

Students' Perspectives on Cyber Bullying

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Abstract

1 The aim of this study was to gain a better understanding of the impact of cyber bullying on students and the possible need for prevention messages targeting students, educators, and parents. A total of 148 middle and high school students were interviewed during focus groups held at two middle and two high schools in a public school district. The focus groups were approximately 45 minutes in length. Students were divided by gender and asked a series of scripted questions by a same-gender student assistance counselor. We found that students' comments during the focus groups suggest that students—particularly females—view cyber bullying as a problem, but one rarely discussed at school, and that students do not see the school district personnel as helpful resources when dealing with cyber bullying. Students are currently experiencing the majority of cyber bullying instances outside of the school day; however there is some impact at school. Students were able to suggest some basic strategies for dealing with cyber bullying, but were less likely to be aware of strategies to request the removal of objectionable websites, as well as how to respond as a helpful bystander when witnessing cruel online behavior. We conclude that school districts should address cyber bullying through a combination of policies and information that are shared with students and parents. Schools should include cyber bullying as part of their bullying prevention strategies and include classroom lessons that address reporting and bystander behavior. © 2007 Society for Adolescent Medicine. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Cyber bullying; Internet; Prevention; Students

2 Young people are very sophisticated users of technology and often lead the way in adapting new technologies to everyday use. Their technological savvy, combined with the ability to be online without much adult supervision, can lead to behaviors that are high risk. Such high risk behaviors include exposure to pornography, drugs, violence, and cyber bullying (i.e., using the Internet to harass and bully others). In a study involving 3767 students in grades 6–8, Kowalski and Limber found that although 78% of the students surveyed had no experience with cyber bullying, 11% were victims of cyber bullying, 7% were bully/victims, and 4% were bullies [1].

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- 3 In addition to rates of cyber bullying reported by youth, it is helpful to gain an understanding of how concerned youth are about cyber bullying and whether or not the prevention of cyber bullying is being addressed in the school and community setting. This article will discuss findings from focus groups conducted in the Cobb County School District of Marietta, Georgia. Despite frequent offcampus origination, some cyber bullying incidents come to the attention of school district personnel because they are disruptive to the school day. The rationale for the focus groups was to gain a better understanding of the impact of cyber bullying on students and the possible need for prevention messages targeting students, educators, and parents. In addition students' responses would provide input for policy development governing students' use of the Internet and other mobile devices on campus.

Methods

- 4 Approximately 150 students participated in focus groups at two middle schools and two high schools. Although income demographic level information was not collected for individual students, middle and high schools were selected in part based on diverse socioeconomic (SES) data. One high school had a rate of 13% of students eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches, and the other had a rate of 42%. The two middle schools had free/reduced-cost lunch rates of 25% and 48% respectively. Student participants' ages ranged from 12–17 years. The students were divided by gender during the focus groups. Cyber bullying was defined for the students as "using the Internet or other digital technologies such as cellular phones and personal digital assistants to be intentionally mean or to harass others."

Results

- 5 Students in the groups indicated that they were very familiar with technology. The majority of them own cellular phones and have Internet access at home. A majority of the female students indicated that cyber bullying was a problem at their schools, although male students were somewhat less likely to agree that this was a problem. Students indicated that the majority of the incidents occurred outside of the school day, with the exception of cyber bullying via text messaging. Students indicated that they were unlikely to report cyber bullying to the adults at school, as it frequently occurs via cellular phone use, and it is against the school policy to have cellular phones on during school hours. When students were asked if they placed text messages or used their cellular phone during the school day, the majority of the students interviewed indicated that they did despite the policy. Students also indicated that they did not think the adults at school could help them if they were experiencing cyber bullying. Students were more likely to report cyber bullying to parents than adults at school, particularly if the bullying was threatening in nature. However students also indicated that they were reluctant to report cyber bullying to parents because they feared the loss of online privileges.

- 6 When asked whether they could circumvent the school filters to access MySpace or other social networking sites, e-mail, or instant messaging programs, students were able to describe ways to effectively circumvent the school district filters. This knowledge was more apparent at the high school level, but some middle school students were aware of ways to circumvent filters. The students indicated that because no one else was on MySpace or instant messaging at the same time, there was not much incentive to go to these sites during the school day.
- 7 Students were able to suggest strategies for dealing with cyber bullying, such as to block the sender or ignore the message rather than respond in a manner that would encourage retaliation. Students were less likely to be aware of strategies to request the removal of objectionable websites, as well as how to respond as helpful bystanders when witnessing cruel online behavior.

Discussion

- 8 The focus group and interviews conducted suggest that students—particularly female students—view cyber bullying as a problem but one rarely discussed at school, and the students do not see the school district personnel as helpful resources for dealing with cyber bullying. Students are currently experiencing the majority of cyber bullying instances outside of the school day, with the possible exception of text messaging via cellular phone. It is possible that with greater ease of access to MySpace and to the Internet in general with increasingly sophisticated cellular phones, we may see an increase in cyber bullying during the school day through the use of such phones. It is recommended that school districts that allow cellular phones on campus prepare for this potential by ensuring that cellular phone policies are enforced with consistent consequences for students who use their phones during the school day. It is also recommended that school districts have parents and students read and sign the school districts' policies regarding acceptable use of technology, and accompany these policies with literature for parents on cyber bullying. Finally, schools are encouraged to adopt bullying prevention programs that include classroom lessons on cyber bullying to ensure that students understand that targeting classmates through negative messages or images online or through cellular phones is a form of bullying [2]. Classroom lessons should include steps that bystanders can take to report and respond to cyber bullying, whether it occurs on campus or in the community.

Acknowledgment

- 9 The authors acknowledge Michael Carpenter, Ph.D., of the Cobb County School District, for his assistance with student interviews for this project.

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Bullying in Schools

By Ron Banks
ERIC Digest, April 1997

- 1 Bullying in schools is a worldwide problem that can have negative consequences for the general school climate and for the right of students to learn in a safe environment without fear. Bullying can also have negative lifelong consequences—both for students who bully and for their victims. Although much of the formal research on bullying has taken place in the Scandinavian countries, Great Britain, and Japan, the problems associated with bullying have been noted and discussed wherever formal schooling environments exist.
- 2 Bullying is comprised of direct behaviors such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, and stealing that are initiated by one or more students against a victim. In addition to direct attacks, bullying may also be more indirect by causing a student to be socially isolated through intentional exclusion. While boys typically engage in direct bullying methods, girls who bully are more apt to utilize these more subtle indirect strategies, such as spreading rumors and enforcing social isolation (Ahmad and Smith 1994; Smith and Sharp 1994). Whether the bullying is direct or indirect, the key component of bullying is that the physical or psychological intimidation occurs repeatedly over time to create an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse (Batsche and Knoff 1994; Olweus 1993).

Extent of the Problem

- 3 Various reports and studies have established that approximately 15 percent of students are either bullied regularly or are initiators of bullying behavior (Olweus 1993). Direct bullying seems to increase through the elementary years, peak in the middle school/junior high school years, and decline during the high school years. However, while direct physical assault seems to decrease with age, verbal abuse appears to remain constant. School size, racial composition, and school setting (rural, suburban, or urban) do not seem to be distinguishing factors in predicting the occurrence of bullying. Finally, boys engage in bullying behavior and are victims of bullies more frequently than girls (Batsche and Knoff 1994; Nolin, Davies, and Chandler 1995; Olweus 1993; Whitney and Smith 1993).

Characteristics of Bullies and Victims

- 4 Students who engage in bullying behaviors seem to have a need to feel powerful and in control. They appear to derive satisfaction from inflicting injury and suffering on others, seem to have little empathy for their victims, and often defend their actions by saying that their victims provoked them in some way. Studies indicate that bullies often come from homes where physical punishment is used, where the children are taught to strike back physically as a way to handle problems, and where parental involvement and warmth are frequently lacking. Students who regularly display bullying behaviors are generally defiant or oppositional toward adults, antisocial, and apt to break school rules. In contrast to prevailing myths, bullies appear to have little anxiety and to possess strong self-esteem. There is little evidence to support the contention that they victimize others because they feel bad about themselves (Batsche and Knoff 1994; Olweus 1993).

- 5 Students who are victims of bullying are typically anxious, insecure, cautious, and suffer from low self-esteem, rarely defending themselves or retaliating when confronted by students who bully them. They may lack social skills and friends, and they are often socially isolated. Victims tend to be close to their parents and may have parents who can be described as overprotective. The major defining physical characteristic of victims is that they tend to be physically weaker than their peers—other physical characteristics such as weight, dress, or wearing eyeglasses do not appear to be significant factors that can be correlated with victimization (Batsche and Knoff 1994; Olweus 1993).

Consequences of Bullying

- 6 As established by studies in Scandinavian countries, a strong correlation appears to exist between bullying other students during the school years and experiencing legal or criminal troubles as adults. In one study, 60 percent of those characterized as bullies in grades 6-9 had at least one criminal conviction by age 24 (Olweus 1993). Chronic bullies seem to maintain their behaviors into adulthood, negatively influencing their ability to develop and maintain positive relationships (Oliver, Hoover, and Hazler 1994).
- 7 Victims often fear school and consider school to be an unsafe and unhappy place. As many as 7 percent of America's eighth-graders stay home at least once a month because of bullies. The act of being bullied tends to increase some students' isolation because their peers do not want to lose status by associating with them or because they do not want to increase the risks of being bullied themselves. Being bullied leads to depression and low self-esteem, problems that can carry into adulthood (Olweus 1993; Batsche and Knoff 1994).

Perceptions of Bullying

- 8 Oliver, Hoover, and Hazler (1994) surveyed students in the Midwest and found that a clear majority felt that victims were at least partially responsible for bringing the bullying on themselves. Students surveyed tended to agree that bullying toughened a weak person, and some felt that bullying "taught" victims appropriate behavior. Charach, Pepler, and Ziegler (1995) found that students considered victims to be "weak," "nerds," and "afraid to fight back." However, 43 percent of the students in this study said that they try to help the victim, 33% said that they should help but do not, and only 24 percent said that bullying was none of their business.
- 9 Parents are often unaware of the bullying problem and talk about it with their children only to a limited extent (Olweus 1993). Student surveys reveal that a low percentage of students seem to believe that adults will help. Students feel that adult intervention is infrequent and ineffective, and that telling adults will only bring more harassment from bullies. Students report that teachers seldom or never talk to their classes about bullying (Charach, Pepler, and Ziegler 1995). School personnel may view bullying as a harmless right of passage that is best ignored unless verbal and psychological intimidation crosses the line into physical assault or theft.

Intervention Programs

- 10 Bullying is a problem that occurs in the social environment as a whole. The bullies' aggression occurs in social contexts in which teachers and parents are generally unaware of the extent of the problem and other children are either reluctant to get involved or simply do not know how to help (Charach, Pepler, and Ziegler 1995). Given this situation, effective interventions must involve the entire school community rather than focus on the perpetrators and victims alone. Smith and Sharp (1994) emphasize the need to develop whole-school bullying policies, implement curricular measures, improve the schoolground environment, and empower students through conflict resolution, peer counseling, and assertiveness training. Olweus (1993) details an approach that involves interventions at the school, class, and individual levels. It includes the following components:
- 11
- An initial questionnaire can be distributed to students and adults. The questionnaire helps both adults and students become aware of the extent of the problem, helps to justify intervention efforts, and serves as a benchmark to measure the impact of improvements in school climate once other intervention components are in place.
- 12
- A parental awareness campaign can be conducted during parent-teacher conference days, through parent newsletters, and at PTA meetings. The goal is to increase parental awareness of the problem, point out the importance of parental involvement for program success, and encourage parental support of program goals. Questionnaire results are publicized.
- 13
- Teachers can work with students at the class level to develop class rules against bullying. Many programs engage students in a series of formal role-playing exercises and related assignments that can teach those students directly involved in bullying alternative methods of interaction. These programs can also show other students how they can assist victims and how everyone can work together to create a school climate where bullying is not tolerated (Sjostrom and Stein 1996).
- 14
- Other components of anti-bullying programs include individualized interventions with the bullies and victims, the implementation of cooperative learning activities to reduce social isolation, and increasing adult supervision at key times (e.g., recess or lunch). Schools that have implemented Olweus's program have reported a 50 percent reduction in bullying.

Conclusion

- 15 Bullying is a serious problem that can dramatically affect the ability of students to progress academically and socially. A comprehensive intervention plan that involves all students, parents, and school staff is required to ensure that all students can learn in a safe and fear-free environment.

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A Profile of Bullying at School

By Dan Olweus

Educational Leadership, March 2003

- 1 Bullying and victimization are on the increase, extensive research shows. The attitudes and routines of relevant adults can exacerbate or curb students' aggression toward classmates.
- 2 Bullying among schoolchildren is a very old and well-known phenomenon. Although many educators are acquainted with the problem, researchers only began to study bullying systematically in the 1970s (Olweus 1973, 1978) and focused primarily on schools in Scandinavia. In the 1980s and early 1990s, however, studies of bullying among schoolchildren began to attract wider attention in a number of other countries, including the United States.

