

## Bullying Education Handout for Parents

### **\*Terminology Regarding Bullying** (samhsa.gov, tolerance.org):

**Target-** the student being harassed repeatedly by another. Target is used rather than the word “victim” which can promote a feeling of helplessness often felt by a target.

**Bullying Behavior-** the action committed by the student who repeatedly has power over the target. This power may come from physical size, popularity, verbal skill, or gender. We are careful to call this bullying behavior rather than labeling a student as a “bully”. This is done to explain that the student’s identity is not defined by this behavior, which can be changed.

**Bystander** - the majority of students fill the role of bystanders who watch bullying in their school community, but do nothing to stop it.

**Direct Bullying** – obvious acts of aggression inflicted upon a target, i.e. physical aggression. This bullying type is seen in both females and males, but is more frequently seen in males.

**Indirect Bullying** – purposeful exclusion or verbal aggression which is more difficult to recognize and stop. This type of bullying is seen in both males and females, but more frequently seen in females.

**TRAINER:** “This language will be used for the rest of the presentation so if there is any confusion, please refer to these key terms we just reviewed. The following is an explanation of the eight types of bullying. When reviewing this sheet, it may become clear that bullying is much more common and less obvious than it may seem.”

### **\*8 Types of Bullying** (tolerance.org):

- **Physical Aggression-** hitting, kicking, destroying property
- **Social Aggression:** spreading rumors, gossiping, excluding from group, silent treatment
- **Verbal Aggression/Intimidation:** name calling, teasing, threatening, intimidating phone calls
- **Written Aggression:** note writing, graffiti, texting,
- **Cyber Bullying:** written aggression over the internet through facebook, myspace, emails, etc.
- **Sexual Harassment:** any unwelcome comments or actions of a sexual nature that makes the target uncomfortable such as: touching someone’s private parts, or the clothing that covers them, unwanted touching of any types, name calling of a sexual nature, spreading sexual rumors, forcing a kiss or something else sexual, obscene gestures, showing or drawing dirty jokes, pictures or cartoons, making comments about someone’s body parts, sexual assault, or rating someone’s appearance on a scale of 1 to 10. Sexual harassment is NOT a friendly smile or mild flirting.
- **Racial and Ethnic Harassment:** Comments or actions containing racial or ethnic content that is unwelcome and makes the recipient uncomfortable such as ethnic jokes, racial name calling, or racial slurs.
- **Sexual Identity Harassment:** Some people are heterosexual, which means they are attracted to people of the opposite gender. Some people are homosexual, which means they are attracted

to people of the same gender. And, some people are bisexual, which means that they are attracted to people of both genders. Sexual Identity Harassment is comment or actions that are intended to put someone down, or exclude, someone because of their sexual identity or perceived sexual identity.

**\*Typical Responses to Bullying (Waasdorp & Bradshaw, 2011):**

- Most children walk away, ignore the students who are harassing them, or do nothing.
- Elementary school students are more likely to seek support from adults by telling a parent or a trusted adult.
- Middle school students are less likely to turn to an adult than elementary school students.
  - Middle school boys are more likely to respond with physical aggression or fighting.
  - Middle school girls are more likely to respond with verbal aggression like name calling.
- High school students are more inclined to handle the matter independently and are the least likely to tell an adult about the bullying behavior.
- Without adult intervention, targeted children are more likely to engage in bullying behavior and physically fit the person who is harassing them,
  - This behavior is found to occur with increased social and emotional problems, including acting out at home/school and depressive symptoms.
- It is important that the target seeks support from others and does not physically fighting the person who is harassing them.

**\*Guidelines to address bullying if your child is a target (samhsa.gov):**

- Initiate conversations about bullying
  - Your child may not address the topic with you because he or she is too scared or embarrassed, so it is important that you ask. This will show the child it is okay to talk about bullying and you are there to help.
  - Tell your child that it is not his/her fault that he/she is being targeted.
  - Often children fear being labeled as a “snitch”. Tell your child that he/she is doing the right thing by sharing the information with an adult in order to improve the situation and stop the bullying.
- Assure your child that you will support him/her in the process.
  - Reach out to teachers/administrators for your child so that he/she feels safer at school.
  - Keep the communication about bullying open with your child. If he/she does not bring up the topic again, check in with the child to get updated on the situation.

- Encourage your child to talk to a trusted teacher for increased support, even if you as a parent have already done so. This will help the child to feel more fully supported both in school and at home.
- Help your child to prepare for any bullying that takes place.
  - Suggest different scenarios and help him/her to practice being assertive.
  - Help your child to practice ignoring a bully, walking away and seek support from a school employee.

**Guidelines to address bullying if your child is exhibiting bullying behavior (samhsa.gov):**

- Tell your child that bullying is not okay.
  - Emphasize the idea that no one deserves to be bullied and bullying is NOT acceptable behavior.
  - Show the child that there are consequences for bullying both at school and at home. Remain consistent in the consequences at home.
- Show your child that his/her behavior is impacting the target.
  - Assist the child in considering the view point of another to understand that he/she IS causing harm and hurting someone.
- Model appropriate ways to handle anger.
  - Your child is looking to you for an example. Help him/her to learn alternative ways to handle anger (counting to ten, breathing, going for a walk).
- Reward appropriate behavior.
  - Your child is not bad, but is engaging in bad behavior. Show the child that he/she can improve such behavior and that improvement will be recognized.
  - When he/she does improve behavior, reinforce that. For example,
    - “I noticed that when your brother stole the controller from you, you walked away and started playing with something else. You handled that well.”

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Waasdorp, T.E., & Bradshaw, C.P. (2011). Examining student responses to frequent bullying: A latent class approach. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 103*, 336-352.