

# **Direct From the Field:** A Guide to Bullying Prevention

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A Joint Project of



# Direct From the Field: A Guide to Bullying Prevention

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# Introduction

*You must be the change you wish to see in the world.*

Mohandas Gandhi

Evidence-based research gleaned from respected institutions, media reports, and the hallways of our nation's schools all point to the same truth: Bullying has devastating effects. Just a quick look at statistics reveals the depth of the problem:

Analysis of high-profile school shootings such as Santana, Columbine, and Virginia Tech reveals that that up to 71 percent involved attacker(s) who felt bullied, persecuted, attacked, or injured.<sup>1</sup>

Around 160,000 school children stay home from school each day out of fear, often without telling their parents why.<sup>2</sup>

Children targeted by bullies experience higher than normal levels of insecurity, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and physical and mental symptoms.<sup>3</sup>

Adults who were bullies as children have higher rates of substance abuse, domestic violence, and other violent crimes.<sup>4</sup>

The percentage of students who report being bullied rose 50% from 1983 to 2003.<sup>5</sup>

In short, bullying is an act that cannot be ignored if we are to safeguard our nation's schools and young people.

## Prevention and Intervention

While the problem is prevalent—up to 80 percent of adolescents report being bullied during their school years—students report that 71 percent of teachers or other adults in the classroom ignore bullying incidents.<sup>6</sup> Adults often either justify their lack of action with long-held myths (“bullying is a part of growing up”) or are simply unprepared to intervene effectively.

Equipping administrators and teachers to respond more effectively is part of the answer, but the problem is complex and defies simple solutions. The majority of bullying incidents happen outside of the eyes and ears of school personnel—on buses, on sidewalks on the way home, at sporting events, and in bathrooms and locker rooms. Complicity among young people not to share knowledge of incidents of bullying with adults is common, often due to fear of retaliation. Ironically, while targets are disempowered by this code of silence, bullies gain power and prestige from it.

A joint study of the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education titled “The Safe School Initiative” (2002)<sup>7</sup> points to the need to create an environment in which students



The nature of the problem at their sites

Progress made in addressing bullying problems.

We spoke with principals, professional development coordinators, health educators, guidance counselors, bullying prevention coordinators, classroom teachers, bus monitors, parents, and students. Some sites had been doing this work for years, while others were just starting out. Some sites were using a comprehensive program, while others were using components of different programs or had tailored their own solutions. At some schools, this work fell under violence prevention efforts, and at other sites it was part of character education. Some sites were rural, others suburban or urban. Some had grant money to address this issue, while others were trying to launch efforts without much fiscal support. While there was great diversity in sites and solutions, many common themes emerged.

In general, young people said a better job could be done at keeping them safe at school, pointing to places in schools they avoid, such as bathrooms, certain hallways, and parts of the cafeteria. They worry the adults in the building don't understand the full scope of the problem. Most said they thought the adults cared about them, but they speculated that the adults lack the knowledge and resources to address an issue as complex as bullying. Bullying from a young person's perspective can feel like a problem one simply has to deal with alone.

Adults reported being worried that despite their best efforts, a culture of ridicule and disrespect prevails outside the building. They said change comes slowly and stressed the importance of buy-in from all school stakeholders, including often neglected constituents such as bus drivers, cafeteria workers, and parents. Teachers and administrators doing this work see progress is possible—that efforts to teach children pro-social skills pay off. But they worry about how to fit bullying prevention into a day already crowded with competing goals driven by high-stakes testing. They point with frustration to grants that launch programs that are difficult to sustain once monies have run out.

Still, an atmosphere of hope prevails. Young people and educators across the State believe in the vision of caring and respectful schools. And they believe their efforts to create such a community will pay off.

## **Research That Informs This Guide**

The strategies, tools, and processes presented in this Guide come from two sources:

Traditional research on social and emotional learning, including the fields of bullying prevention, violence prevention, and character education

Knowledge collected from the field through an action research model

The action research model is likely something you use all the time. We all learn from experience, and action research is an inquiry-based method of research that relies on:

- Self-reflection
- Reflection on one's social system to develop specific action plans

By asking educators across the State to reflect on what has, and what has not, been working in their bullying prevention efforts, we can offer you a practical knowledge base from which to design your own efforts.



## How to Use This Guide

The tools and features presented in this guide are designed to lead you through a process of discovery. This Guide will help identify roadblocks to your success and plan strategies to overcome them. Examples of policies, activities, and other tools and stories from schools across the State are offered, along with guidelines for customizing these tools to meet your schools' needs. Throughout the text you will also find the following features:

**Reflections:** Questions for reflection are provided. They are meant to heighten your awareness and help your staff share their knowledge and insights about bullying. The reflections can be used privately or as staff training activities.

**Things to Think About:** These sections include considerations relevant to fine-tuning and customizing your efforts and gathering support from key players in your school and wider community.

**Delve Deeper:** Resources are offered for further exploration of many topics. Many of these resources are URLs for web-based information free of charge.

**School Spotlights:** Real illustrations and insights shared by educators and sites across the State are interposed throughout the text.

**By the Numbers:** This feature links practice to research and provides hard data to support your efforts.

**Home Connections:** Included throughout are ideas for bridging the gap between home and school and boosting parental support of your efforts.



## Chapter-by-Chapter Overview

**Chapter 1** presents:

Common bullying myths such as “it’s all part of growing up,” “being a target of bullying builds character,” and “kids can work it out among themselves.”

The real cost of bullying to schools, young people, and society.

What the growing body of research on bullying tell us about what it takes to prevent this unnecessary “rite of passage.”

Ways to address varying types of bullying, including harassment directed at gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender youth; sexual harassment; hate crimes; cyberbullying; and hazing.

**Chapter 2** presents:

Ingredients and tools for successful bullying prevention practice.

Ways to create a caring school culture.

Proven bullying prevention strategies.

Discussion about how bullying prevention links to character education

The legal obligations related to harassment

Ways to tie together all of your prevention efforts

Recommended bullying prevention programs and criteria for selecting a program.

### **Chapter 3** presents:

Tools for classroom teachers to help young people develop the pro-social skills, including constructive discipline tips and classroom management techniques.

### **Chapter 4** presents:

Effective intervention strategies: What should you do when you witness a bullying incident? How can teachers, administrators, and parents work with a target, bystander, and bully to leverage the teachable moment and repair damage before it gets out of hand.

### **Chapter 5** presents:

Information for young people, including tools for students to explore the power dynamics of bullying at their school and ways become an ally to targets.

## **The Importance of Language**

Throughout this guide the term **“target”** is used to describe those who are victims of bullying. The term “victim” can be problematic for those at risk for internalizing the victimization and seeing themselves as weak and ineffectual, so the term is avoided.

With other forms of violence, the term “survivor” is often used. However, the term survivor carries with it the assumption of distance from the act—something that cannot be assumed in the context of bullying. The word “target” is also problematic; it is a view through the eyes of the bully and does not give voice to the experience of the person being bullied. We have,

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Throughout the Guide we use the term “**parents**” to refer to all legal guardians, family members, and significant adults in young people’s lives.

## **A Word Before You Get Started**

The real experts on bullying at your school are the students, your staff, and you. Take what we offer here, add your own wisdom and experience, and make it your own. At the heart of best practices in bullying prevention are authenticity, self-direction, and determination. As you refine your practice and learn what works at your site, find ways to share your experience with others—direct from the field.

This Guide was researched in 2002-03, and a rough draft completed in 2003. Following a loss of funding, the Guide was edited and prepared for publication by Don Gorton over the period 2005-07. While the Guide has been updated to reflect newly developed information that became available after the initial research and write-up, it is important to note that cyberbullying has taken on larger and more troubling dimensions in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Educators, parents, and students alike should take notice of this phenomenon and ensure that anti-bullying practices respond to harassment effected over the Internet or by use of cellphone and other portable communication devices. Cyberbullying is specifically addressed at Chapter 1.



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What would you like to say to that target now?

**Myth #3: “Kids can work it out themselves or just tell an adult who will take care of it.”**

“I really believe strongly that it's adults' responsibility, not the responsibility of the victim certainly, and not just of the student body, to deal with bullying. It's an adult responsibility.”

—**Dr. Susan Limber**, Bullying Expert, Clemson University<sup>16</sup>

The Maine Project Against Bullying found that students report 71 percent of the teachers or other adults in the classroom ignored bullying incidents.<sup>17</sup>

Much bullying happens outside of the ears and eyes of caring school personnel—on sidewalks on the way to and from school, in the schoolyard, on buses, in bathrooms, and on playing fields. All bullying prevention programs must find ways for adults to step up supervision and intervention (including training school personnel to identify and then effectively intervene in bullying), but only a small portion of the problem can be addressed solely by increased adult intervention. It is more critical to shift the culture of the school to a caring environment, one where students are less likely to taunt or isolate other students and where student bystanders intervene on behalf of targets.