What Is Bullying?

- 3 Systematic research on bullying requires rigorous criteria for classifying students as bullies or as victims (Olweus 1996; Solberg and Olweus, in press). How do we know when a student is being bullied? One definition is that a student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students. (Olweus 1993, p. 9)
- 4 The person who intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort on someone else is engaging in negative actions, a term similar to the definition of aggressive behavior in the social sciences. People carry out negative actions through physical contact, with words, or in more indirect ways, such as making mean faces or gestures, spreading rumors, or intentionally excluding someone from a group.
- 5 Bullying also entails an imbalance in strength (or an asymmetrical power relationship), meaning that students exposed to negative actions have difficulty defending themselves. Much bullying is proactive aggression, that is, aggressive behavior that usually occurs without apparent provocation or threat on the part of the victim.

Some Basic Facts

- 6 In the 1980s, questionnaire surveys of more than 150,000 Scandinavian students found that approximately 15 percent of students ages 8–16 were involved in bully/victim problems with some regularity—either as bullies, victims, or both bully and victim (bully-victims) (Olweus 1993). Approximately 9 percent of all students were victims, and 6–7 percent bullied other students regularly. In contrast to what is commonly believed, only a small proportion of the victims also engaged in bullying other students (17 percent of the victims or 1.6 percent of the total number of students).

- 7 In 2001, when my colleagues and I conducted a new large-scale survey of approximately 11,000 students from 54 elementary and junior high schools using the same questions that we used in 1983 (Olweus 2002), we noted two disturbing trends. The percentage of victimized students had increased by approximately 50 percent from 1983, and the percentage of students who were involved (as bullies, victims, or bully-victims) in frequent and serious bullying problems—occurring at least once a week—had increased by approximately 65 percent. We saw these increases as an indication of negative societal developments (Solberg and Olweus, in press).
- 8 The surveys showed that bullying is a serious problem affecting many students in Scandinavian schools. Data from other countries, including the United States (Nansel et al. 2001; Olweus and Limber 1999; Perry, Kusel, and Perry 1988)—and in large measure collected with my Bully/Victim Questionnaire (1983, 1996)—indicate that bullying problems exist outside Scandinavia with similar, or even higher, prevalence (Olweus and Limber 1999; Smith et al. 1999). The prevalence figures from different countries or cultures, however, may not be directly comparable. Even though the questionnaire gives a detailed definition of bullying, the prevalence rates obtained may be affected by language differences, the students' familiarity with the concept of bullying, and the degree of public attention paid to the phenomenon.
- 9 Boys bully other students more often than girls do, and a relatively large percentage of girls—about 50 percent—report that they are bullied mainly by boys. A somewhat higher percentage of boys are victims of bullying, especially in the junior high school grades. But bullying certainly occurs among girls as well. Physical bullying is less common among girls, who typically use more subtle and indirect means of harassment, such as intentionally excluding someone from the group, spreading rumors, and manipulating friendship relations. Such forms of bullying can certainly be as harmful and distressing as more direct and open forms of harassment. Our research data (Olweus 1993), however, clearly contradict the view that girls are the most frequent and worst bullies, a view suggested by such recent books as *Queen Bees and Wannabes* (Wiseman 2002) and *Odd Girl Out* (Simmons 2002).

Common Myths About Bullying

- 10 Several common assumptions about the causes of bullying receive little or no support when confronted with empirical data. These misconceptions include the hypotheses that bullying is a consequence of large class or school size, competition for grades and failure in school, or poor self esteem and insecurity. Many also believe erroneously that students who are overweight, wear glasses, have a different ethnic origin, or speak with an unusual dialect are particularly likely to become victims of bullying.

- 11 All of these hypotheses have thus far failed to receive clear support from empirical data. Accordingly, we must look for other factors to find the key origins of bullying problems. The accumulated research evidence indicates that personality characteristics or typical reaction patterns, in combination with physical strength or weakness in the case of boys, are important in the development of bullying problems in individual students. At the same time, environmental factors, such as the attitudes, behavior, and routines of relevant adults—in particular, teachers and principals—play a crucial role in determining the extent to which bullying problems will manifest themselves in a larger unit, such as a classroom or school. Thus, we must pursue analyses of the main causes of bully/victim problems on at least two different levels: individual and environmental.

Victims and the Bullying Circle

- 12 Much research has focused on the characteristics and family backgrounds of victims and bullies. We have identified two kinds of victims, the more common being the passive or submissive victim, who represents some 80–85 percent of all victims. Less research information is available about provocative victims, also called bully-victims or aggressive victims, whose behavior may elicit negative reactions from a large part of the class. The dynamics of a classroom with a provocative victim are different from those of a classroom with a submissive victim (Olweus 1978, 1993).
- 13 Bullies and victims naturally occupy key positions in the configuration of bully/victim problems in a classroom, but other students also play important roles and display different attitudes and reactions toward an acute bullying situation. Figure 1 outlines “The Bullying Circle” and represents the various ways in which most students in a classroom with bully/victim problems are involved in or affected by them (Olweus 2001a, 2001b).

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

- 14 The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program,¹ developed and evaluated over a period of almost 20 years (Olweus 1993, 1999), builds on four key principles derived chiefly from research on the development and identification of problem behaviors, especially aggressive behavior. These principles involve creating a school—and ideally, also a home—environment characterized by
- warmth, positive interest, and involvement from adults;
 - firm limits on unacceptable behavior;
 - consistent application of nonpunitive, nonphysical sanctions for unacceptable behavior or violations of rules; and
 - adults who act as authorities and positive role models.
- 15 We have translated these principles into a number of specific measures to be used at the school, classroom, and individual levels (Olweus 1993, 2001b). Figure 2 lists the set of core components that our statistical analyses and experience with the program have shown are particularly important in any implementation of the program.

FIGURE 1
The Bullying Circle
 Students' Modes of Reaction/Roles in an Acute Bullying Situation

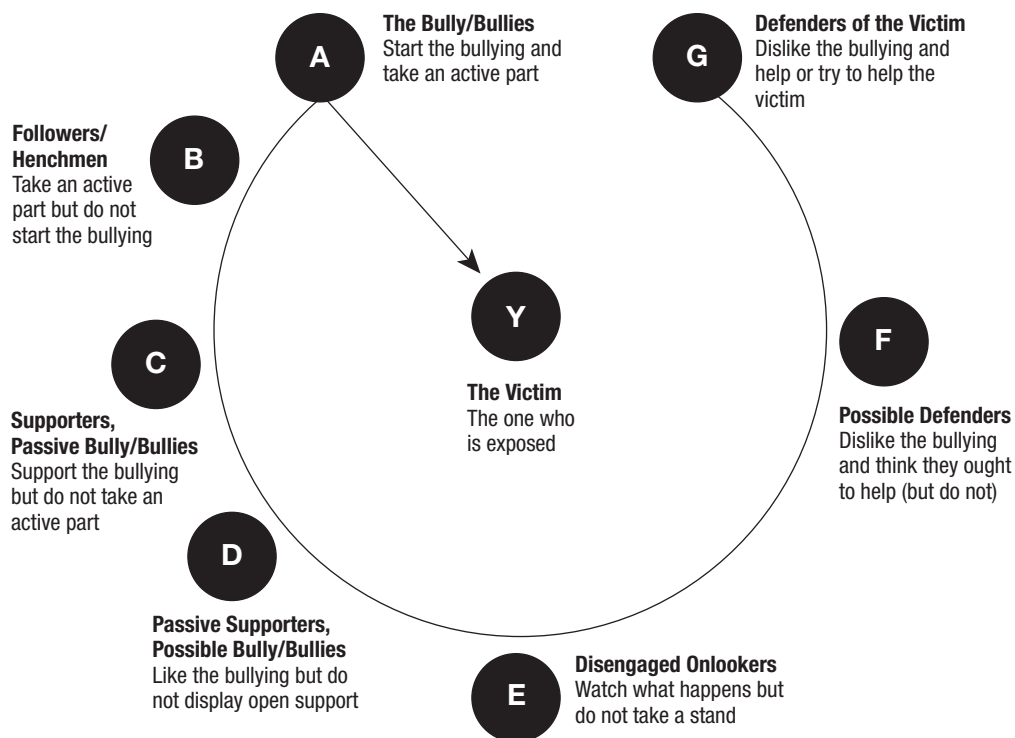


FIGURE 2
The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program

General Prerequisite

- Awareness and involvement of adults

Measures at the School Level

- Administration of the Olweus Bully/Victim Questionnaire (filled out anonymously by students)
- Formation of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee
- Training of staff and time for discussion groups
- Effective supervision during recess and lunch periods

Measures at the Classroom Level

- Classroom and school rules about bullying
- Regular classroom meetings
- Meetings with students' parents

Measures at the Individual Level

- Individual meetings with students who bully
- Individual meetings with victims of bullying
- Meetings with parents of students involved
- Development of individual intervention plans

- 16 The program's implementation relies mainly on the existing social environment. Teachers, administrators, students, and parents all play major roles in carrying out the program and in restructuring the social environment. One possible reason for this intervention program's effectiveness is that it changes the opportunity and reward structures for bullying behavior, which results in fewer opportunities and rewards for bullying (Olweus 1992).

Research-Based Evaluations

- 17 The first evaluation of the effects of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program involved data from approximately 2,500 students in 42 elementary and junior high schools in Bergen, Norway, and followed students for two and one-half years, from 1983 to 1985 (Olweus 1991, in press; Olweus and Alsaker 1991). The findings were significant:
- Marked reductions—by 50 percent or more—in bully/victim problems for the period studied, measuring after eight and 20 months of intervention.
 - Clear reductions in general antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, fighting, pilfering, drunkenness, and truancy.
 - Marked improvement in the social climate of the classes and an increase in student satisfaction with school life.
- 18 The differences between baseline and intervention groups were highly significant. The research concluded that the registered changes in bully/victim problems and related behavior patterns were likely to be a consequence of the intervention program and not of some other factor. Partial replications of the program in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany have resulted in similar, although somewhat weaker, results (Olweus and Limber, 1999; Smith and Sharp 1994).
- 19 In 1997–1998, our study of 3,200 students from 30 Norwegian schools again registered clear improvements with regard to bully/victim problems in the schools with intervention programs. The effects were weaker than in the first project, with averages varying between 21 and 38 percent. Unlike the first study, however, the intervention program had been in place for only six months when we made the second measurement. In addition, we conducted the study during a particularly turbulent year in which Norway introduced a new national curriculum that made heavy demands of educators' time and resources.
- 20 Nonetheless, the intervention schools fared considerably better than the comparison schools. Surveys of the comparison schools, which had set up anti-bullying efforts according to their own plans, showed very small or no changes with regard to "being bullied" and a 35 percent increase for "bullying other students" (Olweus, in press). Because we have not yet analyzed the questionnaire information, we cannot fully explain this result, but it is consistent with findings from a number of studies showing that inexpert interventions intended to counteract delinquent and antisocial behavior often have unexpectedly negative effects (Dishion, McCord, and Poulin 1999; Gottfredson 1987; Lipsey 1992).

- 21 In the most recent (1999–2000) evaluation of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program among approximately 2,300 students from 10 schools—some of which had large percentages of students with immigrant backgrounds—we found an average reduction by around 40 percent with regard to “being bullied” and by about 50 percent for “bullying other students” (Olweus, in press).

The Need for Evidence-Based Intervention Programs

- 22 Coping with bully/victim problems has become an official school priority in many countries, and many have suggested ways to handle and prevent such problems. But because most proposals have either failed to document positive results or have never been subjected to systematic research evaluation, it is difficult to know which programs or measures actually work and which do not. What counts is how well the program works for students, not how much the adults using the program like it.
- 23 Recently, when a U.S. committee of experts used three essential criteria (Elliott 1999) to systematically evaluate more than 500 programs ostensibly designed to prevent violence or other problem behaviors, only 11 of the programs (four of which are school-based) satisfied the specified criteria.² The U.S. Department of Justice’s office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and other sources are now providing financial support for the implementation of these evidence-based “Blueprint” programs in a number of sites.
- 24 In Norway, an officially appointed committee recently conducted a similar evaluation of 56 programs being used in Norway’s schools to counteract and prevent problem behavior (Norwegian Ministry of Education, Research, and Church Affairs 2000) and recommended without reservation only one program for further use. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is one of the 11 Blueprint programs and the program selected by the Norwegian committee.

