

BULLYING WORKSHOP

Bullying: The Definition

According to the 2008 CGS Section 10-222d, bullying is defined as: “any overt acts by a student or a group of students directed against another student with the intent to ridicule, harass, humiliate or intimidate the other student while on school grounds, at a school sponsored activity, or on a school bus, which acts re-committed more than once against any student during the school year”.

A student is bullied when he or she is the target of negative actions by one or several other individuals who are more powerful than the target in some way. Bullying can begin with name calling or social isolation and can build to actual attacks or attempts to injure or humiliate the target. It may involve physical or verbal aggression, intimidation, or racial, ethnic or sexual harassment.

All acts of inappropriate and mean spirited behavior cannot be tolerated. True bullying is an abuse of power and is commonly defined as “repeated” or “patterned”. Verified acts of violence always begin with a first act or incidence of meanness.

The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander & Some Facts about Bullying

The Bully: May be male or female. Boys tend to use physical violence more than girls. The bully needs help too. Childhood bullies often grow up to have trouble in school, at work and with the law. Many bullies have been mistreated themselves. They may bully out of anger or frustration or to try to win respect. Bullying makes the person feel more powerful.

Bullying is not always about anger or conflict; it is about contempt, a powerful feeling of dislike toward someone considered to be worthless, inferior or undeserving of respect. Kids who bully may not feel empathy, compassion or shame. They may have a sense of entitlement and intolerance towards differences. Bullying is used to mask or cover up deep hurt & feelings of inadequacy.

The Bullied: May suffer harm to their bodies and their minds. Feelings of shame and fear can linger for years making it difficult to learn and grow. A quiet boy or girl who keeps to him or her self is a more likely target than an outgoing person who is often surrounded by friends. The bully often picks on those who they think are smaller or weaker or target those they envy for some reason.

The Bystander: The bystander does know what to do and has not been taught what to do. Bystanders usually choose not to take action when they witness a bullying situation, often due to fear that the attack will spread to them. Later they frequently feel guilty that they have not stepped in to help.

Four Types of Bullying

1. Verbal bullying: Is the most common & easy to get away with. The bully may use threats or insults to hurt people. Some bullies try to harm others by ignoring or embarrassing them.
2. Physical Bullying: Slapping, hitting, poking and punching
3. Relational Bullying: the most difficult to detect. It is the systematic diminishment of a bullied child's sense of self through ignoring, isolating, excluding or shunning. An act of omission joined with rumor becomes a powerful bullying tool. i.e. "stay away from him he has cooties". This is used to alienate and reject i.e. eye rolling, snickers and hostile body language.
4. Cyber bullying: Through internet

Impact Bullying has on Students

Fear: Bullies make everyone afraid, even those who are not targets. No one knows who will be bullied next.

Shame: Feelings of worthlessness and powerless.

Hopelessness: Students may lose faith that their world is safe.

Violence: Students may carry weapons to school for protection

Loss of freedom: students may avoid certain places or activities. Students may have limited enjoyment in school.

Absence from School: Students may stop attending or drop out.

Depression & Thoughts of Suicide: Bullying can leave students very depressed and can lead to them having thoughts of self harm.

Ways to prevent Bullying

Teach compassion, empathy and perspective taking.

Intervene and respond to any statements of concern. If you believe your student is being bullied, please discuss with school counselors.

Discuss how to make friends and become part of a group & how to relate to others in a positive way.

Pay attention and stay involved.

Be conscious of the messages you give your student and remember you are a model for teaching empathy and perspective taking. What you do and say makes a big difference in a young person's life

Students need help from adults. They are learning to handle arguments and avoiding fights on their own, but it takes time to learn those skills. While they are learning, students need adults to keep them safe from harm.

Use of humor

Agree with the bully, an approach that only works for certain children in certain situations.

Be assertive

State law requires school to inform students how to report bullying

Bullies need to learn strategies to control their anger and their tendency to blame others for their problems. Victims need interventions that help them develop more positive self view that teach them not to blame themselves for the harassment.

Helpful Skills to Remember....

Talk with your Student & Listen; with your Eyes and your Mind: Listen to their dreams, ideas and fears. Listen to content and feelings. Use reflective listening by acknowledging their words and label their feelings. Try to understand what their world is like. If they share concerns or problems, ask what she or he would like to have happen.

Encourage them: Support them in their efforts, whether they succeed or fail. Spending time with them each week tells them you value and care about them. Encourage their own ideas to solve the problem. Encourage them to seek out other adults they trust.

Empathize: Acknowledge feelings, be non-judgmental, focus on how your student feels and what solutions may help.

Clarify: To gain a better understanding of the issues at hand. Ask questions to search for information, avoid labels, and restate the problem to ensure understanding.

Problem Solve and find a Workable Solution: Convey a desire to work together, explore solutions together, and involve school staff in decision making when necessary. Teach problem solving skills by practicing them and asking them thinking questions.