

Bullying Defined

What is it bullying? Is it just kids being mean to each other? How does understanding and defining what bullying is help guide the ways in which we address bullying prevention – and create a culture of caring rather than cruelty?

Log on to <http://connectwithkids.com/category/blog/> and watch a video segment about bullying prevention. It addresses a recent news story about a Wisconsin television news anchor that responded to viewer criticism of her weight.

Use the following questions and activity to guide a discussion in your classroom or at home about bullying, the power of the media and the role that each of us can play to create a culture of caring in our schools, homes communities.

What We Know

- According to the 2008–2009 School Crime Supplement of the National Center for Education Statistics and Bureau of Justice Statistics, 28% of students in grades 6–12 experienced bullying.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System, 20% of students in grades 9–12 experienced bullying.
- Bullying is generally defined as **“repeated physical, verbal, sexual, or psychological attacks or intimidation by one individual who is perceived as being physically or psychologically stronger than another.** Said in a more concise way – bullying has four elements:
 - Pain:** Someone is physically, psychologically, or sexually hurting someone else.
 - Power:** The person who is doing the bullying is perceived as more powerful and is usually attempting to wield some power over the victim.
 - Persistence:** Generally the bullying is persistent, which means it happens more than once – it’s a repeated act.
 - Permission:** Usually someone else knows about it and is allowing it to happen. A bully almost always has an audience.
- The behavior of bullying is nothing new. Aggression is a natural part of human nature that starts when we are very young. But if left unchecked the consequences can be critical – causing serious harm to individuals, schools, communities and society at large.

Discussion Questions

- Do you think Jennifer Livingston was bullied by the comment she received from a viewer? Why or why not?
- How do you define bullying? Why do you think bullying is such a concern and problem in our schools and society? How has technology, like email and social media, changed the nature of bullying?
- Bullying is a repetitive power play. Who has the power in this story?

Bullying Prevention Activity

It's Quotable

PROJECT AND PURPOSE

Participants will select a quotation in order to think about bullying beyond the current timeframe and in a broader societal context.

PROCEDURE

1. Begin the discussion by saying that bullying is not a new issue. You might share a personal story or reflection or memory from your own school experiences, or perhaps a current workplace or social situation to illustrate that bullying is not confined to the childhood and teenage years.
2. Write the following quotes on the board or share them on a handout. Ask each student to select a quote. Ask that each student write a personal interpretation/reaction to the comment and write a short paragraph about the individual and his or her role in society, so that the comment may be placed in context.
3. Finally, ask the students to imagine they are to be quoted on bullying today. What would they say?

Quotes on Bullying...

“When a resolute young fellow steps up to the great bully, the world, and takes him boldly by the beard, he is often surprised to find that it comes off in his hands, and that is was only tied on to scare away the timid adventurers.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Courage is fire, and bullying is smoke.”

Benjamin Disraeli

“I've been actually really very pleased to see how much awareness was raised around bullying, and how deeply it affects everyone. You know, you don't have to be the loser kid in high school to be bullied. Bullying and being picked on comes in so many different forms.”

Lady Gaga

“A lot of people are afraid to tell the truth, to say no. That's where toughness comes into play. Toughness is not being a bully. It's having backbone.”

Robert Kiyosaki

“Never be bullied into silence. Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life, but define yourself.”

Harvey S. Firestone

“True courage is cool and calm. The bravest of men have the least of a brutal, bullying insolence, and in the very time of danger are found the most serene and free.”

Lord Shaftsbury