For anti-bullying programming to work it must

Children, like adults, often perceive the threat to their physical safety as greater than it is in actuality. Strikingly, a study by Garbarino and deLara revealed that children who were asked what made them feel most unsafe at school most commonly answered “teachers.”<sup>19</sup>

While many of our prevention efforts seek to correct the children, it’s clear that one important place to start is with the adults in the building. Any efforts to bully-proof our

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## Reflection



incidents of bullying and harassment. (See “Is it a Hate Crime?” on page 20 for more information.)

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## Reflection

Think about the bullies in your school. What are the common characteristics among them?

## How Bullying Affects Young People

There are high costs for everyone involved in bullying. In schools where there is rampant bullying, a culture of shame and fear permeates.

Young people quickly learn that to be different or to speak up in defense of another opens them to the risk of being targeted. Some students have compared the feeling of being in such schools to walking on eggshells. They are ashamed of their own inability to act when faced with the humiliation of others. And they frequently voice their belief that adults in the building either “don’t know what’s going on” or “will do nothing to change it.” Faced with such a lack of effective adult intervention, a sort of self-regulating system develops within the group: a system whereby young people maintain and police the prevailing norms and values themselves. Only the smallest percentage of students at the top of the social order benefit from this system. Rigid rules develop that dictate aspects such as dress, appearance, interests, and manner of speech. At the very least, a lack of adult intervention results in what is called “learned helplessness.” Students describe themselves as resigned to the prevailing adolescent social pressures. The difficulty is that they do not always possess the skills or resources needed to be resilient.

The line between target and bully blurs as the cycle of shame is perpetuated. A 2002 *Washington Post* article stated that 30 percent of students reported being somehow involved in bullying, and 6 percent of students reported they were both a target and a bully.<sup>38</sup> Researchers are often most worried about the last population—one that may be at risk for violent outbursts such as those evidenced in high-profile school shootings. It isn’t known which comes first, being a target or being a bully; but many researchers concur that these bullies are most likely passing along behaviors they experience from important adults in their lives or from peers.

### The Effect on Targets

Approximately 160,000 school children stay home each day out of fear, often without telling their parents why.<sup>39</sup>

Targets of bullying experience higher than normal levels of insecurity, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and other physical and mental symptoms.<sup>40</sup>

The stress brought on by chronic bullying leads to a diminished ability to learn.<sup>41</sup>

In extreme cases, targets can resort to violence and suicide.

### The Effect on Bystanders

75% of students report feeling ashamed when they witness bullying.<sup>42</sup>

48% of students agreed that coming to the aid of a victim reduces their social standing.<sup>43</sup>

Being exposed to violence and maltreatment is associated with “increased depression, anxiety, anger, post-traumatic stress, alcohol use, and low grades.”<sup>44</sup>

## The Effect on Bullies

Adults who bullied as children have higher rates of substance abuse (including alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes), domestic violence, and other violent crime.<sup>45</sup>

Bullies identified by age 8 are six times more likely to be convicted of a crime by the time they reach age 24 and five times more likely to end up with a serious criminal record by age 30.<sup>46</sup>

Bullies achieve less academically, occupationally, and personally.<sup>47</sup>

Bullies can be quite popular in middle school, but by the time they get to high school bullies are less popular. In adulthood, they tend to have few friends and appear to perpetuate the cycle of violence in their children by rewarding aggression.<sup>48</sup>

Bullies have more negative attitudes about school and tend to pass those attitudes on to their children.<sup>49</sup>

One study showed bullies have higher rates of suicide than their targets.<sup>50</sup>

## How Do You Know It's Bullying?

Barbara Coloroso, in her book *The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*, identifies four markers for bullying:

- Imbalance of power between target and bully
- Intent to harm
- Threat of further aggression
- Creation of an atmosphere of terror.<sup>51</sup>

Dan Olweus defines bullying as repeated exposure, over time, to negative actions from one or more other students. Negative actions can include physical, verbal, or indirect actions that are intended to inflict injury or discomfort upon another including hitting, intimidation, taunting, exclusion, or spreading rumors.

While one-time incidents of taunting, exclusion, or aggression between young people who are peers tear at the fabric of your community, they do not in themselves constitute bullying. As you launch your bullying prevention efforts, it's helpful to explore what constitutes bullying with administrators, students, parents, and all involved constituents so everyone has a common definition.

## Is it a Hate Crime?

Hate crime is a criminal offense committed against persons or property, motivated, in whole or in part, by an offender's bias against an individual's or a group's race, religion, ethnic/national origin, sex, age, disability, or sexual orientation.<sup>52</sup> Law enforcement agencies, reporting groups, government agencies, and other victim assistance organizations use a number of guidelines to determine whether hate motive is involved in an incident or attack; these are referred to as "bias indicators." Below are some of the more common factors to consider.

Massachusetts law states: “In some instances, one bias indicator may be sufficient to support an inference that a crime was motivated by bias or bigotry (*e.g.*, bias-related epithets or markings). In other cases, more than one bias indicator may be necessary to warrant such an inference.”<sup>53</sup>

### **Things to Think About**

Were the offender and victim of different racial or religious groups, ethnic/national origin, or sexual orientation?

Has the victim or victim's community been subjected to repeated attacks of a similar nature?

Does a substantial portion of the community where the incident occurred perceive the incident was motivated by bias?

What was the manner and means of attack? For example, does the color of paint, the use of particular words or the spelling of words, or the use of symbols or signs suggest a possible hate motive?

Does the incident indicate possible involvement by an organized group? For example:

- ⇒ Has a specific hate group claimed responsibility for the crime?
- ⇒ Is there printed literature involved?
- ⇒ Does the name of the group in the literature suggest hate motivation?
- ⇒ Does the name of the group suggest a "copy-cat" syndrome?
- ⇒ Is there documented or suspected organized group activity in the area?
- ⇒ Was this group actually involved, or was this a fear or scare tactic?
- ⇒ Are there historical animosities existing between groups comprising the victim's and the offender's race, religion, ethnic/national origin, or sexual orientation?

Is there an ongoing neighborhood problem that may have initiated or contributed to the incident? Could the incident be retribution for some conflict with a group in the community, or a segment of the population?

Has there been prior or recent news coverage of incidents of a similar nature?<sup>54</sup>



### By the Numbers

**24%** of students reported witnessing race-related bullying now and then or often.<sup>55</sup>

**13%** of students aged 12–18 have been called a derogatory word related to race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sex, or sexual orientation within a period of 6 months.<sup>56</sup>

**36%** of students aged 12–18 have seen hate-related graffiti at school.<sup>57</sup>

The **majority** of students ages 7–13 rejected the view that it was okay to exclude peers from an activity because of their biological sex or race.<sup>58</sup>

### Delve Deeper

For more information about hate crimes, see [www.adl.org/combating\\_hate](http://www.adl.org/combating_hate).

## **The Time is Ripe: Adolescence and Bullying**

While all middle school and high school teachers have expertise about adolescents, it's useful to think about some of the characteristics of both males and females in this age group before you begin to tailor your prevention program. The following is an excellent activity for a staff meeting.

### **Adolescents Are...**



Fortunately, in addition to risks, adolescence also presents educators and parents with opportunities for nurturing pro-social behaviors. The degree to which teaching efforts are developmentally-tailored will greatly determine whether or not particular characteristics of adolescence can be leveraged as opportunities, rather than risks. The guidance of caring adults in an adolescent’s life can make an enormous difference.