Norway’s New National Initiative Against Bullying

- 25 In late 2000, Norway’s Department of Education and Research and Department of Children and Family Affairs decided to offer the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program on a large scale to Norwegian elementary and junior high schools over a period of several years. In building the organization for this national initiative, we have used a four-level train-the-trainer strategy of dissemination. At Norway’s University of Bergen, the Olweus Group Against Bullying at the Research Center for Health Promotion trains and supervises specially selected instructor candidates, each of whom trains and supervises key persons from a number of schools. The key persons are then responsible for leading staff discussion groups at each participating school. These meetings typically focus on key components and themes of the program (Olweus 1993, 2001b).
- 26 The training of the instructor candidates consists of 10–11 whole-day assemblies over 16 months. In between the whole-day meetings, the instructor candidates receive ongoing consultation from the Olweus Group by telephone or through e-mail.

- 27 In implementing this train-the-trainer model in the United States with financial support from the U.S. Department of Justice and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, we have made some modifications to accommodate cultural differences and practical constraints. In particular, we have reduced the number of whole-day assemblies to four or five and have granted greater autonomy to individual schools' Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committees than is typical in Norway.
- 28 So far, 75 instructor candidates have participated in training, and more than 225 schools participate in the program. Recently, Norway's government substantially increased our funding to enable us to offer the program to more schools starting in 2003.
- 29 We see Norway's national initiative as a breakthrough for the systematic, long-term, and research-based work against bully/victim problems in schools. We hope to see similar developments in other countries.

Notes

- 1 More information about the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is available at www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/model/BPPmaterials.html or by contacting sentell@clemson.edu or olweus@psych.uib.no.
- 2 The four school-based programs are Life Skills Training, Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS), the Incredible Years, and the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. For more information about the Blueprints for Violence Prevention's model programs, visit www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/model/overview.html.

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How to Handle a Bully

By Kathiann Kowalski
Current Health, September 8, 1997

Getting Along

- 1 Meanness comes in many forms, and you can stop them all.
- 2 'I don't want to talk about it!' Ted snapped. His face was scratched up when he got home from school. It seems another boy bragged he could make a 'ninja' sword by folding paper. Then he demonstrated the weapon— by lashing out at Ted.
- 3 Bullying can start at an early age and grow more intense in the teen years.
- 4 Bullying is repeated aggressive behavior or, quite simply, unprovoked meanness. It's a form of intimidation, which is behavior designed to threaten, frighten, or coerce someone.
- 5 'Bullying doesn't stop when you get out of the third grade,' says Jean O'Neil of the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC). Later, it may be called power-tripping, harassing, or disrespecting. Sexual harassment— unwanted and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature—is also a form of bullying.
- 6 When teens intimidate each other, they may attack with bats, knives, guns, or other weapons. The psychological stakes are high too. Physical assaults, vicious taunts, and exclusion from groups can—and have—led to depression and even suicide.
- 7 Intimidation peaks in junior high. It continues through high school and even into the workplace. Intimidation is not just 'boys being boys.' Studies show that girls intimidate other students at least as much as boys. Boys use more physical force. Girls rely more on teasing, taunting, or excluding others from groups.
- 8 Intimidation occurs for different reasons. Hate, prejudice, immaturity, a distorted self-image, or lack of respect can underlie harassing behavior. Some teens pick on others simply to increase their own sense of power.
- 9 In any case, bullying is caused by bullies, not their victims. No one deserves to be intimidated. Everyone has a responsibility to stop intimidation.
- 10 How you handle intimidation depends on the situation and your personal style. Don't feel you have to suffer in silence. And don't be afraid to get help when necessary.
- 11 "I'm a big fan of immediately dealing with the situation," says Lisa Lybbert at the NCPC. But dealing with the situation doesn't mean aggravating it, says Lybbert. "Escalating the situation too often leads to violence."
- 12 "There are alternatives to violence," says sixteen-year-old Jovon Hill of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. "Really think for yourself, because there are ways to get out of situations."

- 13 Here's how some teens would handle these bullying situations. How would you respond?
- 14 Suppose a teen keeps tripping you at school. "First, I would ask the student to stop," says Jovon. "Then if he or she continues, I would take it to one of the proper authorities at school."
- 15 Frances McNamara of Ventura, California, wouldn't argue with the other person. The seventeen-year-old says, "I would probably go to my counselor or my principal about it."
- 16 "I would refer it to mediation," says seventeen-year-old Gekeita Hill of Violet, Louisiana. Gekeita is a peer mediator at St. Bernard High School. She likes how the program provides a forum to talk maturely about feelings and resolve problems.
- 17 Suppose someone badmouths you or spreads rumors. "The way I handle it is [to] ignore it," says Frances. Brushing it off, laughing, or briefly telling taunters to get a life are all ways of refusing to take the bait. They keep you from feeling cowed and deprive the *bully* of any power rush.
- 18 Controlled confrontation is another strategy. "I would go to the student personally," says Jovon, "and ask if there is a problem with me or something." "If you are saying these things about me, I would like to know why," agrees Gekeita, "because I don't have a problem with you, and I don't like to make enemies."
- 19 Suppose someone demands that you hand over your jacket. If you're threatened with a weapon, hand it over. Then tell someone later. The jacket is not worth your life.
- 20 Otherwise, use good judgment. Frances and Gekeita said they'd probably object verbally and would definitely report the incident to school authorities. "I wouldn't wear an expensive jacket to school anyway," adds Gekeita.
- 21 Jovon said he'd offer to contact social services if the other person really needed a jacket. Staying calm helps him in tough situations.
- 22 Suppose a group of kids makes offensive sexual comments about your body. "I'm just going to let them know that's not on my mind at this moment," says Jovon, "and that I would really appreciate it if they would stop."
- 23 Frances might ignore minor comments. But she'd report it "if it was really offensive and really hurtful."
- 24 "I would probably go to the disciplinarian," says Gekeita. Sexual harassment violates civil rights laws, and schools have an obligation to stop it. She might also pursue peer mediation. "If they know how you feel about it and how much it's hurting you," Gekeita says, "they'd probably stop it."
- 25 Even if you're not the immediate target of a *bully*, intimidation cheapens the quality of life in your school and community. Don't let harassers have their way.
- 26 "Cut it out." "Leave them alone." A few words from you might make intimidators back down.

- 27 If you're uncomfortable speaking out directly, tell school authorities confidentially about a problem. That's what someone did after Ted was attacked with the paper knife. That got the problem resolved without revenge or reprisals.
- 28 On a broader level, get some students together to develop or revise your school's code of conduct. "Work with the administration, and set up some standards," recommends NCPC's O'Neil. One example of an important standard is: "We treat each other with respect at all times."
- 29 When students help develop school codes of conduct, everyone knows what's expected. It empowers bullied victims to stand up for themselves. And it tells bullies that intimidation won't be tolerated.

Links last updated September 8, 2004.

School Bullies Are Often Also Victims; Feeling Safe Reduces Youth Bullying

By Pamela Kan-Rice

UC Agriculture and Natural Resources News and Information Outreach,
September 2, 2003

- 1 OAKLAND, Calif.—School bullies are often themselves the victims of bullying, according to University of California Cooperative Extension researchers who conducted a study of Oakland middle school students aged eleven to fourteen.
- 2 In response to the 1999 Columbine High School shooting in Littleton, Colorado, many educators began trying to “bully-proof” their schools. UC Cooperative Extension youth development advisors Charles Go and Shelley Murdock surveyed Oakland middle school students to get a clearer picture of the bullies and their victims. Based on the responses of 1,137 students, 1 out of 10 youth reported having been threatened with a weapon in the last 12 months. But interestingly, half of these teens reported perpetrator behaviors such as using a weapon and selling drugs.
- 3 In response to the questions indicating bullying behavior, 36 percent of the youth reported having been in a physical fight; 9 percent used a weapon to threaten someone; 6 percent sold drugs and 11 percent had been arrested in school at least once during the past year.
- 4 Responding to victimization questions, 10 percent had been threatened with a weapon within the past year. About 20 percent of the youth reported they were offered, sold or given drugs at least once in school. Also within the past year, 24 percent had been teased about their race and 29 percent had had property stolen from them or damaged at school.
- 5 The boys were more likely to be perpetrators than girls were, but were just as likely to be victims. Boys were no more likely than girls were to feel safe at school. Perhaps surprisingly, the bullies didn’t feel safer than their victims did. “It is most likely because they know their victims may retaliate,” Go said.
- 6 Go and Murdock, who are based at UC Cooperative Extension in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, respectively, concluded there are myriad factors that influence bullying, such as the youth’s home life and racial tension. “If a parent tells the kid to hit people who are messing with them, then you need to talk to the parent,” Go explained. Youths who have been beaten because of their race may join gangs for protection.
- 7 Quelling school violence is not as simple as weeding out the bullies and “fixing” them, according to Go. A youth who has been bullied may get caught retaliating or picking on someone else. “It’s easy to label one a bully,” Go said, “but it really depends on where you catch them in the cycle. Perpetrators get victimized too.”
- 8 A more effective approach may be to ask the individual, “Why are you doing this?” then to try to break the circle of bullying. Go suggests teaching youth different ways of negotiating the situation, such as conducting teen conflict resolution education programs, providing alternative creative venues such as physical education in resolving conflicts, or providing positive adult mentors to help teens deal with their problems.

- 9 Another effective approach may be to work in helping our teens feel safer in school. Go and Murdock found that 84 percent of the middle school students reported feeling very safe or safe in their own neighborhoods, but that figure dropped to 70 percent when the students were asked how they felt in school. Thirteen percent claimed they stayed home one or more days because they were afraid to go to school. Interestingly, they also found that when the teens felt safe in their schools, both the youth perpetrator and victim behaviors tended to decrease.
- 10 If schools send a message about the type of behavior that is unacceptable, it establishes ground rules, says Go. They need to make clear the consequences. If a school protects all its students, then they feel safer and don't have to defend themselves.
- 11 Bullying behavior is part of adolescent development, according to Go. "They're trying to figure out what they can get away with. And it can be a search for identity, to learn social relationships and peer relations," he said. Go cited the classic example of a child who pesters the bigger kids until he gets whopped. Some might call that learning the hard way.
- 12 "One thing that this study elucidates is that there is no magic bullet for stopping bullying," Murdock said. "As with most societal issues, it is more complex and requires a more complex intervention than a simple curriculum."
- 13 The researchers chose to focus on middle school students because in 1998, nearly 60 percent of all students suspended in Oakland Unified School District were in middle school. Four times as many 6th graders were suspended as fifth graders. The questionnaire was anonymous and confidential and available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Key Policy Letters from the Education Secretary

June 14, 2011

Dear Colleagues:

- 1 Harassment and bullying are serious problems in our schools, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students are the targets of disproportionate shares of these problems. Thirty-two percent of students aged 12-18 experienced verbal or physical bullying during the 2007-2008 school year;¹ and, according to a recent survey, more than 90 percent of LGBT students in grades 6 through 12 reported being verbally harassed—and almost half reported being physically harassed—during the 2008-2009 school year.² High levels of harassment and bullying correlate with poorer educational outcomes, lower future aspirations, frequent school absenteeism, and lower grade-point averages.³ Recent tragedies involving LGBT students and students perceived to be LGBT only underscore the need for safer schools.
- 2 Gay-straight alliances (GSAs) and similar student-initiated groups addressing LGBT issues can play an important role in promoting safer schools and creating more welcoming learning environments. Nationwide, students are forming these groups in part to combat bullying and harassment of LGBT students and to promote understanding and respect in the school community. Although the efforts of these groups focus primarily on the needs of LGBT students, students who have LGBT family members and friends, and students who are perceived to be LGBT, messages of respect, tolerance, and inclusion benefit all our students. By encouraging dialogue and providing supportive resources, these groups can help make schools safe and affirming environments for everyone.
- 3 But in spite of the positive effect these groups can have in schools, some such groups have been unlawfully excluded from school grounds, prevented from forming, or denied access to school resources. These same barriers have sometimes been used to target religious and other student groups, leading Congress to pass the Equal Access Act.
- 4 In 1984, Congress passed and President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Equal Access Act, requiring public secondary schools to provide equal access for extracurricular clubs. Rooted in principles of equal treatment and freedom of expression, the Act protects student-initiated groups of all types. As one of my predecessors, Secretary Richard W. Riley, pointed out in guidance concerning the Equal Access Act and religious clubs more than a decade ago, we “protect our own freedoms by respecting the freedom of others who differ from us.”⁴ By allowing students to discuss difficult issues openly and honestly, in a civil manner, our schools become forums for combating ignorance, bigotry, hatred, and discrimination.
- 5 The Act requires public secondary schools to treat all student-initiated groups equally, regardless of the religious, political, philosophical, or other subject matters discussed at their meetings. Its protections apply to groups that address issues relating to LGBT students and matters involving sexual orientation and gender identity, just as they apply to religious and other student groups.

