

# Best Practices in Bullying Prevention: Components of Effective Practice at the School Level.

Center for Safe Schools  
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## Center for Safe Schools

The mission of the Center for Safe Schools is to provide schools with resources, training and technical assistance to create and maintain safe, productive learning environments.



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## Essential questions

- What is bullying?
- What are the impacts of bullying?
- What are the components of effective School-based bullying prevention?
- What is the connection between Bullying Prevention and social and emotional learning?
- Why are school-wide approaches and skills-based approaches important?



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## Bullying



- Unwanted aggressive behavior(s)
- Observed or perceived power imbalance
- Repeated or likely to be repeated
- Inflict harm or distress

Source: Center for Disease Control and Prevention




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## Types of bullying



- Direct bullying
  - Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, taunting, teasing, degrading racial or sexual comments, threatening, obscene gesture.
- Indirect bullying
  - Getting another person to hurt someone, Spreading rumors, deliberate exclusion from a group or activity.
- Cyberbullying
  - Use of technology to name-call, tease and/or insult, harass, threaten, intimidate, spread rumors and gossip, exclude targets from a group, rating sites.




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## Children who bully



### Myth

Children who bully are outcasts or loners with few social skills.

### Reality

Children who bully are not socially isolated. Usually they have peers who support them.




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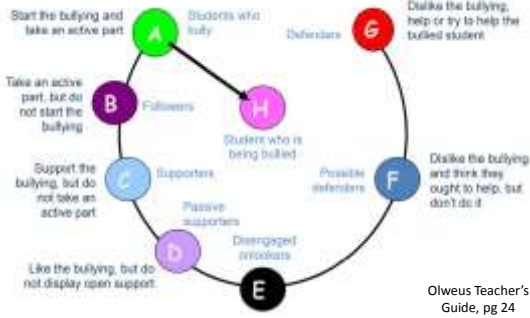
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### What roles do children play in bullying situations?




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### Impacts of Bullying Behavior

Bullying affects children who are the *targets*, the *child who bullies* and the *bystander* who witnesses the bullying. Research indicates that impacts can follow children into adulthood.

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### Children who are bullied

- Bullied children are more likely to:**
- Want to avoid going to school.
  - Have higher absenteeism rates.
  - Say they dislike school; receive lower grades.
  - Have health consequences, e.g. headache, sleep disturbances, depression, tense, anxiety, feeling unhappy.

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### Children Who Bully

Children who bully are more likely to be engaged in other antisocial, violent or troubling behavior.

Both bullies and targets are at greater risk of depression than students who are not directly involved in bullying.




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### Impacts on Bystanders

- Feel afraid.
- Feel powerless to change things.
- Feel guilty.
- Feel diminished empathy for victims.




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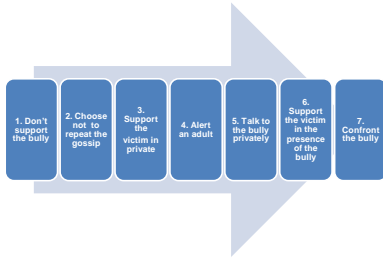
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### Bystander continuum of courage

Fried & Fried, 1996




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### Factors that influence adults' responses to bullying



- Awareness/recognition of the behavior
- Skills/training in how to intervene
- Feelings of efficacy
- Adults' own experiences with bullying

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### Factors that influence children's reactions to bullying



- Knowledge/Awareness
- Quality of relationships/social support
- Social climate of the school or setting
- Specific social-emotional skills and competencies

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## Social-Emotional Learning Core Competencies



www.casel.org




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## What is Social-Emotional Learning?