Remember, most adolescents are:

- Preoccupied with group conformity and peer acceptance
- Acutely aware of differences
- Struggling with issues of dependence and independence
- Socially curious
- Focused on sorting out right from wrong (mostly through testing their and others’ values)
- Self-conscious about the physical changes in their body (which to varying degrees can greatly affect their self-esteem)
- Potentially great leaders and problem solvers

Characteristic	Opportunity	Risk
Moving from concrete to abstract thinking	Can think more clearly about abstractions such as civil liberties, democracy, social justice, fairness, honesty; are able to take the perspective of others	Development and learning differ from child to child, and misunderstandings are common
Moving from authoritarian values to democratic tolerances	Ripe for political thought; able to construct group agreements that represent rights and responsibilities of community living	Some children will make bad choices if left to their own devices.
Focused on sorting out right from wrong	Open to examining their values; focused on justice and fairness	May be susceptible to unhealthy influences
Moving from individual focus to community focus; struggling with issues of dependence and independence	Beginning to put aside own needs for the good of the group; are responsive to adults’ respect for their growing autonomy and abilities	Can be very influenced by their peers to join in behaviors they might not really condone; will resist authoritarian means of controlling their behavior
Becoming more independent and able to problem solve	Able to contribute meaningfully to a community, serve as leaders, and be co-creators of a caring community	Adults may underestimate young people’s need for guidance and support



Maturing physically at different rates (may be awkward, different size from their peers, or more sexually developed)	May be used as an opportunity to nurture appreciation for differences	Sexual harassment; self-conscious about their bodies; greater potential for stronger adolescents to abuse those who are weaker
Preoccupied with fitting in	Can be used as an opportunity to explore issues of sameness and difference	Can be non-tolerant of differences; hate crimes; prejudices and discriminatory behaviors
Defining self in relationship to peers, rather than adults; needy for peer approval	Can think for themselves; can begin to act from their own values and beliefs	Easily influenced by peers; can be threatening to be seen as different in any way; any rejection by peers can lower self-esteem

## Gender Oppression and Adolescent Girls

Researchers describe a phase around age of 11 or 12 when formerly self-confident and forthright girls start censoring their thoughts, insights, and feelings. Sexism and gender oppression in society affect girls and women, but they can be particularly challenging during early adolescence.

It is important to support girls as they deal with sexism, heterosexism, and other sources of stress by encouraging them to voice their opinions, take leadership roles, and express their feelings. It is equally important to interrupt any power imbalances in the classroom that might spill over from power imbalances inherent in society. If unchecked, power imbalances can be exploited and give rise to verbal and physical bullying. Sexual harassment, for example, is a form of bullying based on gender oppression. Staff training is crucial in creating and maintaining a classroom that is welcoming and conducive to learning for all students.



### Things to Think About

Provide opportunities for school personnel to explore gender assumptions and stereotypes and how they affect interactions with youth.

Encourage students to understand gender stereotyping and offer alternative visions.

Help students decode the “mask of masculinity” and the “mask of femininity.” William Pollock states in his book *Real Boys* that the mask of masculinity is when a boy/man hides his genuine self to conform to society’s expectations of males, such as being unemotional or acting tough. The mask of femininity refers to a girl/woman hiding her true self to conform to society’s expectations of females.

Include diverse role models in history, science, mathematics, and the arts so students recognize the contributions of women, people of color, people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, and people with disabilities.

Provide opportunities for youth of different backgrounds to work together on group projects and rotate leadership roles.



## Things to Think About

Together with parents, students, and your school faculty and personnel, you can develop new approaches that create a safer environment for all youth. Your school can provide training for staff on interventions that eliminate harassment and improve awareness of students' legal rights. Some approaches to preventing anti-gay harassment include:

Challenge anti-gay harassment consistently—don't let name-calling go uncorrected.

Include examples of LGBT people in discussions of contemporary life.

Support LGBT cultural activities and celebrations; post events on school bulletin boards.

Include LGBT and heterosexual examples when discussing emotional, social, and economic issues in relationships or family life.

Focus intervention on creating safety and equality in the school. The actual sexual orientation and/or gender identity of the bully and the person being bullied are irrelevant.

Recognize that LGBT youth, like other minorities, may feel isolated in the school and have no one to turn to who understands their experience.

Support the establishment of gay-straight alliances (GSAs).

Invite members of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) to your school to speak to students.

Support gay and lesbian teachers who are open about their identity.

Make events such as high school dances more inclusive by allowing students to invite a guest regardless of their sexual or gender orientation or expression.

## Resources for LGBT Youth and Educators

### **The Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Tran**



Develop and publicize a specific grievance procedure for resolving complaints of sexual harassment.

Develop methods to inform new administrators, teachers, guidance counselors, staff, and students of the school's sexual harassment policy and grievance procedure.

Conduct periodic sexual harassment awareness training for all school staff, including administrators, teachers, and guidance counselors.

Establish discussion groups where students can talk about what sexual harassment is and how to respond to it in a school setting.

Survey students to find out whether sexual harassment is occurring at the school.

Conduct periodic sexual harassment awareness training for parents and teachers.

Work together with parents and students to develop and implement age-appropriate, effective measures for addressing sexual harassment.<sup>68</sup>

Address all reports of sexual harassment immediately and involve law enforcement, when appropriate.

## Cyberbullying

As a school professional or parent, you already know Internet and cell phone use is pervasive among youth. New technologies have revolutionized communication and information sharing, and at the same time have created new opportunities for bullying and harassment. Cyberbullying may seem like the same old behavior using a different means, but there are several unique differences in how the terms **bully**, **bystander**, and **target** are defined. First, the "bully" can be the originator of an offensive text message—someone invisible and not limited to a geographical context. Recipients of a message could be considered "bystanders" if they do not send the message to others or "bullies" if they forward the message onward.

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**Outing and Trickery**—disclosure of someone’s private information online, sending or posting embarrassing images, or deceptions leading another person to reveal personal details about him or herself

**Exclusion**—deliberately keeping someone out of an online group such as a buddy list or game<sup>70</sup>

ers about cyberbullying in chat room conversations and how

out how to block certain email addresses from instant  
and how to report complaints to the ISP of the bully.

continues, the target may need to change his or her email

er sexual in nature, parents should contact the local police,  
Tipline: [www.missingkids.com/cybertip](http://www.missingkids.com/cybertip) or 1-800-843-

[www.missingkids.com/cybertip](http://www.missingkids.com/cybertip) for extensive information and resources for adults  
lth and safety of young Internet users.

## assage

tion and other types of abuse--referred to as hazing--  
more prevalent in high schools, middle schools also  
s a crime.<sup>72</sup> Student groups at secondary institutions  
of Chapter 269 of the General Laws, and those  
members of, or applicants to, their group.

discussed in this guide will help with hazing  
ignal of the County College of Morris, NJ also  
address hazing. See

[www.morriscc.edu/index?index=1366&cat=1](http://www.morriscc.edu/index?index=1366&cat=1)

## eld

as part of its hazing policy the complete

[u\\_handbook8.html#code.](#))

For more information, visit

[pdf](#)

to hazing, according

## Things to Think About

Help meet students' need for initiation rites in healthy ways. Offer ceremonies, mentoring programs, and other ways to welcome young people into a new school, onto a team, or into a group or activity.

Be sure to have adult supervision at all group activities.

Help educate young people about what hazing is and why it is wrong: Just because it's a tradition doesn't mean it's right.

Include hazing in your discussions of bullying and in any written student agreements.

Ask faculty supervisors of all activities to discuss hazing with their groups and to be on the lookout for hazing behaviors.

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## Reflection





**Tip: Start Early!**

Coordinate your bullying prevention efforts across all schools in your district, beginning with the youngest students. As mentioned earlier, research shows that when a child reaches age 8, aggressive tendencies may already be firmly in place. The earlier you begin bullying prevention efforts the better.

**Ingredients for School-wide Success**

*Essentials for Principals: Creating Emotional and Physical Security in Schools*, a study from the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2002), co-authored by the Educational Research Service, outlines some of the ingredients common to successful anti-bullying and violence prevention programs. While many of the “ingredients” apply to all prevention efforts and good teaching, it is the combination of ingredients that helps lead to successful programming.

**Ingredients for Success**

**Examples**

<p><b>Activities fostering school norms against violence, aggression, and bullying</b></p>	<p>Developing clear policies and procedures addressing bullying and harassment</p> <p>Using consistent, fair, and non-punitive consequences for violations of policies</p> <p>Reaching agreement on group policies with students (both classroom and school-wide)</p> <p>Posting school-wide rules in prominent places and places where bullying is identified as most common.</p> <p>Using a suggestion box or other anonymous instrument for reporting incidents</p> <p>Positively reinforcing pro-social behavior (prominently posting photos or testimonials of positive stories)</p>
<p><b>Comprehensive Approach</b> (family, peer, media, and community)</p>	<p>Developing student public service announcements (PSAs) for local cable access that discourage bullying</p> <p>Encouraging participation of local politicians in school events</p> <p>Discussing how widely to spread bullying prevention efforts (e.g., at sporting events)</p> <p>Placing articles in news media promoting prevention efforts</p> <p>Developing community/school partnerships such as in-school DARE officers or community policing models</p>

Partnering with parents to identify solutions;  
providing training and information to families  
about how to help targets and how to help bullies

Including parents, family members, and  
community members on task forces

Holding a whole community kick-off and follow-  
up events

Sharing information about the problem and  
solutions that are working with key personnel in  
your community