- 6 Today, the U.S. Department of Education’s General Counsel, Charles P. Rose, is issuing a set of legal guidelines affirming the principles that prevent unlawful discrimination against any student-initiated groups. We intend for these guidelines to provide schools with the information and resources they need to help ensure that all students, including LGBT and gender nonconforming students, have a safe place to learn, meet, share experiences, and discuss matters that are important to them.
- 7 Although specific implementation of the Equal Access Act depends upon contextual circumstances, these guidelines reflect basic obligations imposed on public school officials by the Act and the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The general rule, approved by the U.S. Supreme Court, is that a public high school that allows at least one noncurricular student group to meet on school grounds during noninstructional time (e.g., lunch, recess, or before or after school) may not deny similar access to other noncurricular student groups, regardless of the religious, political, philosophical, or other subject matters that the groups address.
- 8 I encourage every school district to make sure that its administrators, faculty members, staff, students, and parents are familiar with these principles in order to protect the rights of all students—regardless of religion, political or philosophical views, sexual orientation, or gender identity. I also urge school districts to use the guidelines to develop or improve district policies. In doing so, school officials may find it helpful to explain to the school community that the Equal Access Act requires public schools to afford equal treatment to all noncurricular student organizations, including GSAs and other groups that focus on issues related to LGBT students, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Officials need not endorse any particular student organization, but federal law requires that they afford all student groups the same opportunities to form, to convene on school grounds, and to have access to the same resources available to other student groups.
- 9 The process of revising or developing an equal-access policy offers an opportunity for school officials to engage their community in an open dialogue on the equal treatment of all noncurricular student organizations. It is important to remember, therefore, that the Equal Access Act’s requirements are a bare legal minimum. I invite and encourage you to go beyond what the law requires in order to increase students’ sense of belonging in the school and to help students, teachers, and parents recognize the core values behind our principles of free speech. As noted in our October 2010 Dear Colleague Letter and December 2010 guidance regarding anti-bullying policies, I applaud such policies as positive steps toward ensuring equal access to education for all students.
- 10 Thank you for your work on behalf of our nation’s children.

Sincerely,

Arne Duncan

Enclosure

¹ Dinkes, R., Kemp, J., and Baum, K. (2010). Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2010. (NCES 2010-012/NCJ 228478). 42 National Center for Education Statistics: Washington, DC.

² Kosciw, J. G., Greytak, E. A., Diaz, E. M., and Bartkiewicz, M. J. (2010). The 2009 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth in our nation's schools, 26, New York: GLSEN.

³ GLSEN, at 46-8.

⁴ U.S. Department of Education, "Secretary's Guidelines on Religious Expression in Public Schools," August 1995, <http://www2.ed.gov/Speeches/08-1995/religion.html>.

Life After Bullying

By Mark Brown

PTA.org, February 20, 2005

Emmy-nominated Mark Brown is a youth motivational speaker who, as part of a national outreach program sponsored by QSP, the educational fundraising arm of Reader's Digest, talks to young people about the harmful effects of bullying. To see and hear Brown firsthand, log onto www.rd.com/bully.

- 1 Billy has a thyroid disorder; no matter how fun-loving he is, the other kids cannot see past his being overweight. Liz has been dubbed "trailer trash" by the local kids because she lives on the "wrong side of town." Eleven-year-old Matt came home with black and blue marks, the result of a classmate convincing others to have a punching contest on the "new kid's" arm.
- 2 Bullying is a serious problem today. In a recent Reader's Digest poll, 70 percent of all parents surveyed said their children have been bullied at school. In fact, according to the National Education Association, 160,000 kids stay home from school each day to avoid torment.
- 3 As I travel the country teaching the lesson of tolerance and respect to victims and bullies alike, I have learned something myself. With the proper guidance from family and the school community, children can survive a hurtful experience like bullying and grow in many ways never imagined.

A victim finds her "inner light"

- 4 Sue Stapleton and I met in February 2000 when she was substitute teaching at a middle school in Connecticut. Sue said her daughter Katelyn, then 10 years old, "had always been the child in the classroom who was picked on, teased, even physically abused." It started in kindergarten with taunts about her weight, her glasses, even the size of her nose, and it escalated through the years—from kids throwing rocks at her to locking her in a fenced-in area after gym. It got to the point where Katelyn did not want to go to school.
- 5 On that day four years ago, Sue began her crusade to help rebuild Katelyn's self-esteem. Katelyn became a Girl Scout and lived the Girl Scout promise of being good to other people. She began to expect nothing less for herself. The family's ties to their place of worship also helped nurture Katelyn's inner strength, as did her parent's unending efforts to help their daughter know how loved she was.
- 6 This past fall, 150 students heard Katelyn's message of hope as she shared her story in a special assembly at her high school. As a victim of bullying, Katelyn spoke about her inner light that burns bright and cannot be snuffed out by the mean actions and words of others.

Words as weapons

- 7 Molly was in the 8th grade when we met. She never considered herself a victim, but there were times other kids had picked on her for her disinterest in makeup and fashion, and her passion for athletics. She never considered herself a bully, either, but she could remember having called other kids names.

- 8 I explained to Molly and her schoolmates that words can actually be used as weapons. They were taken aback by this notion. Molly recalls that day, “So many kids were so emotional because it had never occurred to them that their words could be so hurtful to others.”
- 9 Molly thought about Emily, a classmate with cerebral palsy, whom most students avoided because of her disability. Molly and her best friend decided to reach out to Emily, thus finding a new friend.
- 10 Today Molly is a college freshman with a far different perspective. She’s studying to be a nurse so that she can help people.
- 11 Sue, Katelyn, and Molly personify why it is important that every parent, educator, and child work together to create a safe and caring school.

Creating a caring school environment

- 12 Here are some ways parents can help combat bullying and create a more caring school environment for their children:
- Always take bullying seriously and never dismiss it as merely a rite of passage.
 - Keep the lines of communication open with your children and reassure them that they are loved and valued.
 - Involve your child in character-building activities and be involved in these kinds of activities yourself.
 - Establish PTA-sponsored programs in your school that reinforce the importance of tolerance and respect.
 - Encourage school special assemblies and bring in outside speakers to raise awareness about this issue.
 - If one doesn’t already exist, establish a peer mediation program where students can present their grievances with one another in a nonthreatening environment.

Excerpts from *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*

By Barbara Coloroso

1 In a study conducted in 2001 by the Kaiser Foundation, a U.S. health care philanthropy organization, in conjunction with the Nickelodeon TV network and Children Now, a youth advocacy group, almost three-quarters of preteens interviewed said bullying is a regular occurrence at school and that it becomes even more pervasive as kids start high school; 86 percent of children between the ages of twelve and fifteen said that they get teased or bullied at school—making bullying more prevalent than smoking, alcohol, drugs, or sex among the same age group. More than half of children between the ages of eight and eleven said that bullying is a “big problem” at school. “It’s a big concern on kids’ minds. It’s something they’re dealing with every day,” report Lauren Asher of the Kaiser Foundation.

2 Dr. Debra J. Pepler and her colleagues at the La Marsh Centre for Research on Violence and Conflict Resolution at York University conducted a descriptive study on bullying at the request of the Toronto Board of Education. Drawing on answers given by the 211 students in fourteen classes from grades four through eight, their teachers, and their parents, two other researchers, S. Zeigler and M. Rosenstein-Manner (1991), compiled the following statistics:

- 35 percent of the kids were directly involved in bullying incidents.
- Bullying peaked in the eleven- to twelve-year-old age group.
- 38 percent of students identified as special education students were bullied, compared with 18 percent of other students.
- 24 percent reported that race-related bullying occurred now and then or often.
- 23 percent of the students bullied and 71 percent of the teachers reported that teachers intervened often or almost always. (page 12)

...

3 Individual incidents of verbal, physical, or relational bullying can appear trivial or insignificant, nothing to be overly concerned about, part of the school culture. But it is the imbalance of power, the intent to harm, the threat of further aggression, and the creation of an atmosphere of terror that should raise red flags and signal a need for intervention. Sadly, even when the[se] four markers of bullying are clearly in evidence, adults have been known to minimize or dismiss the bullying, underestimate its seriousness, blame the bullied child, and/or heap on additional insult to injury. (page 22)

...

(Racist Bullying)

4 Racist bullying doesn’t just happen. Kids have to be taught to be racist before they can engage in racist bullying. Racist bullying takes place in a climate where children are taught to discriminate against a group of people, where differences are seen as bad, and where the common bonds of humanity are not celebrated.

- 5 Children systematically learn the language of racial slurs and the rules of bigoted behavior through thought (stereotype), feeling (prejudice), and action (discrimination). First, children are taught to *stereotype*—that is, to generalize about an entire group of people without regard to individual differences: [insert a group] are hot-tempered, ugly, lazy, stupid, no good, crazy. . .
- 6 Second, children are taught to *prejudge* a person based on this stereotype. Prejudice is a feeling: We don't like [-----].
- 7 Combine racist thought and feeling and you get children willing to *discriminate* against individuals in that group: You can't play with us. You can't come to our party. We don't want you on our team. Get out of here, you creep!
- 8 This is bullying and needs to be addressed as such. It is only a short walk from racist discrimination to scapegoating a particular child—selecting someone to suffer in place of others or attaching blame or wrongdoing to a specific child when it is not clear who is at fault. Rangi was accused of starting the fight because “his kind” has hot tempers. (page 30)

. . . .

(Sexual Bullying)

- 9 Just as racist attitudes can collide with bullying, so, too, can sexist attitudes. And all three forms of bullying—physical, verbal, and relational—can be wrapped in sexual overtones. Because our sexuality is an integral part of who we are, sexual bullying cuts at the core of our being and can have devastating consequences. Peer-to-peer sexual bullying is one of the most widespread forms of violence in our schools today. According to the 1993 “Hostile Hallways” study conducted by the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, questionnaire responses of 1,632 students from grades eight to eleven offered some startling information:
- 85 percent of girls and 76 percent of boys reported having experienced sexual harassment.
 - 65 percent of girls reported being touched, grabbed, or pinched in a sexual way.
 - 13 percent of girls or 9 percent of boys reported being forced to do something sexual other than kissing.
 - 25 percent of girls stayed home from school or cut classes to avoid sexual harassment.
 - 86 percent of girls targeted reported being sexually harassed by their peers.
 - 25 percent of girls targeted reported being sexually harassed by school staff.

- 10 One-third of the kids surveyed reported experiencing sexual bullying in sixth grade or earlier. Boys and girls reported experiencing sexual harassment in the hallway (73 percent), in the classroom (65 percent), on the school grounds (48 percent), and in the cafeteria (34 percent). The study pointed to serious education consequences as well as significant threats to the physical and emotional well-being of targeted kids. Girls who mature early and boys who mature late are at a high risk for being targeted for sexual bullying. Kids of different sexual orientation from the majority are likely to be bullied. In the article “Young, Gay, and Bullied (Young People Now), researcher I. Rivers wrote about his 1996 study, in which he interviewed 140 gay and lesbian young people. He found that 80 percent of those responding had experienced taunting about their sexual orientation, and over half had been physically assaulted or ridiculed by peers or teachers. (pages 34, 35)
-
- 11 Days after the shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, a group of Nashville, Tennessee, students created a Web site: www.iwillpledge.nashville.com. They invited other students throughout the world to sign the following pledge:
- 12 As part of my community and my school, I WILL:
- pledge to be a part of the solution.
 - eliminate taunting from my own behavior.
 - encourage others to do the same.
 - do my part to make my community a safe place by being more sensitiveto
 - others.
 - set the example of a caring individual.
 - eliminate profanity toward others from my language.
 - not let my words or actions hurt others . . .
- . . . and if others won’t become a part of the solution, I WILL.
- 13 These kids were willing to take a leadership role, knowing that if they took a stand, others might follow. They also recognized that even if no one else followed in their footsteps, they would do what they knew was right.
- 14 *Cowardice asks the question: is it safe?
Expediency asks the question: is it politic?
Vanity asks the question: is it popular?
But conscience asks the question: is it right? And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular—but one must take it because it’s right.*
—Martin Luther King Jr. (pages 174, 175)

Understanding Bullying

By Tara L. Kuther

Our Children, National PTA, 2004

- 1 Each day hundreds of thousands of children dread going to school and facing the taunts, jeers, and humiliation wrought by bullies. When we think of bullying, the easily identifiable physical and verbal harassment comes to mind, including teasing, taunting, threatening, and hitting. Relational bullying is more difficult for adults to observe and identify. Children who bully through relational means socially isolate their victims by intentionally excluding them or spreading rumors about them. Bullying, then, refers to physical or psychological intimidation that occurs repeatedly, is intended to inflict injury or discomfort on the victim, and creates an ongoing pattern of harassment and abuse.
- 2 The bullying relationship is characterized by an imbalance of power, such that the victim of bullying finds it hard to defend him- or herself and begins to feel powerless against the bully. The child who bullies typically is bigger, older, stronger, or more popular than the victim of bullying, and his or her intent is to exert power over the victim. For example, girls who bully through exclusion and other forms of relational aggression tend to have more social power than their victims. The bully is aware that his or her behavior causes distress, the bully enjoys the victim's reaction, and the bullying continues and escalates. Bullies hurt others in order to feel strong and powerful at a given moment.
- 3 It's very difficult for most parents to determine whether their children engage in bullying behaviors because most bullying occurs out of parents' sight. See [factors parents and teachers can watch for to identify instances of bullying](#).
- 4 Some adults and children rationalize bullying because victims are overly sensitive, cry easily, or act in ways that set them apart from other children. Even if the victim does show these characteristics, adults and children must know bullying is not a healthy coping response—it signals that a child needs to learn how to manage his or her emotions, release anger and frustration in more healthy ways, and learn more constructive strategies for getting along with others. Your role, as parent or teacher, is to help children establish more mature and healthy ways of relating with others, thereby ensuring that they will grow into caring and adaptive adults.

