

Bullying: What It Is and What We Can Do



Kathleen P. Allen, Ph. D.

Alberti Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention | University at Buffalo
and
Impact Training

alberticenter@buffalo.edu
katyallen@rochester.rr.com

gse.buffalo.edu/alberticenter

Medina Central School District – Parent Presentation
February 27, 2014

What is Bullying?

Unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths that involves an **observed or perceived power imbalance** and is **repeated multiple times (or is highly likely to be repeated)**

Bullying may inflict **harm or distress** on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm.



Types of Bullying

- Physical bullying
 - punching, shoving, acts that hurt people or their belongings
- Verbal bullying
 - name calling, making offensive remarks
- Social/relational bullying
 - spreading rumors, excluding, ganging up
- Cyberbullying
 - sending insulting messages, pictures or threats by e-mail, text messaging, tweeting, Internet posts

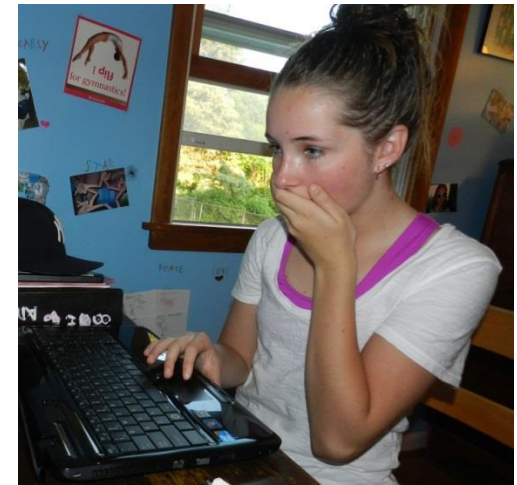


The “Content” of Bullying

- Weight
- Size
- Appearance
- Mannerisms
- Attire/clothing/accessories
- Gender/real or perceived sexual orientation
- Race/ethnicity
- Religious affiliation/practices
- Cultural practices
- Socio-economic status
- Place of residence
- Ability/lack of ability

Why Students Bully: *It is Rewarding*

- Boredom
- Entertainment
- Retaliation
- Expression of contempt or dislike
- Manipulation of relationships to suit their needs
- Enhancement or acquisition of social status
- Enjoyment of the use or misuse of power
- Enforcement of group norms



Causes/Predictors of Bullying

- Types of parenting: overly authoritarian or overly permissive
 - Harsh punishments
 - Sibling bullying
 - Few rules; no support
- Aggressive environments that reward aggressive behavior
- Callous and unemotional personality
- Fragile but high self-esteem (narcissistic)
 - Sensitive to criticism

Not Everything is Bullying!

Being rude:

Inadvertently saying or doing something that hurts someone else

Being mean:

Purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone else
(once or twice)

Conflict: Oppositional interactions, disagreements, or differences of opinions where power is not used to exploit or manipulate anyone, usually resolved through prosocial means, but can become aggressive ('normal').

Not Everything is Bullying!

Aggression: Behavior that is intentionally hurtful, that does cause harm.

Drama: A social interaction or series of interactions characterized by overreaction, excessive emotionality, prolongation, involvement of extraneous individuals, temporary importance, and inflated relevance.

Fun Teasing vs. Mean Teasing: Teasing is an indirect way of sending a message. It is a form of communication that includes aggression, humor, and ambiguity. Fun teasing is always reciprocal and positive. Mean teasing is one sided and negative.

Stand Up If This Is Bullying

Two friends, Asher and Aaron, are working on a class project and they disagree about how to divide up the work. Aaron says “You’re such a loser; I don’t want to work with you.” The next day in school, the two barely speak to each other.

Brittany is very popular, and many of the girls want to be just like her. Brittany becomes friends with the new, quiet girl (Sharon), but then quickly “drops” her. Brittany tells her friends to ignore Sharon when she talks to them. Brittany tweets to several boys that Sharon likes them, when Sharon never said this.

Stand Up If This Is Bullying

Joe is always joking – walking down the hall and burping in people’s faces and teasing (“Mama’s boy,” “Wimp”). Other students have learned to give it right back to him.

Joe (the one who likes to joke), starts calling Trey a “fag.” Trey tells him to cut it out, but Joe continues to do it in class, in the hallways, and outside of school. Trey starts taking alternate routes to school and class to avoid Joe. When the principal addresses it with Joe, he says that Trey just can’t take a joke.

Why Is It a Problem?

➤ It is common

➤ 1 in 3 have been involved in bullying at some point

➤ It is hurtful

➤ Low self-esteem, avoidance of school or social situations, anxiety, depression, PTSD, suicidal thoughts and attempts

➤ School problems, relationship problems, rule-breaking behavior



Possible Signs of Bullying Others

- Refers to others negatively (wimp, loser)
- Lacks empathy
- Strong need to get own way,
to have power and control
- Hostile/defiant attitude
- A sense of entitlement
- Angers easily
- Denies involvement or blames others when behavior is addressed
- Has friends



Possible Signs of Being Bullied

- Unexplained illnesses, cuts/bruises; increased trips to the nurse
- Not wanting to go to school or be in social situations
- Changes in use of social media or distressed behaviors after using social media
- Any change in behavior
 - Not interested in doing things used to like doing
 - Withdrawn
 - Change in friend group