Giving concrete examples to community members

<p><b>Skills Training</b> based on sound theoretical underpinnings such as <b>Social Learning Theory</b></p>	<p>Training of teachers, families, and all school personnel</p> <p>Sustaining technical support of faculty, staff, and families through coaching, peer mentoring, and other intensive and ongoing relationships</p> <p>Training students in anger management, conflict resolution, perspective taking, active listening, “I”-messages, hate crimes, prejudice, racism, sexual harassment, and the role of bystanders</p>
<p><b>Interactive Pro-social Teaching</b></p>	<p>Employing group work, cooperative learning, discussions, and role plays for modeling of pro-social skills</p>
<p><b>Developmentally Tailored</b></p>	<p>Being sensitive to risks and opportunities of adolescence</p>
<p><b>Culturally Sensitive Material</b></p>	<p>Having sensitivity to different cultures and needs of families when planning events and home/school partnerships</p> <p>Using curricula that look at issues of institutionalized oppression and “isms,” and that encourages appreciation of differences</p> <p>Employing inclusive classroom practice (e.g., giving a voice to all students; using pedagogy that appeals to different cultures, learning styles, and intelligences)</p> <p>Training teachers to adapt curricula to their population</p>

## What is Social Learning Theory?

According to social learning theory, understanding behavior requires consideration of both the individual (his or her life history of learning and experiences) and their environment (the stimuli the person is responding to). Social learning theory and associated research hold that if one changes the way a person thinks, or changes the environment s/he is responding to, behavior will change.<sup>74</sup>



### Reflection

Communities may arise whether intended or not. The challenge is to intentionally create the kind of community that promotes safe and healthy values. Reflect with your staff about the core values that inform their vision of education:

What do they feel are the most important things for students to learn during their time at school?

What skills, understanding, and behaviors would they like the young people in your school to have?

How these values might be reflected in your “common-unity”?

For example, if one school community’s value is “respect for others,” what rules or expectations might all participants agree to uphold? Would teasing be tolerated? How would you define teasing? How might you incorporate these expectations into your school’s daily routine?

### Tip

Have students identify the core values of your school using their own words. Their thoughts can later become the basis for fashioning group agreements about what constitutes “acceptable behavior.”

## More Ingredients for Success: Developing Student Assets

“Destructive behaviors develop in part from a complex web of familial, economic, and cultural circumstances. These factors are part of the fabric of life and difficult to attack. Yet strategies that help children develop the resilience to cope adaptively with modern-day stresses can be effective, and it is there schools need to focus their efforts.”

— **Collaborative for the Advancement of Social and Emotional Learning**<sup>75</sup>

What are the building blocks for developing caring and responsible young people? Research shows that even populations at-risk for violence and other behavior or health problems can be greatly helped by enhancing protective factors. The Search Institute, at [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org), has outlined 40 research-based assets as playing a potential role in healthy youth development. Both internal and external assets have been identified and indicate that all levels of relationships - with peers, family, school, and the wider community - are significant in the positive development of young people.

### EXTERNAL ASSETS: Support

**Family support:** A young person’s family life provides high levels of love and support.

**Positive family communication:** A young person and his or her parent(s) communicate positively, and the young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parent(s).

**Other adult relationships:** A young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults.

**Caring neighborhood:** A young person experiences caring neighbors.

**Caring school climate:** School provides a caring, encouraging environment.

**Parental involvement in schooling:** Parent(s) are actively involved in helping a young person succeed in school.

### EXTERNAL ASSETS: Empowerment

**Community values youth:** A young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.

**Youth as resources:** A young person is given useful roles in the community.

**Service to others:** A young person serves in the community 1 hour or more per week.

**Safety:** A young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.

### EXTERNAL ASSETS: Boundaries and Expectations

**Family boundaries:** Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors a young person's whereabouts.

**School boundaries:** School provides clear rules and consequences and monitors students' whereabouts.

**Neighborhood boundaries:** Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.

**Adult role models:** Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.

**Positive peer influence:** A young person's best friends model responsible behavior.

**High expectations:** Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do their best.

### EXTERNAL ASSETS: Constructive Use of Time

**Creative activities:** A young person spends 3 or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.

**Youth programs:** A young person spends 3 or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.

**Religious community:** A young person spends 1 hour or more per week in activities in a religious institution.

**Time at home:** A young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

### INTERNAL ASSETS: Commitment to Learning

**Achievement motivation:** A young person is motivated to do well in school.

**School engagement:** A young person is actively engaged in learning.

**Homework:** A young person reports doing at least 1 hour of homework every school day.

**Bonding to school:** A young person cares about her or his school.

**Reading for pleasure:** A young person reads for pleasure 3 or more hours per week.

### INTERNAL ASSETS: Positive Values

**Caring:** A young person places high value on helping other people.

**Equality and social justice:** A young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.

**Integrity:** A young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.

**Honesty:** A young person tells the truth, even when it is not easy.

**Responsibility** and poverty.

*f*



## **It Takes a Village: Widening the Circle**

Central to the developmental assets is the notion that the whole community has a stake in a child's upbringing. The influence of adults in all aspects of a young person's life is critical. It's important to think about ways to involve all key members of your community who have the power to influence young people. This outreach might include everyone from members of faith-based communities, to public officials creating youth services programming, to neighbors or community members a young person regularly sees—such as a local store owner, a librarian, a police officer, or a crossing guard.

### **Reflection**



## Tools at the Ready: Creating a Caring School Community

Community is the glue that holds your school together. By being part of a community, young people learn how to treat one another and about their rights and responsibilities.

Eric Schaps' article "Creating a School Community" reported that students in schools with a strong sense of community derive multiple benefits, including learning to be:

- More academically motivated
- More likely to act ethically
- Better in emotional and social competencies
- Less likely to engage in problem behaviors, including violence
- More pro-social<sup>76</sup>

The article further states that schools that foster a sense of connection and belonging assure emotional and physical safety, nurture students' sense of autonomy and competence, and fulfill important psychological needs in young people—needs that underlie young people's motivations. When these important needs are met, young people become increasingly committed to the school's norms, values, and goals.<sup>77</sup>

### Things to Think About

- What is the "common-unity" of your school?
- How do you want young people to treat one another?
- What will they value?
- How will those values get expressed through their actions?
- How do you create the type of community you want in your school?

### Reflection

The following assessment is from the Developmental Studies Center ([www.devstu.org](http://www.devstu.org)), an organization that stresses the development of community in schools.

#### Ask students to agree or disagree with such statements as:

- My class is like a family.
- Students in my class help one another learn.
- I believe I can talk to the teachers in this school about things that are bothering me.
- Students in my class can get a rule changed if they think that it is unfair.

### Further Reflection

The above exercise can be adapted for use with faculty and other school personnel to get a gauge on how well you are doing with building a sense of community among staff. **Do they agree or disagree with such statements as:**

The staff and faculty at my school are like a family.

My colleagues help one another learn

My colleagues are supportive of one another.

I believe I can talk to the staff in this school about things that are bothering me.

I believe I can talk to the administration in this school about things that are bothering me.

I have meaningful input into the rules and policies of this school.

## Group Agreements for Behavior

One way to promote a positive school community is to establish patterns of behavior that students can engage in and rely on.

A useful framework centers on “agreements” your staff and students together develop to set expectations for behavior. Many bullying prevention programs include a pledge against bullying behaviors or a pledge to commit to inclusive and caring behaviors. The pledge or code would then be given to students and parents. It can be very effective to create your own pledge or code with students. This process can communicate to young people that school is their community, and that to function effectively within it, they must take responsibility for creating the type of community they want.

By involving students in crafting group agreements for behavior, students will be more invested in them. They are motivated not just by a set of external rules, but by their own commitment to a vision of how they want their community to be. Students agree to participate in their community because they understand that it benefits them and that certain rights and benefits come with responsibilities.

Of course students should not be left to define communal norms of conduct by themselves, and group agreements for behavior cannot replace student codes of conduct. The leadership of teachers and administrators is essential. There are excellent activities to structure development of such agreements in many curricula. (See, *e.g.*, the “Caring Being” activity which is included in Operation Respect’s *Don’t Laugh at Me* program referenced on page 66 for an example.) Generally, the process entails the following components:

Dialogue with students about what rights every student has (e.g., to feel safe, to learn, to participate in school life).

Dialogue with students about what behaviors threaten those rights or that students simply do not want in their community.

Dialogue with students about what behaviors support those rights (e.g., what helps one to feel safe) or that students desire for their community.

Dialogue and a group process to construct agreements from this brainstormed list of behaviors.

Action where students signify their commitment to the agreements (by signing agreements or some other active way of saying “I agree to live by this”).

Dialogue about consequences for not adhering to the agreement (what should happen when someone makes a mistake and acts outside of the agreement).