Who is likely to be victimized?

- 5 There are at least two types of victims: passive victims and reactive victims. The stereotypical image of the bullied child is the passive victim: He or she avoids confrontation, is physically slight, quiet, does not tease others, and does not defend him- or herself from the bully. The passive victim turns inward when bullied—crying and withdrawing rather than fighting back.

- 6 Reactive victims are much less common than passive victims. The reactive victim provokes attacks by being aggressive, disruptive, argumentative, and antagonizing towards bullies and other children, and retaliates when he or she is bullied. Sometimes reactive victims are referred to as bully/ victims because they straddle the fence of being a bully and/or victim. They are difficult to identify because they seem to be targets for bullies, but they often taunt bullies and other children. Not only do reactive victims fight back when bullied, but they sometimes channel their rage and anger into bullying others, especially those younger and weaker than themselves. In this way, some victims of bullies transform into bullies themselves, perpetuating the abuse and singling out new victims.

What are the effects of bullying?

- 7 Bullying is not a normal part of growing up. Victims of bullying suffer psychological and sometimes physical scars that last a lifetime. Victims report greater fear and anxiety, feel less accepted, suffer from more health problems, and score lower on measures of academic achievement and self-esteem than students who are not bullied. Victims often turn their anger inward, which may lead to depression, anxiety, and even suicide. The experience of bullying is also linked with violence, as the fatal school shootings in Littleton, Colorado, and Jonesborough, Arkansas, have illustrated.
- 8 However, it's not just victims who are hurt by bullying. Bullies fail to learn how to cope, manage their emotions, and communicate effectively—skills vital to success in the adult world. Without intervention, bullies suffer stunted emotional growth and fail to develop empathy. Since bullies are accustomed to achieving their immediate goals by pushing others around, they don't learn how to have genuine relationships with other people. Instead, they externalize and blame others for their problems, never taking responsibility, nor learning how to care for another's needs. Bullies who don't learn other ways of getting what they want develop into adult bullies who are more likely to experience criminal troubles, be abusive toward their spouses, and have more aggressive children, perhaps continuing the cycle of bullying into the next generation.

Ending bullying: What works

- 9 The most effective way of addressing bullying is through comprehensive schoolwide programs. Schoolwide programs, developed collaboratively between school administration and personnel, students, parents, and community members, seek to change the school's culture to emphasize respect and eliminate bullying. So what has been shown to work in preventing and ending bullying?
- Increased awareness, understanding, and knowledge about bullying on the part of school staff, parents, and students
 - Involvement of the wider community, including parents and service providers
 - Integration of bullying-related content into the curriculum in ways that are appropriate to each grade
 - Increased supervision and monitoring of students to observe and intervene in bullying situations

- Involvement of students
- Encouragement of students to seek help when victimized or witnessing victimization
- A plan to deal with instances of bullying
- Class and school rules and policies regarding bullying and appropriate social behavior
- Promotion of personal and social competencies (e.g., assertiveness, anger management, self-confidence, and emotional management skills)
- A schoolwide community of respect in which every student is valued
- Collaboration between parents, educators, service providers, and students to reinforce messages and skills across settings (e.g., home, school, community)
- Serious commitment to implementing the program on the part of administrators and school staff

How to know if your child is the victim of bullying

- 10 Children who are bullied often tell no one about their misery out of shame, fear of retaliation, and feelings of hopelessness. Be aware of the following signs of victimization:
- Subtle changes in behavior (withdrawn, anxious, preoccupied, demonstrates loss of interest in school and in favorite activities)
 - Comes home from school with bruises and scratches, torn or dirtied clothing, or with missing or damaged books and property
 - Loss of appetite
 - Excessive trips to the school nurse
 - Inability to sleep, bad dreams, crying in sleep
 - Repeatedly loses clothing, money, or other valuables
 - Appears afraid or reluctant to go to school in the morning
 - Repeated headaches or stomachaches—particularly in the morning
 - Chooses a roundabout or strange route to and from school
 - Feels lonely
 - Sensitive or withdrawn when asked about his or her day
 - Big appetite after school (perhaps because lunch or lunch money was taken)
 - Reluctant to take the school bus
- 11 Most children will not display every warning sign. The most important thing to look for is a change in a child's behavior. When determining what action to take, consider the specific warning signs the child shows: How serious are they? How frequently do they occur?

Identifying bullying

- 12 Concrete behaviors
- Name calling
 - Rumor spreading
 - Making up stories to get other children in trouble
 - Telling other children not to be friends with a target child
 - Hitting, kicking, tripping, or pushing another child
 - Teasing other children and making remarks about their culture, religion, ethnicity, weight, physical appearance, disabilities, or medical conditions
 - Intimidating others
 - Taking other children's possessions or demanding money from them
 - Damaging other children's property
 - Bossiness
 - Hiding other children's books, bags, or other property
 - Picking on other children, even when they're upset
 - Making threats to other children
 - Manipulating others, getting them to do things that they may not want to do
- 13 Attitudinal signs
- Hot-tempered and quick to anger
 - Impulsive—acts without thinking or considering the consequences of his or her behavior
 - Low tolerance for frustration
 - Difficulty conforming to rules
 - Needs to dominate and subdue others
 - Brags about his or her superiority over other students
 - Aggressive toward adults
 - Good at talking themselves out of situations
 - Little empathy—has difficulty understanding others' perspectives and feelings
 - Engages in antisocial behavior (e.g., stealing, vandalism, substance use)
 - Enjoys putting down others
 - Treats animals cruelly
 - Disrespects authority
 - Enjoys fighting
 - Refuses to admit fear

Eliminate Bullying in Your Classroom

By Eleanor T. Migliore

Intervention in School and Clinic, January 2003

1. Significant negative effects have been documented on the physical and emotional health of both bullies and their victims (Weinhold, 2000). Bullying has been defined as behavior that is “intentional and causes physical and psychological harm to the recipient” (Smith & Thompson, 1991). Schools can do a great deal to create climates in which bullying is significantly reduced and where students feel safe and supported (Peterson & Skiba, 2001). It is important that as educators we are knowledgeable about interventions that can make a difference for students.
 1. Lead a class discussion on bullying. Make certain that students understand what bullying is and why it is harmful. Have them write about their experiences and feelings, and include role-plays to clearly demonstrate what constitutes bullying. You could have older students research the effects on both victims and those who bully so they can understand the extent of the problem.
 2. Write a specific no-bullying policy into your classroom rules. Although bullying is a form of aggression that may be covered by other rules, it is important that students see the unique characteristics of bullying so they can help prevent it. Consequences could also be included with the policy if this is a standard procedure with the other class rules.
 3. Teach social skills routinely through specific lessons and in conjunction with other activities throughout the day. Many excellent programs, for all age levels, can be obtained through educational publishing companies. Lessons, which can be especially helpful, focus on making friends, being appropriately assertive, and learning to take turns. Although “teachable moments” are certainly important, formal lessons on these topics should also be planned and regularly scheduled into the school day.
 4. Teach students how to avoid being a victim and what to do if they are victimized. Specific strategies can be useful if a student finds him- or herself in a possible victim situation. An effective approach can be to use assertive statements such as, “I don’t like the way you are talking to me. You sound mean. Stop doing it.” Seeking help from nearby friends or adults can also be a good strategic. Some students are able to use humor or “own” the belittling comment (“You’re right, this shirt is pretty ugly. I was too lazy to iron another one this morning”) to deescalate a tense situation. Avoiding a bully may be the best choice at times. Finally, using positive self-talk to maintain self-esteem during a bullying incident may be the only appropriate choice (Garrity, Jens, Porter, Sager, & Short-Camilli, 1996).
 5. Support students who speak out about bullying or who seek extra adult help. All adults in the school should be encouraged to praise students who come to them with bullying concerns. The student should not be made to feel cowardly but rather that this is the duty of a student in this school. Stress that this information could be helpful to prevent other students from being subjected to bullying.

6. Use extra effort to include all students in class activities. If a class project is being planned, give everyone a role. Be on the lookout for students who are getting left out of situations or groups, and try to bring them in with specific assignments or jobs.
7. Reinforce responsible, positive behaviors whenever possible. Public praise is always a powerful tool. In addition, choose a student each week who was “caught caring” and reward him or her with age-appropriate privileges or reinforcers (Garrity et al., 1996). Make it clear that this is how to achieve status in your class, and convey this message in as many ways as possible.
8. Use a confidential “message box” for student suggestions or comments on classroom concerns. Some students may be hesitant about bringing up subtle forms of bullying in person, but a written, confidential communication method may make this easier for them. Also, make yourself available so students can talk with you privately about their concerns.
9. Always model respectful behavior toward students. Never use intimidation or sarcasm. Your behavior as an educator is extremely important and conveys a powerful message to students. Even when students are disrespectful or rude, it is imperative that your demeanor be calm and in control. As you set limits in this manner, students observe an assertive way to behave that does not imitate the person attempting to bully.
10. Make sure that situations that have the potential of becoming aggressive are closely supervised. For example, outdoor recess periods or before and after lunch free time can be opportunities for bullying students to find victims. It may be best to schedule similar age groups for free time together to avoid having older students mixed with much younger students. It also may be advisable to plan some structured activities during these nonacademic times. Make sure all areas are well patrolled so there are no isolated spots for bullying to occur (Stephenson & Smith, 1997).
11. Intervene immediately with an approach that matches the incident if bullying occurs. If the bullying involves degrading language or slurs, the adult may only need to use a firm, low-key intervention such as saying, “Those words offend me. We don’t talk like that here.” This may be enough to break a pattern of escalation. If a more physically aggressive incident is observed or reported, a multifaceted approach to intervening may be required. Involve student, school, and family in this case, and use appropriate consequences as well as preventive measures for the future (Wessler, 2001).
12. Insist that the bully make amends if the incident involves a specific targeted victim. Exactly how this is accomplished will depend on the situation. The victim should agree to this action, and the apology should be supervised to make certain that it is carried out in the right manner. Some ways that a bully might make amends could be a public apology, a private face-to-face apology, an apology in writing, or performance of a special favor for the victim (Pearce, 1997).
13. Arrange your class schedule to minimize chaos. A clearly organized schedule and activity stations that are separated and thoughtfully arranged make student interactions more positive. Also, make certain that there are adequate materials for all students in order to minimize potential conflicts (Stephenson & Smith, 1997).

14. Provide many ways to gain recognition in your classroom. Nonacademic as well as academic achievements should be praised. Effort should especially be rewarded. Students should get the message that there are many ways to succeed and that it is possible for them to attain recognition for their particular strengths.
15. Have a clear process to report bullying. These procedures should be discussed with the class and be publicly displayed. It should be understood that reporting is the expectation and to not do so would be breaking a rule. Be alert to students placing a stigma on reporters, and address this immediately.
16. Enlist students in no-bullying activities. Making posters for display around the school or making presentations at assemblies or PTA meetings could be projects for the whole class. Emphasizing the role of bystanders could be a theme for these public information activities because many students may think they have no part in these projects if they are not bullies or have not been victimized personally.
17. Encourage administrators and faculty members to write a no-bullying policy into the school handbook. This will make the school's attitude toward bullying official and be an important first step in establishing an environment that does not condone intimidation at any level (Froschl & Gropper, 1999).
18. Plan an in-service meeting for all staff members to address bullying. All school personnel need to know what bullying really means and how the misuse of power can affect the atmosphere of an entire school. Include bus drivers, cafeteria staff, and assistants because they may often witness bullying but not know the most effective response.
19. Involve parents in your no-bullying efforts. As a classroom teacher, include your no-bullying policy procedures with the information you send home at the beginning of the year addressing general rules and homework. Include information in your parent-teacher conferences, and encourage parents to talk with their children about this issue. Respond quickly and positively to any parent concerns about individual incidents.
20. Use the PTA to publicize the school's no-bullying policy. If parents become part of the team trying to prevent bullying, your efforts will be far more successful (Peterson & Skiba, 2001). Inviting mental health professionals to speak with the PTA about the importance of this issue may make it more relevant. Also, having speakers address how to get students to talk about being intimidated may open up important channels of communication between parents and children.