The process through which children and adults acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills they need to:

- Recognize and manage their emotions
- Set and achieve positive goals
- Demonstrate caring and concern for others
- Establish and maintain positive relationships
- Make responsible decisions

An underlying premise of SEL is that emotions influence what and how children learn and that caring relationships provide the foundation for lifelong success.

www.casel.org




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## Social-Emotional Characteristics of a Child Who is Bullied

Research suggests that many students who are targets of bullying situations :

- Demonstrate ineffective problem-solving in conflict situations;
- Experience feelings of emotional distress (anxiety & depression)
- Are perceived as vulnerable, submissive, insecure and/or different in a bad way;
- Report few friends or social isolation.
- Are at-risk of re-victimization due to social/interpersonal skill deficits.




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### Social-Emotional Characteristics of a Child who Bullies

Research suggests that many students who bully others:

- have difficulty regulating their emotions
- are perceived as aggressive and domineering by peers and teachers
- lack the ability to empathize or display empathy
- do not consider the impact of their actions on others in advance
- possess positive attitudes toward violence and anti-social behavior
- often misinterpret social interactions, viewing an ambiguous situation as hostile/adversarial




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### Social-Emotional Characteristics of a Child Who Witnesses Bullying

According to research, the following factors encourage bystander intervention

- feelings of guilt (empathy)
- belief in personal responsibility and
- desire for reparation for the victim

Bystanders with social-emotional skills, who are able to empathize and take the perspective of the victim are more likely to intervene




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### 9 Research-Based Indicators of Effective Bullying Prevention Practice in Schools




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**Indicator #1: Building Capacity for Action/Sustainability**

- Administrative commitment
- Sufficient time and resources
- Plan for sustainability
- Monitor fidelity and address strategies
- Address organizational culture and barriers to change




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**Indicator #2: Proactive Policies, Procedures, & Practices**

- Bullying policy is regularly reviewed with staff and students
- Procedures related to bullying, harassment and suspected bullying are understood and applied by all adults
- Pro-social norms and anti-bullying rules posted in all classrooms
- Active adult supervision
- Use of nonpunitive classroom management strategies




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**Indicator #3: Comprehensive, Multi-Tiered Framework for a Safe and Supportive School**

- Building-level leadership team focused on fostering a positive school climate
- Use of data collection systems re: bullying and peer aggression
- Universal (all school) programming to promote positive peer relations and bystander engagement
- Small group and targeted interventions for children who are bullied
- Targeted interventions for aggressive students
- Link to SAP process




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### Indicator #4: Family Involvement

- Include information about bullying, its prevention and school procedures during parent-teacher conferences
- Involve parents on school climate teams
- Provide parent trainings/topical meetings to address specific needs
- Proactive work with parents whose children are affected




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### Indicator #5: Evidence-based Strategies and Programs

- Universal social-emotional programming
  - Build empathy
  - Reduce aggression/impulsivity
  - Relationships skills
  - Bystander skills
  - Social problem-solving
- Improved supervision
- Disciplinary measures that provide opportunities for learning
- Well-researched Tier-2 interventions




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### Indicator #6: Student and Staff Training

- Initial in-depth training for all staff
- Yearly professional development focused on bullying prevention, systems and procedures
- Class time dedicated to explicit bullying prevention training of students
- Training to support selected evidence-based program




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**Indicator #7: Awareness Building Strategies**

- Host assemblies and conferences on the school's bullying prevention efforts
- Communicate via school website, newsletters, emails, etc.
- Work with local media to educate community




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**Indicator #8: Peer Engagement/Social Support Strategies**

- Extracurricular student groups focused on supporting inclusion and pro-social norms
- Explicit training of student leaders
  - Communication skills
  - Conflict resolution
  - Bystander strategies
- Mentoring programs




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**Indicator #9: School-Community Engagement**

- Establish relationships with key community stakeholders and service providers
- Make efforts to align practices of schools and OST providers
- Identify community supports that may be accessed by students affected by bullying




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## School climate and BP



Positive school climate – a necessary component of bullying prevention.

A positive climate can reduce stress therefore improving learning and behavioral performance.



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## Contact Information



Center for Safe Schools  
[www.safeschools.info](http://www.safeschools.info)  
(717) 763-1661

References available upon request



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