Ongoing dialogue and process for updating and amending the agreements  
(regular consideration of how things

## Things to Think About

What behaviors do you want to encourage?

What behaviors do you want to discourage?

Is there frequent disruptive behavior at your school? What types of behaviors are most frequent?

When do problems most often occur? Are there any patterns?

In what ways might you reinforce young people's/peers positive behaviors?

What types of limits need to be set to create an environment where your school's values are able to flourish?

In what ways could behavior be remedied by a revision of your school's structure, extracurricular offerings, or schedule? *Note:* Behavior problems often disappear when young people are kept involved and active.

What types of discipline methods does your school support? What types of discipline need to be avoided? Why?

In what ways can adults encourage young people to solve problems for themselves (i.e., peer leadership, bystander responsibility)?

What are the best ways to empower young people to take initiative to improve the school climate?

How can you create an environment that helps facilitate young people solving problems for themselves?

How are agreed rules of conduct created? How can students participate? Staff?

How will you train staff to skillfully deal with the guidance, discipline, and behavior management needs of young people?

(See "Constructive Disciplining" on page 76 in Chapter 3 for more information.)

## Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policies

In addition to group agreements about behavior, create and communicate policies that specifically prevent bullying and harassment and address civil rights concerns; then share the policies with key stakeholders. Such policies are typically created at the district level. They are the more formal version of the group agreements you make with students and they must address any relevant legal factors, including definitions and formal complaint procedures.

## Maintain Policies That Are Effective

Explain how to report harassment and to whom to report it

Describe the various steps the school will take to respond to reported incidents

Include formal complaint procedures

Protect those who report harassment, or who participate in related proceedings, from retaliation

Ensure that all members of the school community are aware of their rights and responsibilities

Student codes of conduct and personnel policies should also be examined to ensure they

Federal laws prohibiting sex and disability discrimination require prompt and equitable complaint procedures that incorporate due process standards. Such procedures are also recommended to address complaints of race-, national origin-, and sexual orientation-related discrimination, and other types of discrimination addressed by a district's policy. The term "grievance procedures" is also used to refer to formal complaint procedures; this Guide uses the two terms interchangeably.

**Formal complaint procedures should include:**

- Notice given to students, parents, and employees about the process, including how and where complaints can be filed
- An opportunity for a prompt, thorough, and impartial investigation, including the opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence
- Confidentiality for the complainant, the alleged harasser, and any witnesses, to the extent possible
- Notification to the complainant of the outcome of the complaint consistent with any legally required privacy restrictions
- Effective remedies when civil rights violations are found

**Promote Tolerance and Mutual Respect for Differences**

Consensus is rising among educators that the best way to protect students from harassment is to establish a secure environment that expects appropriate behavior and promotes tolerance, sensitivity to others' views, and cooperative interactions among students. Effective anti-harassment programs offer students curricula, teaching methods, and school activities that discourage stereotypes and respond to the concerns of students of different races and cultural backgrounds.

The district should regularly communicate its policies against harassment to all members of the school community—including students, staff, parents, and school visitors—and make it clear the policies will be enforced. The district should also take steps to ensure students are able to identify harassment, understand its causes and effects, and feel safe when reporting instances of harassment.

The school environment and activities should be regularly monitored to ensure harassment is not occurring. All instances of alleged or suspected harassment, whether or not substantiated, should be documented. Documentation should include all disciplinary incidents in which race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or other subjects of district concern are a factor.

Successful anti-harassment efforts generally provide opportunities for students to overcome ignorance, mistrust, and biases. Age-appropriate prejudice reduction and sexual-respect concepts and examples can be included in social studies, literature, and other classes.

Examples of teaching strategies that can help to reduce prejudices include modeling unbiased behavior, improving students' critical thinking skills, helping students to develop empathy, and encouraging cooperative learning.

Student activities, such as civil rights teams that encourage students of different backgrounds and both sexes to work together on shared projects, can contribute to intergroup understanding. Many schools use trained student mediators to resolve personal conflicts that

could lead to harassment. In some schools, student volunteers are trained to discuss diversity issues with their peers or younger students in the classroom.

**Policies should be developed to cover the following:**

Bullying

Unlawful harassment (harassment based on race, color, national origin, ethnicity, sex, disability, sexual orientation, and religion) (**See** “Legal Issues Related to Bullying” on page 62)

Cyberbullying

Hazing

Think about how you’d like to structure these policies. Many schools create separate policies for each, while others include everything under the umbrella of “harassment.” Whatever approach you take, it’s helpful to avoid confusion by using the same grievance procedure for all policies.



### Things to Think About

What behaviors are you committing to eliminate?

What are the legal requirements for the policy?

What definitions and examples of behaviors can you offer?

What will be your standards for determining whether or not the behavior is bullying or harassment?

What are your specific procedures for reporting and addressing complaints?

What are the protocols for staff to follow if they witness an incident?

What are the actions school officials will take when they learn of an incident?

What are the options for responding to incidents of varying severity, persistence, and pervasiveness for both perpetrators and targets?

What effect will the age of the parties have? What effect will the context of the behavior have?

How can you ensure the safety of people making reports?

How can you ensure all members of your school community are aware of their rights and responsibilities?

When does conduct need to be reported to law enforcement?

Who on staff will be responsible for compliance?

How can you support these policies with staff training?

How will you encourage the involvement of parents?

What ways can you team with outside agencies to implement your policy?

What resources are available to support your policy?

What are the free speech (i.e., First Amendment) implications of your policy?

What other policies are affected by anti-bullying rules? (e.g., transinswg9tion





## The Role of Rituals

### **Delve Deeper**

For more information about the use of rituals in promoting a caring culture in schools, see Rachel Kessler's



## Encourage Supportive and Sincere Relationships

The heart of being positive role models is building the relationship between students and teachers. Students can sense when teachers or school personnel truly care about them. Educators offer valuable support when they call attention to how a student is doing on a given day, give extra encouragement, or strive to be fair. The teachers who are seen as positive role models by young people are not usually those who are most lenient with students, but those who are always fair and caring. They communicate their respect for young people and for themselves with their high expectations, their belief in young people's goodness, their interest in young people's thoughts and opinions, and their encouragement of youth to give their best efforts. They help create a safe environment for learning, are honest, and are receptive to feedback. While these skills can be reinforced and modeled through training, teachers should also be given time for self-reflection.

Such qualities can be reinforced at your school by making caring and support of young people a criterion in teacher evaluations. And you can create safe systems for students to give feedback to teachers about how they are doing. Administrators can also model caring and concern in interactions with staff, as the school atmosphere is often set by them.

## Give Students a Voice in the School

In addition to having students contribute to developing school or classroom agreements, it is important to involve students in different yet meaningful ways of improving school life.

Adolescents are often ready to assume ownership and leadership and can have insightful ideas and problem-solving abilities. In order to receive respect, you must give it. You communicate your respect for young people by including them in important decisions that affect them. And such involvement helps them to develop their core competencies and leads to a growing sense of autonomy, efficacy, and investment in the outcome. You will also be teaching young people important skills that can be applied in academics and later in life. One might say the young people in any school are the true experts on bullying and should be consulted as such.



### School Spotlight: Springfield

When asked what the number one thing they would do to reduce bullying and teasing in their public school in Springfield, MA, a group of middle school students said that they would institute a policy of wearing school uniforms.

## Class Meetings

One way to harness youth as a resource in your school is by holding class meetings. Class meetings are democracy in action, teaching important tools for civic engagement such as brainstorming, problem solving, listening to others, stating your case, and respecting different perspectives.

Class meetings can be held at short notice to deal with specific problems, but they should also be held at regular intervals to check in on how things are going; establish norms, and values, and group agreements; set goals; and plan activities.

## Delve Deeper

Classroom teachers benefit from training on how to facilitate class meetings. The Developmental Studies Center [www.devstu.org](http://www.devstu.org) has some excellent resources about holding class meetings.

## Cultivate Peer Leaders

Another way to involve youth meaningfully is to have student representation on task forces with an ongoing charge to address the issue of bullying. These task forces can be mixed groups of key stakeholders who are responsible for:

- Understanding the scope of the bullying problem at your school
- Planning prevention efforts
- Networking with families and the wider community
- Getting the word out about your efforts

Other worthwhile practices include using youth as peer mentors; options include pairing a less popular kid with a more popular one, pairing a special needs student with a mainstream peer, and pairing students across grades to provide important guidance and support.

Peer mediation programs can also be highly effective in improving school climate.<sup>81</sup> However, peer mediation is **not** an appropriate way to deal with bullying incidents where there is a clear pattern of abuse and power imbalance. Intervention from adults is necessary in such instances. It is usually best to avoid direct confrontation between the bully and target. Still, peer mediation can be an effective prevention strategy.

