

# BULLYING

***A Preventable Threat  
to Our Children***

**Bullying unnecessarily  
traumatizes  
millions of children and youth  
every year.**

# FACTS ABOUT BULLYING

- Bullying is a common form of violence in our society.
- Between 15 and 30 percent of students are bullies or victims.
- A study of over 15,000 6-10<sup>th</sup> graders estimates that
  - 3.7 million youths engage in moderate or serious bullying each year.
  - more than 3.2 million are victims of moderate or serious bullying each year.

(American Medical Association, 2001)

# FACTS ABOUT BULLYING

- Bullying among younger students is also common:
  - Between 19 and 27% of boys in grades 4-6 reported being bullied in the past 3 months\*
  - Between 23 and 26% of girls reported being bullied in the past 3 months\*
  - \*Olweus, D., Limber, S. & Mihalic, S.F. (1999). Blueprints for Violence Prevention, Book Nine: Bullying Prevention Program. Boulder, CO: Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence.

**Preventing bullying must be a  
top priority for parents and  
schools!**

# BULLY

- Repeatedly directs physical, verbal or psychological aggression or harassment towards others who cannot defend themselves, with the goal of gaining power or dominating another individual.
- More prevalent in boys than girls, though this difference decreases when considering indirect aggression (such as verbal threats).

# VICTIM

- Repeatedly is exposed to aggression from peers in the form of physical attacks, verbal assaults, or psychological abuse.
- More likely to be boys and weaker (physically and socially) than peers.
- Generally do not have many, if any good friends and may display poor social skills and academic difficulties in school.

# BYSTANDER

- Stands by and watches as another student is the victim of bullying.
- Does nothing to intervene in the situation even though they experience discomfort.
- Generally motivated by a fear of becoming a victim themselves if they stand up for the victim.
- May even encourage the bullying by egging the bully on.



**Bullying affects a child's ability  
to be successful in school.**

# FACTS ABOUT BULLYING

- Being a bully or victim is associated with **school drop-out, poor psychosocial adjustment, criminal activity**, and other negative long-term consequences.
- Both boys and girls can be bullies and victims.
- Bullying involves a **spectrum of aggressive behaviors** that ranges from overt acts of physical violence to more subtle (yet equally destructive) patterns of verbal or relational cruelty.

# MORE FACTS ABOUT BULLYING

- Nearly 25% of teachers report that they **do not think it is necessary to intervene** in bullying.
- Over two-thirds of students believe that **schools respond poorly to bullying**, with a high percentage of students believing that adult help is infrequent and ineffective.

# WHERE DOES BULLYING OCCUR?

- Bullying is two to three times more likely to occur at school as on the way to and from school.
- Bullying takes place:
  - in the classroom,
  - on the playground,
  - in hallways,
  - in gyms,
  - in locker rooms, and
  - in bathrooms.

**Children need to believe that  
adults will protect them!**

# WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

- Establish clear consistent consequences for bullying behavior that all children understand.
  - Incorporate positive behavioral interventions
  - Clearly define unacceptable behavior
  - Do not rely solely on punishment
  - Include loss of privileges or other consequences for bullying behavior

# WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

- **Institute school-wide discipline plans** that address behavior and its underlying causes.
  - Involve the entire school community, including students and parents.
  - Reinforce the values of empathy, caring, respect, fairness, and personal responsibility.
  - Place this plan prominently throughout the school to serve as a reminder.

# WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

- **Train all school personnel** to prevent and intervene with bullying.
  - Teachers
  - Administrators
  - Support personnel
  - Bus drivers, playground monitors, after-school program supervisors
- Maintain a focus on supervision.



# WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

- **Never ignore bullying behaviors**
  - Intervene immediately when bullying occurs.
  - Model appropriate behaviors.
  - Praise children when they do the right thing.
  - Offer children alternatives to bullying.

# WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

- **Teach children to work together.**
  - Encourage children to stand up to a bully or reach out to excluded peers.
  - Teach children that being a silent bystander enables bullying to continue.
  - Celebrate acts of kindness.
  - Reinforce the availability of adult support.
  - Transform the “silent majority” into a “caring majority”.

# WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

- Distinguish between “**ratting**” and “**reporting.**”
  - Many adolescents do not want to get their peers in trouble, particularly if the bully is popular.
  - Ensure confidentiality.
  - Establish a non-threatening way for students to report bullying.
  - Identify which staff handle bullying issues. **But, all staff should be trained and responsible.**
  - Make it clear that students can contact any trusted adult.

# WHAT SCHOOLS CAN DO

- **Be visible and vigilant.**
  - Common areas: hallways, cafeterias, locker rooms, playgrounds
  - Be aware of behavior on the bus and on the way to and from school for children who walk—these can be important parts of a child's school day.

## Create a culture in which:

- Adults stop all bullying immediately.
- All students learn positive behaviors.
- All students, parents, and staff become part of the anti-bullying solution.
- The needs of individual students are met.

# WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- **Be aware** of changes in your child's behavior or attitudes.
  - Bullied children give signals that something is wrong.
  - Note withdrawal, reluctance to go to school, physical symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches, or problems sleeping.
  - Talk to your child about his or her concerns.
  - Reassure them that you will work with the school to stop the bullying behavior.

# WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- **Inform** the school if your child is being bullied.
  - Become involved in school programs to counteract bullying.
  - Volunteer at the school to get first-hand knowledge of the school environment and your child's peer group.

# WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- **Teach** children strategies to counter bullying.
  - Stand up for themselves verbally, by saying “I don’t like what you said or did” or “You can say whatever you want, but it is not true”.
  - Walk away from the bully.
  - Use humor.



# WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Teach children to:
  - Think of positive images or statements about themselves to bolster self-esteem.
  - Get help from an adult.
  - Stay out of hidden corners and within sight of adult supervisors.
  - Stay with a group of friends.
  - Avoid provoking the bully – lots of bullying is “payback”.

# WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- **Praise** children for appropriate social behaviors.
  - Model interactions that do not include bullying or aggression.
  - Catch your child doing something good and offer positive reinforcement.
  - Encourage children to support their peers.
  - Monitor television and video games.

# WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- **Foster** positive social relationships and activities.
  - Help your child identify peers with whom they get along.
  - Suggest things they can do together.
  - Find a variety of activities that your child enjoys and does well. This can help build self-esteem and confidence.

# WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- **Use** alternatives to physical punishment.
  - Children who are spanked too harshly or too often learn that physical aggression is okay.
  - More effective consequences for inappropriate behavior include removal of privileges or addition of extra chores.

# WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- **Supervise** children at all times.
  - Intervene as bullying behavior is happening.
  - Have the child practice alternative behaviors.

# WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- **Contact** your school psychologist or counselor if you are concerned about your child or want more information.