Persons interested in submitting material for 20 Ways To... should contact Robin H. Lock, College of Education, Box 41071, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX 76409-1701.

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- (In the United Kingdom, they are wearing blue wristbands to “beat bullying.”)
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Bullying Behaviors Among US Youth: Prevalence and Association With Psychosocial Adjustment

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Abstract

Context—Although violence among US youth is a current major concern, bullying is infrequently addressed and no national data on the prevalence of bullying are available.

Objectives—To measure the prevalence of bullying behaviors among US youth and to determine the association of bullying and being bullied with indicators of psychosocial adjustment, including problem behavior, school adjustment, social/emotional adjustment, and parenting.

Design, Setting, and Participants—Analysis of data from a representative sample of 15686 students in grades 6 through 10 in public and private schools throughout the United States who completed the World Health Organization's Health Behaviour in School-aged Children survey during the spring of 1998.

Main Outcome Measure—Self-report of involvement in bullying and being bullied by others.

Results—A total of 29.9% of the sample reported moderate or frequent involvement in bullying, as a bully (13.0%), one who was bullied (10.6%), or both (6.3%). Males were more likely than females to be both perpetrators and targets of bullying. The frequency of bullying was higher among 6th-through 8th-grade students than among 9th- and 10th-grade students. Perpetrating and experiencing bullying were associated with poorer psychosocial adjustment ($P<.001$); however, different patterns of association occurred among bullies, those bullied, and those who both bullied others and were bullied themselves.

Conclusions—The prevalence of bullying among US youth is substantial. Given the concurrent behavioral and emotional difficulties associated with bullying, as well as the potential long-term negative outcomes for these youth, the issue of bullying merits serious attention, both for future research and preventive intervention.

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BULLYING AMONG SCHOOL-AGED youth is increasingly being recognized as an important problem affecting well-being and social functioning. While a certain amount of conflict and harassment is typical of youth peer relations, bullying presents a potentially more serious threat to healthy youth development. The definition of bullying is widely agreed on in literature on bullying.¹⁻⁴ Bullying is a specific type of aggression in which (1) the behavior is intended to harm or disturb, (2) the behavior occurs repeatedly over time, and (3) there is an imbalance of power, with a more powerful person or group attacking a less powerful one. This asymmetry of power may be physical or psychological, and the aggressive behavior may be verbal (eg, name-calling, threats), physical (eg, hitting), or psychological (eg, rumors, shunning/exclusion).

The majority of research on bullying has been conducted in Europe and Australia. Considerable variability among countries in the prevalence of bullying has been reported. In an international survey of adolescent health-related behaviors, the percentage of students who reported being bullied at least once during the current term ranged from a low of 15% to 20% in some countries to a high of 70% in others.^{5,6} Of particular concern is frequent bullying, typically defined as bullying that occurs once a week or more. The prevalence of frequent bullying reported internationally ranges from a low of 1.9% among 1 Irish sample to a high of 19% in a Malta study.^{1,7-12}

Bullying takes many forms, and findings about the types of bullying that occur are fairly similar across countries. A British study involving 23 schools found that direct verbal aggression was the most common form of bullying, occurring with similar frequency in both sexes.¹³ Direct physical aggression was more common among boys, while indirect forms were more common among girls. Similarly, in a study of several middle schools in Rome, the most common types of bullying reported by boys were threats, physical harm, rejection, and name-calling.¹⁴ The most common forms for girls were name-calling, teasing, rumors, rejection, and taking of personal belongings.

Research examining characteristics of youth involved in bullying has consistently found that both bullies and those bullied demonstrate poorer psychosocial functioning than their noninvolved peers. Youth who bully others tend to demonstrate higher levels of conduct problems and dislike of school, whereas youth who are bullied generally show higher levels of insecurity, anxiety, depression, loneliness, unhappiness, physical and mental symptoms, and low self-esteem.^{1-4,8,15-25} Males who are bullied also tend to be physically weaker than males in general.² The few studies that have examined the characteristics of youth who both bully and are bullied found that these individuals exhibit the poorest psychosocial functioning overall.^{15,17,19,26}

The current research provides a foundation for an understanding of the bullying problem. However, it is insufficient to guide intervention and policy development. Moreover, little is known specifically about bullying among US youth.⁶ In one county-wide middle school survey, 24.1% of youth reported bullying others at least once in the past semester²⁶; it is not known whether this is characteristic of the rest of the nation.

The purpose of this study was to report the prevalence of bullying in a nationally representative sample of US youth in grades 6 through 10, along with information on differences in the prevalence of bullying by sex, grade, and race. In addition, the relationships among bullying, being bullied, and psychosocial adjustment are explored for 3 distinct groups: bullies only, those bullied only, and those who both bully and are bullied.

METHODS

Study Population

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development supported a nationally representative survey of US youth in grades 6 through 10 during spring of 1998. The survey, entitled the Health Behaviour of School-aged Children (HBSC), was part of a collaborative, cross-national research project involving 30 countries and coordinated by the World Health Organization.²⁷ The US survey was approved by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Institutional Review Board and was carried out by Macro International Inc (Calverton, Md). Both parental and student consent were solicited.

The US sampling universe consisted of all public, Catholic, and other private school students in grades 6 through 10, or their equivalent, excluding schools with enrollment of fewer than 14 students. The sample design used a stratified 2-stage cluster of classes. The sample selection was stratified by racial/ethnic status to provide an oversample of black and Hispanic students. The sample was also stratified by geographic region and counties' metropolitan statistical area status (largest urban areas/not largest urban areas) with probability proportional to total enrollment in eligible grades of the primary sampling units. Sample size was determined on the criteria of making estimates for all US students in grades 6 through 10 with a precision of 3% at a 95% confidence level, and for minority students with a precision of 5% at a 95% confidence level.

An 83% participation rate was achieved. The school-based sample design, using 1 class period for completion of the questionnaire, precluded ability to compare respondent characteristics with those of nonparticipants. Responding students in sampled classes were excluded if they were out of the target range for grade or if age was outside of the 99th percentile for grade (n=440 students), or if either grade or age were unknown (n=39 students), yielding an analytic sample of 15686 students.

Measures

Measures were obtained from a self-report questionnaire containing 102 questions about health behavior and relevant demographic variables. Items were based on both theoretical hypotheses related to the social context of adolescents and measurements that had been validated in other studies or previous WHO-HBSC surveys.²⁷ Measures were pretested.

Bullying—Questions about bullying were preceded with the following explanation.^{10,28} *Here are some questions about bullying. We say a student is BEING BULLIED when another student, or a group of students, say or do nasty and unpleasant things to him or her. It is also bullying when a student is teased repeatedly in a way he or she doesn't like. But it is NOT BULLYING when two students of about the same strength quarrel or fight.*

Participation in bullying was assessed by 2 parallel questions that asked respondents to report the frequency with which they bullied others in school and away from school during the current term. Similarly, being bullied was assessed by 2 parallel questions asking respondents to report the frequency with which they were bullied in school and away from school during the current term. Because the analytic focus of the current study was the relationship of bullying behaviors to overall psychosocial adjustment, frequencies of bullying behaviors in and out of school were combined for all analyses. Response categories were “I haven't . . .,” “once or twice,” “sometimes,” “about once a week,” and “several times a week.” An analysis of the response distribution revealed fewer subjects in the fourth category than the fifth, a deviation from the expected skewed pattern. Hence, the latter 2 response options were collapsed. Additional questions asked respondents to report the frequency with which they were bullied in each of 5

ways—belittled about religion/race, belittled about looks/speech, hit/slapped/pushed, subject of rumors or lies, and subject of sexual comments/gestures.

Psychosocial Adjustment—Measures of psychosocial adjustment included questions about problem behaviors, social/emotional well-being, and parental influences. Alcohol use was measured by 3 items assessing frequency of alcohol consumption. The frequency of smoking, fighting, and truancy were assessed by 1 item each. Academic achievement was assessed by an item querying perceived school performance. Three items ($\alpha=.70$) queried the frequency of feeling lonely, feeling left out, and being alone because others at school did not want to spend time with the person. One item assessed ease of making friends. Three items ($\alpha=.72$) were used to assess relationship with classmates: “enjoy being together,” “are kind and helpful,” and “accept me.” School climate was measured by 7 items ($\alpha=.82$) related to the respondent’s perception of the school and teachers. Three items measured parental involvement in school ($\alpha=.82$), and 1 item assessed respondents’ perceptions about their parents’ attitudes toward teen drinking.

Statistical Methods

Statistical sample weights were developed to adjust the minority oversampling and to obtain student totals by grade comparable to population grade estimates from the US National Center for Education Statistics. Weighted data analyses were conducted using SUDAAN software.²⁹ Descriptive statistics were conducted using SUDAAN to obtain percentage distributions and confidence intervals (CIs) based on the weighted data, with SEs adjusted for the sample design. All CIs are shown at the 95% level.

To examine the relationship between psychosocial adjustment and bullying/being bullied, students were classified as noninvolved, bullies only, those bullied only, or both bully and bullied coincidentally, and a separate model was fit for each outcome. Students who were neither bullies nor bullied served as the reference group. Each outcome had 4 ordinal levels based on frequency of the behavior—never, once or twice, sometimes, and once a week or more. The proportional odds model³⁰ was used to examine the relationship between a range of psychosocial adjustment constructs and each of the outcomes. Inherent in this model is the proportional odds assumption, which states that the cumulative odds ratio for any 2 values of the covariate is constant across response categories. Its interpretation is that the odds of being in category $\leq k$ is $\exp[\beta'(x_1 - x_2)]$ times higher at the covariate vector $x=x_1$ than at $x=x_2$, where the parameter vector β contains the regression coefficients for the covariate x . A cumulative logit function was used to estimate the model parameters via the generalized estimating equations.³¹ The dependence of responses within clusters was specified using an exchangeable working correlation structure. To account for the dependence between outcomes in estimating the variances, robust variance estimates were used for the estimated parameters. The MULTLOG procedure of SUDAAN was used to fit the proportional odds model with exchangeable correlation structure. Each model was first fit using the full sample, and then refit using 4 sub-samples stratified by sex and education level (middle school vs high school).

RESULTS

Prevalence of Bullying

Overall, 10.6% of the sample reported bullying others “sometimes” (moderate bullying) and 8.8% admitted to bullying others once a week or more (frequent bullying), providing a national estimate of 2027254 youth involved in moderate bullying and 1681030 youth in frequent bullying (Table 1). Experiencing bullying was reported with similar frequency, with 8.5% bullied “sometimes” and 8.4% bullied once a week or more, for a national estimate of 1634095 students bullied with moderate frequency and 1611809 bullied frequently (Table 2). A sizable

number of students reported both bullying others and being bullied themselves. Of the total sample, 29.9% (an estimated 5736417 youth) reported some type of involvement in moderate or frequent bullying, as a bully (13.0%), a target of bullying (10.6%), or both (6.3%).

Demographic variation in the frequency of bullying was observed. Males both bullied others and were bullied significantly more often than females. Bullying occurred most frequently in 6th through 8th grade. Hispanic youth reported marginally higher involvement in moderate and frequent bullying of others, whereas black youth reported being bullied with significantly less frequency overall. No significant differences in the frequency of being bullied were observed among youth from urban, suburban, town, and rural areas ($\chi^2 = 11.72, P=.24$).

However, small differences were observed in the frequency of bullying others ($\chi^2 = 19.13, P=.03$): 2% to 3% fewer suburban youth reported participation in moderate bullying, and 3% to 5% more rural youth reported ever bullying than youth from town, suburban, and urban areas (data not shown).

Table 3 presents the frequency with which those bullied reported being bullied in each of 5 specific ways. Being bullied through belittling one's looks or speech was common for both sexes. Males reported being bullied by being hit, slapped, or pushed more frequently than did females. Females more frequently reported being bullied through rumors or sexual comments. Being bullied through negative statements about one's religion or race occurred with the lowest frequency for both sexes.

Results of the analyses of the relationship among indicators of psychosocial adjustment and bullying/being bullied using the proportional odds model are presented in Table 4. The overall model for each of the outcomes was significant ($P<.001$). All main effects were significant in at least 1 of the models. Table 4 also shows the estimated odds ratios for each psychosocial adjustment construct in the model (adjusting for all other constructs in the model), indicating the odds of having a greater frequency of the outcome variable compared with the reference group.

