and complete descriptions of activities. To order: www.stopbullyingnow.net