## School Spotlight: Holyoke

“We recommend you engage students actively in creating and sponsoring violence prevention school-wide activities, doing community service, and nurturing peer leaders.” — **Peck Middle School**, Holyoke, MA

## By the Numbers

Research from the National Resource Center for Safe Schools showed the incidence of aggression and bullying is reduced in mixed-aged groupings.<sup>82</sup>

## Break the Code of Silence

Maintaining open lines of communication with students about bullying is critical in prevention efforts. Students can also be given a way to communicate anonymously with adults about bullying. Some programs include the use of a locked suggestion box for students to report incidents of bullying or give ideas for improving school safety. Once students feel confident that adults will intervene effectively on their behalf, they will be more eager to share what is really happening.

### **Make it a Habit**

Don't work from a rote list of ways to involve students; instead cultivate a practice of involving them. Once seeking student input becomes a habit of mind, the possibilities for engaging young people in meaningful ways are endless.

### **Teach Pro-social Skills**

A successful bullying prevention effort should include a curricular component that teaches pro-social skills and awareness.

Some of the skills that students need to learn and have modeled include:

Communication skills (I-messages, active listening, self-assertion)





## **Apply Action Research**

An intentional process of self-reflection called action research can be used to guide your prevention efforts. By using action research you:

- Ensure that you will learn from what has worked and what has not

- Continually refine and improve your efforts

Every member of your community can become a partner in this sort of research—from



## Home Connections

The possibilities for including parents do not have to be limited to your bullying prevention program. Consider creating a parent resource center, developing policies that include parents at every step, using parents as aides, and sustaining their involvement. When parents feel they are part of the school, they are more likely to support your day-to-day efforts.

## The Importance of Training

Just as students need new skills and awareness to deal with bullying, so do staff and students' families. Successful bullying prevention programs stress the importance of including all key school staff in training (e.g., teachers, counselors, safety officers, cafeteria workers, custodians, and bus drivers). Families of your students can be reached through a separate training or can be integrated into a portion of your staff training.

### **Tip: Create Cross-Age Peer Partnerships**

Bullying appears to occur less frequently in mixed-aged settings, as opposed to same-age groupings. Cross-age peer mentoring is one way to help prevent bullying. Once you've identified a target population that is vulnerable to bullying in your school, you can design an effective strategy to support that group. If 6<sup>th</sup> graders are afraid of 8<sup>th</sup> graders (or avoid the 8<sup>th</sup> graders' bathroom or floor), you may find that creating 8<sup>th</sup> grade mentors for 6<sup>th</sup> graders is an effective bullying preventative strategy.

Some key topics to address in training are:

- Recognizing bullying when you see it (how to differentiate between ordinary conflict and bullying)
- Myths about bullying
- Knowing the facts about how bullying (left uncorrected) affects targets, bystanders, and bullies
- How to support targets
- How to help bystanders become allies
- How to re-channel bullies' need for power into more positive directions
- How to develop pro-social skills
- Community-building techniques
- Discipline and guidance techniques
- Policies and reporting procedures

### **Delve Deeper**

The National Education Association (NEA) encourages bringing outside bullying prevention consultants into the school system to build up internal knowledge and capacity. The NEA can train your school staff and assist the district in developing a “Whole School Bullying Prevention/Intervention Program” at no cost. Many excellent sources for training assistance listed in this Guide’s resource section on page 66.

This observation holds true for targets, bystanders, bullies, and the adults in their lives. What supports bullying prevention—and has the by-product of building character—is the process of reflecting and questioning oneself. For motivations to be “good” they must arise internally, rather than just externally.



### School Spotlight: Holbrook

Bullying prevention is successful when you link it with a character education program and offer peer mediation, which are then integrated.”

— **South School**, Holbrook, MA

## The Critical Role of Adults

“We will never greatly improve students’ moral development in schools without taking on the complex task of developing adults’ maturity and ethical capacities.”

— **Rick Weissbourd**<sup>86</sup>

Apart from whatever adults model for young people, children are closely attuned to the adults in their lives and the treatment they receive from them. It is the quality of the relationships that most deeply influence young people’s behaviors. Character development expert Rick Weissbourd explains adults’ capacity “to appreciate students’ perspectives and to disentangle them from their own, their ability to admit and learn from moral error, their moral energy and idealism, their generosity, and their ability to help students develop moral thinking without shying away from their own moral authority.”<sup>87</sup>

While most efforts to develop young people’s character focus solely on them, we often ignore the adults in the building at our peril. The goal should be to support the adults in recognizing a sense of their efficacy, not in becoming “values police.” Supporting teachers in dealing with stress and students’ behavioral problems is critical. Give them the opportunity to reflect on hopes and dreams related to their service and to mitigate the isolation that is often endemic to teaching. This kind of support will fortify your bullying prevention efforts.

Teachers who are disillusioned and stressed can be depressed—leading to behavior that is contrary to creating a community of caring. It is difficult for depressed teachers to maintain positive qualities, but these “are exactly the qualities—empathy, patience, persistence, consistency, idealism—that are crucial for teachers to shepherd students’ moral growth.”<sup>88</sup>

## Lessons from Character Education

Research into young people’s character development has implications for any pro-social program you develop, including one whose purpose is to prevent bullying.

When faced with inequities and other social problems, young people’s moral action is tied to their sense of their own ability to effect a change in relation to that problem. Conversely, young people who believe they have little ability to make a difference in the world become unable to act.

...help developing the skills to work successfully (e.g., brainstorming, setting and achieving goals, listening, and collaborating) in a group, appreciating differences, effectively expressing emotions, and recognizing and expressing feelings appropriately.)

Young people's efforts to improve their environment are often more successful when they feel connected to one another and are supported by others.

Young people are deeply affected by the actions of their parents and teachers.

Finding sense and meaning in their world is an important part of young people's moral development.

Young people naturally care about issues of justice and fairness. Character education is not instilling a list of values on young people but rather a process of recognizing and encouraging their own values as they emerge.<sup>89</sup>

Strong emotions such as anger, shame, and despair can undermine the sense of caring and the development of other positive character traits.<sup>90</sup>

## Things to Think About

Give young people an opportunity to identify and address problems in your school culture that are important to them. This means involving young people in both identifying problems and developing ways that are meaningful and supporting them to achieve those goals.

Teach young people and staff the skills of active listening.

Foster a sense of connection between young people and the adults in your school.

Allow young people the opportunity in their environment to explore their own values and beliefs.

Provide opportunities for school personnel to explore their own values and beliefs.

Encourage staff to take responsibility in revitalizing their school.

Encourage the school community to feel a sense of belonging and to avoid staff isolation. Encourage peer support and identify staff members who might be suffering from isolation.

## Reflection

In a staff meeting, have groups of two teachers reflect on:

What were your hopes and dreams for your school?

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How can you integrate these learning goals into the curriculum and school

In general, civil rights violations occur in school when a student's or adult's behavior, or inappropriate language, creates a hostile school environment. Repeated bias-related harassment that creates a hostile environment unlawfully denies a student the "advantages and privileges" of attending school. G.L. c.76, § 5.



### **Guarantee of Non-Discrimination: G.L. Chapter 76, § 5**

**Statutory guarantee of non-discrimination in** obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study in a public school **on account of** race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation

### **Civil Rights Criminal Statute: G.L. Chapter 265, § 37**

Whoever, by force or threat of force **willfully** injures, intimidates, interferes with, oppresses, **or attempts** to injure, intimidate, or interfere with a person in the exercise of a right secured by constitution or statute stands subject to 10 years in state prison and a \$10,000 fine with bodily injury, or 1 year in a house of correction and a \$1,000 fine without injury.

### **Action by Attorney General for Civil Injunction: G.L. C.12, SEC. 11H**

Whenever any person(s) interfere(s) with or attempt(s) to interfere with, **by threats, or intimidation, or coercion**, any other person(s) in the exercise of a right secured by constitution or statute, the Attorney General may apply to Superior Court for injunction to protect peaceable exercise or enjoyment of rights.

### **The Hate Crimes Penalties Act: G.L. C.265, SEC. 39**

As applicable to violence against persons: Whoever commits an assault and/or battery with the intent to **intimidate a person because of race or ethnicity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or disability** stands subject to 5 years in a state prison and a \$10,000 fine with bodily injury **or** 2.5 years in a house of correction and a \$5,000 fine without injury.