Bullies, those bullied, and individuals reporting both bullying and being bullied all demonstrated poorer psychosocial adjustment than noninvolved youth; however, differences in the pattern of maladjustment among the groups were observed. Fighting was positively associated with all 3 outcomes. Alcohol use was positively associated with bullying and negatively associated with being bullied. Smoking and poorer academic achievement were associated with both bullying and coincident bullying/being bullied; poorer perceived school climate was related only to bullying. Poorer relationships with classmates and increased loneliness, on the other hand, were associated with both being bullied and coincident bullying/being bullied. Ability to make friends was negatively related to being bullied and positively related to bullying. A permissive parental attitude toward teen drinking was associated only with coincident bullying/being bullied, while increased parental involvement in school was related to both being bullied and coincident bullying/being bullied.

Results from the analyses of the 4 sex/age subgroups (data not shown) yielded findings similar to the model based on the full sample. No notable differences among groups were observed for fighting, academic achievement, perceived school climate, and relationship with classmates. However, differences by sex and age were observed for several variables. While smoking was positively associated with bullying and coincident bullying/being bullied among all groups, the magnitude of the relationship was greater for middle school youth than high school youth. Middle school males also showed a positive relationship between loneliness and bullying; this was not the case for any of the other groups. Among high school youth, bullying/being bullied was positively related to alcohol consumption; this relationship was not observed among middle school youth. High school females, on the other hand, did not demonstrate a

significant relationship between poorer friendship-making and being bullied, whereas the other groups did. In addition, permissive parental attitude toward teen drinking was associated with bullying/being bullied for all groups except high school females. Finally, greater parental involvement in school was related to being bullied and bullying/being bullied for males (both middle and high school) but not females. It was related to bullying for high school males only.

COMMENT

This study indicates that bullying is a serious problem for US youth. Consistent with previous studies,^{1,7,8,11,12} bullying was reported as more prevalent among males than females and occurred with greater frequency among middle school-aged youth than high school-aged youth. For males, both physical and verbal bullying were common, while for females, verbal bullying (both taunting and sexual comments) and rumors were more common. However, verbal bullying through derogatory statements about one's religion or race occurred infrequently for both sexes. This finding may reflect stronger social norms among adolescents against such behavior. That is, it may be more socially acceptable for a youth to taunt peers about their appearance than to make derogatory racial statements.

Both bullying and being bullied were associated with poorer psychosocial adjustment; however, there were notable differences among those bullied, bullies, and those reporting both behaviors. Those bullied demonstrated poorer social and emotional adjustment, reporting greater difficulty making friends, poorer relationships with classmates, and greater loneliness. Youth who are socially isolated and lack social skills may be more likely targets for being bullied. This is consonant with the finding by Hoover and colleagues^{32,33} that the most frequent reason cited by youth for persons being bullied is that they “didn't fit in.” At the same time, youth who are bullied may well be avoided by other youth, for fear of being bullied themselves or losing social status among their peers. Considering the high degree of relationship observed, it is likely that both processes occur. Being bullied was also associated with greater parental involvement in school, which may reflect parents' awareness of their child's difficulties. Conversely, parental involvement may be related to a lower level of independence among these youth, potentially making them more vulnerable to being bullied. Interestingly, being bullied was associated with less frequency of alcohol use and had a nonlinear relationship with smoking. This is not altogether surprising, given Farrington's^{34, 35} finding that socially inept youth were less likely to be involved in delinquency than other youth.

Persons who bullied others were more likely to be involved in other problem behaviors such as drinking alcohol and smoking. They showed poorer school adjustment, both in terms of academic achievement and perceived school climate. Yet they reported greater ease of making friends, indicating that bullies are not socially isolated. Considering their greater involvement in other problem behaviors, it is likely that these youth have friends who endorse bullying and other problem behaviors, and who may be involved in bullying as well.

Those youth who reported both bullying and being bullied demonstrated poorer adjustment across both social/emotional dimensions and problem behaviors. Considering the combination of social isolation, lack of success in school, and involvement in problem behaviors, youth who both bully others and are bullied may represent an especially high-risk group. It is not known whether these youth were first bullied and then imitated the bullying behavior they experienced or whether they were bullies who then received retaliation. Current understanding tends to support the former explanation. Olweus² describes a small subset of bullied youth he terms “provocative victims,” individuals who demonstrate both anxious and aggressive behavior patterns and who are known for starting fights and engaging in disruptive behavior. Pellegrini and colleagues^{36,37} further discuss the “aggressive victim,” defined as youth who

respond to bullying with reactive aggression. These youth do not tend to use aggression in a proactive or instrumental manner, but rather are aggressive in retaliatory circumstances.

The patterns of relationships between bullying/being bullied and psychosocial adjustment observed in this study were similar across age and sex groups, providing support for the stability of the findings. The differences that emerged may be useful for those conducting research or developing interventions targeting specific populations. For example, the stronger relationship between bullying and smoking observed among middle school youth may reflect an association of bullying with deviance; as smoking becomes more normative in the older youth, it is less associated with bullying. The lack of a relationship between being bullied and poorer friendship-making among high school females could indicate that by this age, females are more apt to find a peer group in which they “fit,” even though the peer group may consist of youth of similar social status.³⁸

Several limitations of the study should be noted. The HBSC is a broadly focused survey regarding the health behaviors of middle- and high school-aged youth. As such, more in-depth information, such as might be obtained from an intervention study addressing bullying, are not available. This study includes middle- and high school-aged youth but does not address elementary school youth. The data are cross-sectional, and as such, the direction of relationships among the variables cannot be determined. Another limitation is the reliance on self-report for measurement of bullying. While self-report is a common and accepted method of measuring bullying, individual perceptions of bullying nevertheless may vary. To minimize subjectivity, students were provided with a detailed definition of bullying along with examples.

While research on the long-term consequences of bullying is minimal, the studies that have been conducted show negative effects into adulthood. Olweus³⁹ found former bullies to have a 4-fold increase in criminal behavior at the age of 24 years, with 60% of former bullies having at least 1 conviction and 35% to 40% having 3 or more convictions. Their earlier pattern of achieving desired goals through bullying likely inhibited the learning of more socially acceptable ways of negotiating with others. Conversely, individuals formerly bullied were found to have higher levels of depression and poorer self-esteem at the age of 23 years, despite the fact that, as adults, they were no more harassed or socially isolated than comparison adults.⁴⁰ Those who have been bullied may view such treatment as evidence that they are inadequate and worthless and may internalize these perceptions. No study has assessed the long-term outcomes for those who both bully others and are bullied. Given their initial poorer adjustment status, it is possible that they fare worse than either bullies or those bullied.

While this study provides important data on the prevalence and psychosocial correlates of bullying among US youth, further research is needed. Of particular importance would be prospective studies addressing factors that lead to bullying, as well as studies on the long-term consequences of bullying and being bullied. Longitudinal studies also would be valuable in better understanding the nature of those who bully and are bullied.

The prevalence of bullying observed in this study suggests the importance of preventive intervention research targeting bullying behaviors. Effective prevention will require a solid understanding of the social and environmental factors that facilitate and inhibit bullying and peer aggression. This knowledge could then be used to create school and social environments that promote healthy peer interactions and intolerance of bullying. School-based interventions have demonstrated positive outcomes in Norway and England,^{40–43} with reductions in bullying of 30% to 50%. These interventions focused on changes within the school and classroom climate to increase awareness about bullying, increase teacher and parent involvement and supervision, form clear rules and strong social norms against bullying, and

provide support and protection for individuals bullied. This type of approach has not been tested in the United States.

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Table 1
Weighted Percentage of Students Reporting Bullying Others During the Current Term*

Sample	Reported Bullying, % (95% CI)			
	None	Once or Twice	Sometimes	Weekly
Total	55.7 (53.6–57.8)	25.0 (23.9–26.1)	10.6 (9.5–11.6)	8.8 (7.9–9.6)
By sex				
Males	47.1 (44.8–49.4)	27.0 (25.5–28.5)	13.0 (11.9–14.1)	12.9 (11.5–14.3)
Females	63.2 (60.5–65.8)	23.2 (21.8–24.6)	8.5 (7.0–9.9)	5.2 (4.4–6.0)
By grade				
6th	54.3 (50.0–58.7)	26.9 (23.8–29.9)	8.4 (6.7–10.2)	10.4 (8.2–12.6)
7th	53.5 (49.8–57.2)	26.9 (24.1–29.8)	9.8 (8.0–11.5)	9.8 (8.0–11.5)
8th	50.5 (47.3–53.7)	25.4 (22.9–28.0)	14.3 (11.8–16.8)	9.8 (8.2–11.4)
9th	56.4 (53.2–59.5)	25.0 (22.9–27.1)	11.6 (9.1–14.2)	7.0 (6.0–8.0)
10th	64.0 (60.7–67.4)	20.4 (18.3–22.5)	8.6 (7.3–9.9)	6.9 (5.8–8.1)
By race				
White	54.8 (52.2–57.4)	26.2 (24.7–27.7)	10.5 (9.0–12.0)	8.5 (7.4–9.5)
Black	59.8 (56.2–63.5)	21.7 (19.0–24.4)	10.2 (8.1–12.2)	8.3 (6.5–10.0)
Hispanic	53.2 (50.5–55.9)	24.4 (21.9–26.9)	12.0 (10.4–13.5)	10.4 (8.4–12.4)

* CI indicates confidence interval.

Table 2

Weighted Percentage of Students Reporting Being Bullied During the Current Term *

Sample	Reported Being Bullied, % (95% CI)			
	None	Once or Twice	Sometimes	Weekly
Total	58.9 (57.1–60.8)	24.2 (23.0–25.3)	8.5 (7.4–9.6)	8.4 (7.6–9.2)
By sex				
Males	53.3 (50.7–55.9)	26.1 (24.5–27.7)	9.9 (8.3–11.5)	10.8 (9.5–12.0)
Females	63.8 (61.8–65.9)	22.5 (21.0–23.9)	7.3 (6.4–8.3)	6.4 (5.3–7.4)
By grade				
6th	49.6 (45.7–53.4)	26.2 (23.3–29.1)	10.9 (9.0–12.9)	13.3 (11.3–15.3)
7th	51.5 (48.2–54.8)	28.6 (26.2–31.0)	9.4 (7.8–11.0)	10.5 (8.4–12.6)
8th	58.7 (54.9–62.5)	25.0 (22.7–27.3)	8.7 (5.9–11.4)	7.6 (6.4–8.9)
9th	63.4 (61.2–65.6)	22.1 (20.4–23.8)	8.8 (7.3–10.3)	5.7 (4.3–7.2)
10th	71.9 (69.6–74.1)	18.8 (17.1–20.4)	4.6 (3.4–5.8)	4.8 (3.8–5.8)
By race				
White	56.3 (54.2–58.4)	26.2 (24.8–27.6)	8.7 (7.2–10.1)	8.8 (7.9–9.7)
Black	70.1 (66.6–73.6)	15.8 (13.4–18.3)	7.4 (5.9–8.9)	6.7 (4.7–8.7)
Hispanic	59.4 (55.9–62.9)	24.5 (21.8–27.2)	8.0 (6.9–9.2)	8.1 (6.7–9.5)

* CI indicates confidence interval.

Table 3
Weighted Percentage of Those Bullied Reporting 5 Specific Types of Bullying*

	Total of Those Bullied		Reported Being Bullied, % (95% CI)		Females Bullied	
	Ever	Frequent	Ever	Frequent	Ever	Frequent
Belittled about religion or race	25.8 (23.1–28.5)	8.08 (6.9–9.3)	27.7 (24.5–30.8)	8.8 (7.1–10.6)	23.7 (20.8–26.7)	7.2 (5.7–8.8)
Belittled about looks or speech	61.6 (60.0–63.3)	20.1 (18.5–21.7)	58.4 (55.9–60.9)	19.8 (17.8–21.7)	65.3 (62.9–67.6)	20.5 (18.3–22.7)
Hit, slapped, or pushed	55.6 (53.0–58.2)	14.6 (13.0–16.2)	66.1 (62.5–69.7)	17.8 (15.4–20.1)	43.9 (41.5–46.3)	11.1 (9.0–13.2)
Subjects of rumors	59.9 (57.9–61.8)	17.0 (15.2–18.8)	55.0 (52.0–57.9)	16.7 (14.1–19.4)	65.3 (62.8–67.8)	17.3 (14.8–19.8)
Subjects of sexual comments or gestures	52.0 (49.7–54.3)	18.9 (17.5–20.3)	47.3 (44.4–50.2)	17.5 (15.6–19.5)	57.2 (54.1–60.3)	20.5 (18.0–22.9)

* “Ever” includes all those reporting the behavior “once or twice” or more. “Frequent” includes those reporting the behavior “once a week” or “several times a week.” CI indicates confidence interval.

