Maryland School Mental Health Alliance*
Bullying and Bullying Prevention
Information for Teachers and School Personnel

Definition

Bullying may be physical or verbal. Teasing, ignoring, and intentionally hurting another child are all types of bullying. Harassment and sexual harassment are also considered forms of bullying. Bullies may be large and aggressive, but they also could be small and cunning**.**   Victims of bullying have poor self-confidence and typically react to threats by avoiding the bully. Both bullies and their victims make up a fringe group within schools. Those children who bully want power over others. Both bullies and their victims feel insecure in school. Boys typically bully by using physical intimidation; girls bully in a less obvious manner by using social intimidation to exclude others from peer interactions.

Why do we care?

When compared to their developmental peers:
- Students who bully their peers are more likely to react aggressively to conflict in the classroom.
- Students who bully their peers are more likely to engage in disruptive behavior.
- Students bullied by their peers are more likely to display signs of depression.
- Students bullied by their peers are less likely to gain acceptance by classmates.
- Students bullied by their peers are more likely to bring a weapon with them to school.

What can we do about it?

- **Model pro-social behavior that asserts the self-worth of each individual student.** Explain to students the balance between appearing too passive and acting too aggressive towards others.
- **Actively observe student behavior in the classroom.** Do certain people always sit on the fringes of the classroom? What students almost never participate in class discussion?
- **Speak with parents to see if additional stressors at home contribute to the bullying dynamic.** Is the child the victim of abuse or neglect? If you think this could be a possibility, refer them to the school clinician or other outside mental health provider.
- **Include discussions of conflict-resolution in your lesson plan.** Find creative ways to engage all students in group work during class time.
- **Ask school clinicians to present on consequences of bullying.** Explain to students the negative cycle of bullying and how it can have fatal consequences.
- **Become familiar with the bullying prevention curriculum in your school.** In Maryland, state law requires that all public schools include a bullying prevention component within their curriculum. See Maryland State Department of Education website for more information: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/studentschoolsvcs/student_services_alt/bullying/

Helpful Forms and Handouts

- AACAP Facts for Families - Bullying: http://www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/80.htm.

- Centre for Children and Families in the Justice System – Bullying, Information for Parents and Teachers: http://www.lfcc.on.ca/bully.htm.

- Stop Bullying Packet: http://www.kidscape.org.uk/assets/downloads/ksstopbullying.pdf.

- Bullying Fact Sheet: http://www.childline.org.uk/pdfs/info-bullying-parents.pdf.

- Guide for Teachers and Administrators: http://www.police.govt.nz/service/yes/nobully/.

Additional Resources

Cohen, A., & Canter, A. (2003). Bullying: Facts for parents and teachers. *National Association of School Psychologists*. Retrieved February 10, 2006 from NASP website http://www.naspcenter.org/factsheets/bullying_fs.html.

Levy, B.M. (2004). Name calling and teasing: Strategies for parents and teachers. *National Association of School Psychologists.* Retrieved February 10, 2006 from NASP website http://www.naspcenter.org/pdf/name-calling%20template%209_04.pdf.

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