### **Private Action for Injunction and Monetary Damages: G.L. C.12, SEC. 11I**

Any person whose exercise or enjoyment of rights secured by constitution or statute has been interfered with, or attempted to be interfered with, by **threats, intimidation, or coercion** may apply to Superior Court for injunctive or other equitable relief, compensatory money damages, and award of attorneys' fees and costs.

### **Required School Policies: MGL Chapter 71: Section 37H**



## **Cooperate with Law Enforcement**

[This section is adapted from *Protecting Students Against Harassm*



## Delve Deeper

See *Safe and Sound: An Educational Leader's Guide to Evidence-based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs* from CASEL at [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org) for a review of 80 multi-year comprehensive programs in social and emotional learning. Included is advice about how to put together fragmented prevention efforts into a comprehensive whole and checklists of questions relevant to any program you are considering.

## Recommended Bullying Prevention Programs and Resources

- ✚ **Complete No-Bullying Program Curriculum**, a comprehensive school-wide anti-bullying prevention program based on the research of Daniel Olweus. Available at Hazelden Center City, Center City, MN 55012-0176, 1-800-328-9000 or through [www.hazelden.org/OA\\_HTML/ibeCCtpItmDspRte.jsp?item=3824](http://www.hazelden.org/OA_HTML/ibeCCtpItmDspRte.jsp?item=3824)
- ✚ **Let's Get Real**, a powerful documentary and curriculum where kids speak up about bullying, available from Women's Educational Media at [http://www.respectforall.org/lgr\\_teachingguide.htm](http://www.respectforall.org/lgr_teachingguide.htm)
- ✚ The **Olweus Bullying Prevention Program**, a multilevel, multicomponent program designed to reduce and prevent bully/victim problems among students at school. School staff is largely responsible for introducing and implementing the program, and their efforts are directed toward improving peer relations and making the school a safe and pleasant environment. The program, developed by Dan Olweus, was identified by the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (University of Colorado, Boulder) as "1 of 10 Blueprint Programs for Violence Prevention." Dr. Olweus is widely recognized as an international expert on bullying issues and the "father" of research on bullying. Available through [www.clemson.edu/olweus](http://www.clemson.edu/olweus)
- ✚ **Open Circle Curriculum**, a classroom primary prevention program for elementary students. See <http://guide.helpingamericasyouth.gov/programdetail.cfm?id=370> for more information.
- ✚ **Operation Respect: Don't Laugh at Me**, founded by Peter Yarrow of the folk group Peter, Paul & Mary, the organization disseminates educational resources including the *Don't Laugh at Me* (DLAM) programs: one for grades 2 through 5, another for grades 6 through 8, and a third for summer camps and after-school programs. All the programs utilize inspiring music and video along with curriculum guides based on the well-tested, highly regarded conflict resolution curricula developed by the Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (RCCP) of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). Available through <http://www.dontlaugh.org/>

## Online Resources

- # **The Anti-Bullying Network**, from the Moray House Institute of Education, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, at [www.antibullying.net/index.html](http://www.antibullying.net/index.html)
- # **Bully Online**, from the UK National Workplace Bullying Advice Line at [www.successunlimited.co.uk](http://www.successunlimited.co.uk)
- # **Bullying.com**, at [www.bullying.com](http://www.bullying.com)
- # **Bullying at School**, from the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE), the University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland, at [www.scre.ac.uk/bully](http://www.scre.ac.uk/bully)
- # **Bullying in Schools and What to Do About It**, Ken Rigby, Adjunct Associate Professor of Social Psychology and an educational consultant based at the University of South Australia, at [www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying](http://www.education.unisa.edu.au/bullying)
- #





## The Three “I”s

**Involved:** “I am part of the process. My opinion counts. My ideas are included.”

**Invested:** “I care what happens. I can commit to change. I have a stake in the outcome.”

**Inspired:** “I have a unique vision to contribute. I have the energy for the long-haul. I will bring my heart, soul, and mind to the solution. I can make a difference.”

Not every intervention to prevent bullying begins at the top. Grassroots efforts that begin with a small group of faculty members and concerned staff can be just as successful in planting the necessary seeds to create a whole-school movement to bully-proof your school. While it is critical that leaders in positions of authority commit to school-wide implementation, you’ll find that positive energy and determination can be energizing and contagious.

### Reflection

With a colleague or in a staff meeting consider the following:

How can you involve young people in co-creating a bullying-free classroom?

How will you help young people feel invested in what happens in the classroom?

What types of inspiration can you provide to keep young people motivated throughout the process?

## Offering Leadership

Classroom teachers do not always think of themselves as leaders, nor do they necessarily get treated as leaders, but they can be. A teacher may also think of his or her role as being an authority figure for young people, or a facilitator and coach. All these roles have their place in teaching. When you support children in learning a skill, you are often in the role of facilitator



How would you like it to be?

What do you seek to change about your classroom practice?

Why is that a challenge?



Regulate distress  
Are open to multiple viewpoints  
Get student input  
Nurture student leaders.

## **Tools at the Ready: Classroom Applications**

In Chapter 2 school-wide “Tools at the Ready” for building community and preventing bullying were outlined. Refer back to that discussion for more information. The same tools can be put to use in your classroom. Here are ways to think about how to customize the tools to your and your students’ unique needs.

## **Tools for Community-Building and Bully-Proofing Schools**

Group agreements for behavior  
Disciplining for Learning  
Rituals  
Positive reinforcement and role modeling  
Empowering students  
Teaching pro-social skills  
Cooperative learning  
Action research.

## **Group Agreements for Behavior**

Even if you have developed a school-wide pledge or group agreement for behavior, it’s helpful to repeat this process in your classroom (or create a process if school-wide agreements have not been negotiated).

Your classroom agreements might be more specific or address unique circumstances. If you have a science lab, what needs to be agreed about sharing resources? What behaviors does everyone agree to for maintaining safety? What behaviors do students agree to in order to show respect for others’ ideas? What specifically helps young people feel safer when they





How often will we check in on how we are doing in adhering to our group agreements?

What will we do when someone does not adhere to an agreement?

How often and through what process will we update or revise agreements?

How will you use the process of creating and maintaining group agreements and class meetings to leverage the three “I”s? (**See** page XX in Chapter 3 for a review of the three “I”s.)

What training and support do you need to effectively implement practices such as group agreements and class meetings?

What skills and support will students need?

(**See** “Group Agreements for Behavior” on page 42 in Chapter 2 for more information.)

### Tip

Limit class meetings to no more than 20 minutes and keep the conversation focused. Create a “parking lot” for random issues that come up or issues that are too time consuming to deal with at that moment. You can return to your parking lot items at the next class meeting.

## Constructive Discipline

There are countless opportunities in classrooms to instill discipline which is conducive to growth and learning. While a school-wide discipline and behavior code guides your efforts, how you handle those teachable moments can have a major impact in setting classroom expectations.



### Reflection

When you were an adolescent and misbehaved, how did your parents handle the situation? Your teachers?

How did their reaction make you feel?

What do you think is the best way to address a behavioral problem with a student?

A question I still have about behavior management is ...

## **Punishment vs. Discipline**

## Discussing Behavior Problems with Young People

Use “Needs, Weeds, Seeds, and Deeds” as the foundation for a private conversation about a problem behavior between two students or with an individual student. If the problem is a group problem, use the process during a class meeting.

### Important Safety Note!

Think carefully about whether or not a situation between two students should be mediated using Needs, Weeds, Seeds, and Deeds.

If harassment or intimidation is ongoing, a face-to-face meeting between a bully and target may only serve to retraumatize the target. Safety must take priority. Mediation, whether adult or peer mediated, is only effective in first-time, minor, or nonchronic situations. (See Chapter 4 for more information about ways to intervene with bullies and targets.)

### Things to Think About



Set and enforce ground rules: no blaming, shaming, name-calling, or interrupting.

Listen non-judgmentally

Paraphrase what young people have said

Encourage the use of “I feel” messages rather than “You” messages that imply blame

Be comfortable with silence (allow young people ample time to reflect)

Criticize the behavior, not the person—“You are decent, but what you did was wrong”

### Needs

What happened? (Give each student a chance to say what happened from his or her perspective. Paraphrase each student’s perspective and ask if you are correct in your summary.)

Why was the behavior a problem? (Address feelings that were brought up by the behavior or any other repercussions. In framing the question, it helps to remind students that their actions, like a stone thrown into a pond, create ripples that affect the whole community.)

What **need(s)** do you think motivated the behavior? (This question might take some time for reflection. You can give each young person a chance to write out ideas before answering. For example, a young person who spreads rumors about another young person may seem to be acting out of personal dislike. A closer look might reveal that the young person feels they need to increase his own social standing in the school by lowering another student’s social standing. Students will get better at this type of reflection over time.)