Table 4
Results of Fitting the Proportional Odds Model to the HBSC Data*

Covariate	Outcome, OR (95% CI)		
	Being Bullied	Bullying	Bullying/Being Bullied
Alcohol use	<i>P</i> = .03	<i>P</i> < .001	<i>P</i> = .76
Never	1.00	1.00	1.00
Rarely	0.98 (0.85–1.14)	1.44 (1.24–1.67)	1.09 (0.89–1.34)
Every month	0.67 (0.50–0.90)	2.11 (1.68–2.64)	1.09 (0.83–1.44)
Every week	0.76 (0.58–0.99)	1.89 (1.47–2.44)	1.12 (0.84–1.50)
Every day	0.56 (0.34–0.93)	1.42 (0.98–2.08)	0.97 (0.63–1.50)
Smoking	<i>P</i> = .03	<i>P</i> < .001	<i>P</i> < .001
Never	1.00	1.00	1.00
<Once a week	1.36 (0.97–1.90)	1.66 (1.32–2.08)	1.59 (1.27–1.98)
Every week	0.94 (0.68–1.29)	1.79 (1.36–2.36)	2.11 (1.41–3.16)
Every day	0.70 (0.49–1.00)	1.67 (1.24–2.24)	1.68 (1.22–2.31)
Fighting	<i>P</i> < .001	<i>P</i> < .001	<i>P</i> < .001
None	1.00	1.00	1.00
Once	2.16 (1.85–2.52)	2.87 (2.42–3.39)	3.17 (2.59–3.89)
2 Times	2.34 (1.75–3.13)	3.31 (2.64–4.16)	4.39 (3.20–6.03)
3 Times	2.47 (1.72–3.55)	4.59 (3.41–6.19)	5.36 (3.76–7.64)
≥4 Times	2.39 (1.82–3.14)	5.20 (4.16–6.49)	3.58 (2.46–5.21)
Academic achievement	<i>P</i> = .97	<i>P</i> < .001	<i>P</i> = .048
Very good	1.00	1.00	1.00
Good	0.99 (0.83–1.19)	1.19 (0.99–1.42)	1.15 (0.91–1.44)
Average	0.96 (0.80–1.16)	1.46 (1.22–1.74)	1.19 (0.97–1.46)
Below average	0.97 (0.68–1.38)	1.82 (1.33–2.47)	1.70 (1.16–2.49)
Perceived school climate [†]	<i>P</i> = .85	<i>P</i> < .001	<i>P</i> = .65
1 (least positive)	1.00	1.00	1.00
2	0.99 (0.90–1.09)	0.83 (0.73–0.93)	0.97 (0.86–1.09)
3	0.98 (0.80–1.19)	0.68 (0.54–0.87)	0.94 (0.74–1.19)
4	0.97 (0.72–1.31)	0.57 (0.40–0.81)	0.91 (0.64–1.31)
5 (most positive)	0.96 (0.65–1.43)	0.47 (0.29–0.75)	0.89 (0.55–1.43)
Relationship with classmates [†]	<i>P</i> < .001	<i>P</i> = .64	<i>P</i> < .001
1 (least positive)	1.00	1.00	1.00
2	0.69 (0.63–0.76)	0.98 (0.90–1.07)	0.79 (0.71–0.87)
3	0.48 (0.39–0.58)	0.96 (0.82–1.13)	0.62 (0.51–0.75)
4	0.33 (0.24–0.44)	0.94 (0.74–1.19)	0.49 (0.36–0.66)
5 (most positive)	0.23 (0.15–0.34)	0.92 (0.67–1.27)	0.38 (0.26–0.57)
Friendship making	<i>P</i> < .001	<i>P</i> < .001	<i>P</i> = .73
Very easy	1.00	1.00	1.00
Easy	1.05 (0.91–1.20)	0.80 (0.72–0.89)	1.01 (0.85–1.20)
Difficult	1.46 (1.13–1.87)	0.74 (0.59–0.93)	0.88 (0.66–1.17)
Very difficult	1.92 (1.42–2.59)	0.67 (0.43–1.05)	1.15 (0.70–1.89)
Loneliness [†]	<i>P</i> < .001	<i>P</i> = .62	<i>P</i> < .001
1 (least lonely)	1.00	1.00	1.00
2	2.41 (2.17–2.69)	1.02 (0.94–1.12)	1.90 (1.67–2.16)
3	5.81 (4.77–7.09)	1.04 (0.85–1.27)	3.60 (2.84–4.56)
4	14.01 (10.41–18.86)	1.06 (0.79–1.43)	6.82 (4.78–9.74)
5 (most likely)	33.78 (22.74–50.20)	1.08 (0.73–1.61)	12.94 (8.04–20.81)
Parental attitude toward teen drinking	<i>P</i> = .29	<i>P</i> = .55	<i>P</i> < .001
Shouldn't drink	1.00	1.00	1.00
Don't like but allow	1.19 (0.98–1.45)	1.05 (0.89–1.25)	1.33 (1.07–1.64)
Okay to drink/not get drunk	1.13 (0.86–1.49)	1.16 (0.86–1.57)	1.43 (1.06–1.94)
Okay to get drunk	1.12 (0.82–1.53)	1.19 (0.90–1.58)	2.10 (1.53–2.88)
Parental involvement in school [†]	<i>P</i> = .01	<i>P</i> = .53	<i>P</i> = .003
1 (least involved)	1.00	1.00	1.00
2	1.12 (1.02–1.22)	1.02 (0.96–1.08)	1.12 (1.04–1.21)
3	1.25 (1.06–1.46)	1.04 (0.92–1.17)	1.25 (1.06–1.46)
4	1.39 (1.10–1.76)	1.06 (0.89–1.27)	1.39 (1.10–1.76)
5 (most involved)	1.55 (1.13–2.13)	1.08 (0.85–1.37)	1.55 (1.13–2.13)
Wald χ^2_{27} [‡]	337.30	4878.42	2678.37

* HBSC indicates Health Behaviour of School-aged Children survey; OR, odds ratio; CI, confidence interval. *P* values represent the significance of the category overall.

[†] Odds ratios for continuous variables were calculated for each level for illustrative purposes. In each case, the OR provided at the level “2” represents the increase in odds attributable to an increase in 1 unit of the covariate.

[‡] *P* < .001 for outcome overall.

Bully-Proof Your School

Recognized as more than just a problem between kids, schools are called upon to put forth a team effort to end bullies' longtime reign of terror.

By Colleen Newquist

Education World, September 8, 1997

- 1 In *Arthur's April Fool*, Marc Brown's lovable aardvark gets the best of a school bully by playing a joke on him. Lucky for Arthur, the book ends there.
- 2 As most children know, and many adults remember, struggles with real life bullies rarely are resolved so easily. The enormity of those struggles are now recognized, and bullying in schools, once shrugged off with a kids-will-be-kids attitude, has come to be regarded as a serious problem around the world.
- 3 The facts about bullying show that 10 to 15 percent of children are bullied regularly, and bullying most often takes place in school, frequently right in the classroom. The facts show, too, that bullying is an equal opportunity torment—the size of a school, its setting (rural, urban or suburban) and racial composition seem to have no bearing on its occurrence.
- 4 Bullying takes a heavy toll on the victims. As many as 7 percent of eighth grade students in the United States stay home at least once a month because of bullies. Chronic fear can be the source of all-too-real stomachaches and headaches and other stress-related illnesses. According to Norway's Dan Olweus, a leading authority on the subject, being bullied also leads to depression and low self-esteem, problems that can carry into adulthood.
- 5 The effects of such behavior are grim for the offender, too. One study by Olweus shows that 60 percent of kids characterized as bullies in sixth through ninth grades had at least one criminal conviction by age 24.
- 6 Rather than help resolve the issue, schools have contributed to the problem. Teachers and principals underestimate the amount of bullying in schools and, when they do witness it, often are reluctant to get involved, says Nan Stein, a researcher at Wellesley College, in "Beating the Bullies" (*Teacher* magazine, August/September 1997). "Kids say that when they tell the adults about the bullying, adults don't take them seriously, or they make them feel responsible for going back and working it out." In the same article, researcher Charol Shakeshaft of Hofstra University said she found that "kids believe that teachers thought it was OK to behave that way because teachers didn't intervene."
- 7 Until recent years, the problem of bullying has been addressed primarily through efforts to raise the self-esteem of victims, many of whom are more passive and physically weaker than their tormentors. While this helps, it's not nearly enough. Olweus and other researchers emphatically agree that preventing and eliminating bullying in schools requires a clearly stated, zero-tolerance attitude toward bullying and a wholehearted team effort involving teachers, administrators and support staff, as well as students and parents.

- 8 The approach advocated by Olweus, detailed in his book *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*, includes first distributing a questionnaire on bullying to students and teachers to foster awareness, justify intervention efforts and establish a benchmark for later comparison. He also recommends:
- Conducting a parental awareness campaign through newsletters, parent-teacher conferences and PTA meetings, and publicizing the results of the questionnaire;
 - Intervening individually with bullies and victims, implementing cooperative learning activities, and stepping up adult supervision at recess and lunch (opportune times for bully behavior);
 - Working with students in role-playing exercises and related assignments that teach alternative methods of interaction, and developing strong antibullying rules, such as “we won’t bully other kids” and “we’ll include other kids who are easily left out.” Such messages repeated on a regular basis can have a lasting positive effect.
- 9 In his article “What Schools Can Do About Bullying,” Ken Rigby of the University of South Australia says teachers can have a significant impact on the problem by specifically:
- Expressing disapproval of bullying whenever it occurs, not only in the classroom but also on the school playground;
 - Listening sympathetically to students who need support when they are victimized, and then initiating or taking action according to procedures approved by the school;
 - Encouraging cooperative learning in the classroom and not setting a bad example with their own behavior (Assess yourself honestly: Do you use sarcasm or mean-spirited humor?);
 - Talking with groups of students about bullying, and mobilizing student support for action to reduce bullying—for example, by including victimized students in their activities. “Most students are in fact against bullying,” Rigby says, “and, given the chance, can provide not only active support for the school policy but also make positive proposals and undertake constructive actions to counter bullying.”
- 10 Anti-bullying campaigns make a difference. Schools in Norway and in South Carolina that adopted Olweus’ program reported incidents of bullying dropped by 50 percent. For anybody who’s ever felt the sting of a schoolmate’s punch or caustic words, that’s very good news.

Related Resources

Sources from *Teacher* magazine:

- *Bully-Proofing Your School*, by Carla Garrity, Kathryn Jens, William Porter, Nancy Sager, and Cam Short-Camilli, 1996; \$29.95. Contact: Sopris West, 1140 Boston Ave., Longmont, CO; 80501; (303) 651-2829.
- *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*, by Dan Olweus, 1993; \$19.95. Contact: Blackwell Publishers, P.O. Box 20, Williston, VT 05495; (800) 216-2522.
- *The Bullying Prevention Handbook: A Guide for Principals, Teachers, and Counselors*, by John Hoover and Ronald Oliver, 1996; \$21.95. Contact: National Education Service, 1252 Loesch Rd., Bloomington, IN 47402; (812) 336-7700 or (800) 733-6786.
- *Bullyproof: A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use With Fourth and Fifth Grade Students*, by Nan Stein, Lisa Sjostrom, and Emily Gaberman, 1996; \$19.95, plus \$5 shipping and handling. Contact: Centers for Women, Publications, Wellesley College, 106 Central St., Wellesley, MA 02181; (617) 283-2532.

From the [National PTA](#):

- *Safe at School: Awareness and Action for Parents of Kids K–12*, by Carol Silverman; Saunders Free Spirit Publishing Inc. 400 First Ave. N., Suite 616 Minneapolis, MN 55401-1730 (612) 338-2068. The tips in this book help parents deal with bullying, gangs, sexual harassment, and other school safety issues.
- *Set Straight on Bullies*, by Stuart Greenbaum with Brenda Turner and Ronald D. Stephens; National School Safety Center 4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd., Suite 290 Westlake Village, CA 91362 (805) 373-9977. The problem of bullying is examined in this book. It offers prevention and intervention strategies for parents, teachers, and students.
- *Why is Everybody Always Picking on Me? A Guide to Handle Bullies*, by Terrence Webster-Doyle; Atrium Society Publications P.O. Box 816 Middlebury, VT 05753 (800) 966-1998 or (802) 388-0922. This book helps children and teens to develop the confidence needed to resolve conflicts without fighting and to cope with bullies.

Related Sites

[Dr. Ken Rigby's Bullying Pages](#)

Includes information on resources concerned with bullying in schools and questionnaires (for sale) for use in schools, plus the article "What Schools Can Do About Bullying."

- [Teaching Children Not to Be—or Be Victims of—Bullies](#)
From the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).
- [Safeguarding Your Children at School: Helping Children Deal with a School Bully](#)
From the National PTA.
- [Dealing with Bullies](#)
From the Safe Child Organization.
- [Prevent Bullying: A Parents Guide from Kidscape](#)