Signs of a Bully-Victim

- Displays aggressive behaviors
- Lacks social awareness or savvy
- Looks like a bully, but usually loses
- Is unpopular
- Has few friends
- May bully to retaliate against bullying

If Your Child is Being Bullied

- Listen & empathize
 - “Thank you for coming to me. Tell me what happened”
 - “It sounds like that was really hurtful” (do not minimize it)
- Problem-solve with the child
 - UNHELPFUL
 - “You just need to....ignore it; whack him back”
 - “I’m so mad I am going to....call my lawyer; give the school a piece of my mind...”
 - HELPFUL
 - Find out what is happening and what has been tried
 - Problem-solve strategies that may help: report it, surrounding self with trusted peers and/or adults, use assertive communication, build confidence, deflect or make a joke

Supporting Students Who are Bullied

- Enhance social support from peers and significant adults
- Identify qualities that may make them vulnerable and intervene accordingly
 - Support ways to make friends
 - Teach assertiveness skills
- Encourage involvement in an activity in which he or she can experience success
- “Check in” regularly
- Monitor for signs of depression, suicide, or violence and refer to mental health professional

If Your Child is Bullying Others

- Try to figure out why...
 - To be or stay popular or powerful?
 - To go along with the crowd?
 - Because of being bullied?
- Send clear, firm, and supportive messages that the behavior is not OK and that it needs to change (meaningful consequences)
- Work with school or community professionals to plan for change
 - Involve child in developing alternate behaviors or ideas to gain leadership and “social status” that don’t involve bullying others
 - Involve child in figuring out ways to get needs met without supporting bullying or using aggression

Supporting Students Who Bully

- Establish clear norms against bullying
- Increase empathy and perspective taking, if that is lacking
- Teach problem-solving to manage emotions
- Provide opportunities for the positive use of power
- Assess for other problems (e.g., drugs, suicidality)

Tips for Parents

- Messages
- Model
- Teach
- Establish Rules
- Listen
- Ask Questions
- Practice Amnesty
- Problem Solve Instead of Blame
- Collaborate with Educators
- Above All: Be Reasonable

See handout

Read, Watch, and Talk About it!

gse.buffalo.edu/albertcenter

HOME | ABOUT US | FACULTY & RESEARCH | ADMISSIONS | ACADEMIC PROGRAMS | CONTINUING EDUCATION

GSE Home > Departments & Centers > Albert Center for Bullying Abuse Prevention > Resources

- Albert Center - Home
- About Us
- Projects
- Events
- Presentations
- NYS Dignity Act Training
- In the News
- Publications

Resources

- For Educators
- For Kids and Teens
- For Parents
- For Researchers
- Early Career Award
- Links
- Get Help Now
- Contact Us

RESOURCES



[For Educators](#)



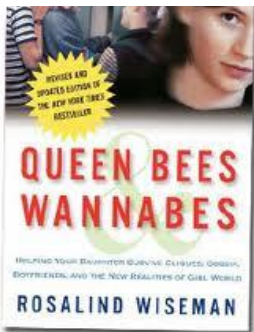
[For Kids and Teens](#)



[For Parents](#)



[For Researchers](#)



RODALIND WISEMAN

DEAR BULLY
MEGAN KEISLEY HALL TAMI LEWIS

BULLYING

at School and Online

Quick Facts for Parents

For Parents



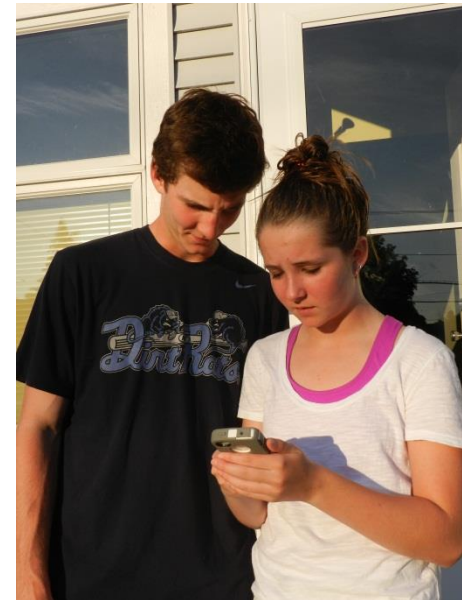
Free, online resource


education.com

<http://www.education.com/static/ebook/education-com-bullying-ebook.pdf>

If Your Child Sees Bullying

- Be an upstander, not a bystander
 - Don't join in... speak up if it is safe to do so
 - Band together in support of the target
 - Become a buffer between the target and those who bully
 - Tell an adult about the bullying
 - Tattling/ratting = telling an adult to get someone in trouble
 - Telling/reporting = telling an adult because someone's behavior is unsafe or hurtful to another
 - **Reach out to isolated peers; offer support!**



**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,
committed citizens can change the world.
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”**

Margaret Mead



Visit us: gse.buffalo.edu/alberticenter

Follow us: [@UB_BullyPrevCtr](https://twitter.com/UB_BullyPrevCtr)

Like us: www.facebook.com/UBBullyPrevCtr

Presenter Contact Information

Katy Allen, Ph.D.

Impact Training
58 Nobleman Ct.
Fairport, NY 14450

(585) 223-3531 (home/office)
(585) 509-4893 (cell)

katyallen@rochester.rr.com



Questions?