If the problem you see in your classroom is a group dynamic, like a group of students being excluded, bring the issue to a class meeting and use the “Needs, Weeds, Seeds, and Deeds” process to take a closer look at the issue. Engage the entire group in solving the problem and making a commitment to change. Does anything need to change in your classroom agreements?

## Weeds

Were there any obstacles to achieving better behavior? Again, this question may be difficult for young people, but it's worth pursuing.

This step is an opportunity to think about factors that might reinforce or contribute to the problem. The emphasis here is on learning, not blaming. In the example of someone who has spread rumors about a student, an obstacle to improving behavior may be the prevalence of gossiping among students. By looking at **weeds** you can better problem solve issues related to the behavior.

## Seeds

What opportunities for learning and growth exist? A young person who spreads rumors might not have foreseen how far the rumor would go or how devastating it would be for the target. Likewise, a target might not have thought about the ways the school culture encourages such rumors. This step is akin to finding the silver lining in a cloud.

## Deeds

This is the part of the conversation where **deeds** (intentional acts) occur:

Necessary reparations are made

A commitment to better behavior is secured.

Ask the student who instigated the problem what s/he can you do to repair the damage done. (In the rumor example, the perpetrator can apologize and retract the rumor.)

Ask the target what s/he wants to happen.

Also try to problem solve ways the class can address any weeds identified. Perhaps the person who spread the rumor could write a piece in the school newspaper about why gossip is bad for everyone; or you could get students' suggestions at your class meeting.

To bring this conversation to a constructive close, it is critical to ask what the person with the problem behavior can commit to doing differently next time. Sometimes simply re-committing to a group agreement against bullying behavior might be enough; but consider getting a specific commitment from the young person beyond your classroom agreements or in addition to the agreements. (**See** Chapter 4 for more strategies for intervening in bullying events.)

### Tip: Curriculum Infusion

"Needs, Weeds, Seeds, and Deeds" can be infused into the academic curricula. The subjects of history, politics, and literature are filled with opportunities to reflect on conflict using this framework. By weaving in bullying prevention ideas you'll help students gain skill reflecting on personal and social dynamics that contribute to problems.

## Delve Deeper

See Alfie Kohn's provocative book about classroom management *Beyond Discipline: From Compliance to Community* (ASCD, 1996).

### Review of Steps for Constructive Disciplining

1. Use the Needs, Weeds, Seeds, and Deeds framework for discussion
2. Provide choices
3. Teach responsibility
4. Stay neutral, nonjudgmental, and dispassionate
5. Respond immediately
6. Be fair and consistent
7. Implement consequences

### The Power of Rituals

Many teachers use rituals in their classrooms—from the way they hand out papers to how they begin and end each class. Rituals can help create a caring community, and the best rituals are those that communicate and reinforce values your group holds and celebrates and those that prepare students for, and celebrate, life transitions.

There are endless options: You could use a relaxation technique to diffuse students' tensions before tests or you might begin a class period with a quote that is related to the topic of the day. Rituals accepted and followed by the group can help prevent conflict in a classroom and build a sense of shared community. Rituals and traditions that are ongoing have the added benefit of reminding everyone they are part of a history with strong roots and an enduring future. We are more likely to behave at our best when we feel part of something larger and more important than ourselves.



### Reflection

What rituals, if any, do I currently use in my classroom?

In what ways do these rituals support a caring classroom? Are there ways they do not provide positive support?

What opportunities are there for me to reinforce the values of a caring classroom through rituals?



## Things to Think About

During a normal class period, what are the moments of transition?

Which periods of transition seem to be most difficult for students?

What type of ritual might make that transition easier?

What values could that ritual communicate?

What type of rituals best communicate the values of your classroom?

What events could be celebrated in the classroom with rituals?

What rituals would best celebrate those events, while also communicating important values?

How might I nurture student leadership through the development and use of rituals?

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What life transitions will my students be experiencing this year? What ritual could honor or celebrate this transition?

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**Tip**

## **Positive Reinforcement and Role Modeling**

### **Teaching Opportunities**

Look for opportunities during each class period to provide role models for young people and

Are you ready to hear feedback? What might make you feel safer when hearing feedback? Who would you trust to give you constructive, and honest, feedback?

What good behavior do you wish to single out for recognition?

What mechanisms will you use to positively reinforce those behaviors?

How might young people be involved in providing good role models and positive reinforcement for good behavior?

## Empowering Students: Nurturing Acts of Conscience

In the article “Words Can Hurt Forever,” authors Garbarino and deLara note that efforts to create a caring community within your classroom and school plant the seeds of social responsibility in young people. To the largest extent, young people’s acts of conscience arise from a sense of being inextricably bound together with others. It is through their relationships with others and their successful navigation of differences among people that they gain clarity about their own needs and values.

Another key part of young people’s character development is having the opportunity to experience a sense of their own power and efficacy. So every time you let a student take a leadership role or ask for input from your class and integrate it in meaningful ways, you are contributing to growth in young people’s character. While this practice will serve your bullying prevention efforts directly, it will also well serve your students and likely make you feel better about your own efficacy in the classroom.<sup>96</sup>

### By the Numbers

Students who are most connected to their schools are the ones most likely to believe and act on the conviction that it is not acceptable to treat others badly.<sup>97</sup>

How long does it take to build a circle of caring? How do you encourage their potential and...

**G**oal setting and staying motivated to reach goals.

**O**bstacle identification: recognizing group goals and obstacles.

**L**earning from mistakes and recovering from setbacks.

Put it together: How do we support our personal beliefs and values in...

Young people need to develop skills that help them reach their personal bests. The sense of confidence and accomplishment that comes along the way is vital to personal growth.

Help students develop the GOLD skills—particularly their efforts to help bully-proof their schools:

Young people need practice and opportunities to develop new competencies. They need permission to make mistakes and learn from them, and they need your guidance to facilitate their progress. (See Chapter 5 for ideas about working with students to widen the circle of caring and encourage community service projects.)

### Your Role in Nurturing Student Leadership

**Coach** young people on the tools of achievement, such as goal setting, self-assessment, learning from failure, persistence, discipline, and cooperation.

**Lead** young people in developing a sense of their own self-worth, and identifying their unique gifts and contributions to the whole.

**Help** young people in the classroom see themselves as members of a team, striving together for a common goal.

**Witness** students' growth and **reflect** it back to them.

**Champion** young people's efforts, increasing enthusiasm and buy-in, so progress in bullying-prevention spreads beyond the classroom/school and into the community.

### Teaching Pro-Social Skills and Awareness

People often turn to curricula when they think of bullying prevention, but choosing a specific program is just one approach to bullying prevention. It is, however, a critical piece of a whole-school approach. Fortunately, many good bullying prevention programs exist, and there is overlap of core concepts within the fields of conflict resolution, violence prevention, anti-bias work, social and emotional learning, and character education. For that reason, the key concepts are outlined here. Feel free to draw from various sources for activities and lessons that will work best with your student population. A minimum of 10 to 20 skills lessons are recommended.

### Key Bullying-Buster Concepts to Teach

What bullying is (how to know it when you see it)

How common myths about bullying perpetuate it

Bullying hurts everyone (toxic environment)

Everyone has a right to feel and be safe

Our actions (and inactions) have consequences

Problems can be solved nonviolently

One of our responsibilities is to be an ally to someone who is being bullied or excluded

Another responsibility is to be an ally to an ally  
Adults in the community are here to help you learn and keep you safe  
Telling is not tattling  
Differences among members enrich a community  
Conflict is a growth opportunity and leads to creative solutions  
Biases are often operating in our interactions, whether or not we are conscious of them  
Power dynamics and biases at work in a school culture reflect larger society's power dynamics and biases  
Expectations others have of us influence our behaviors (both positively and negatively)

### **Key Social Skills to Teach**

Perspective taking  
Anger management/impulse control  
Empathy  
Feelings vocabulary  
Healthy expression of feelings  
Cooperation  
How to be a friend  
Communicating needs ("I" messages)  
Active listening  
How conflict escalates  
Win-win conflict resolution  
Problem solving  
Assertiveness skills (interrupting bias and harassment)  
Positive self-talk  
Appreciation of differences

### **Launching the Classroom Component**

A good place to begin your classroom component is a group discussion about feelings and thoughts about bullying. Most young people are not bullies, but the majority of us—adults included—have been involved in bullying, either by our silence as a witness to an event or by being party to more subtle forms of bullying such as exclusion, spreading gossip (or simply believing rumors), or teasing.



## Moving From Bystanders to Allies

“It made me sad for the victim, and I wanted to help him, but I was afraid.”

— **from a bystander who witnessed a bullying incident**

Studies show that peer intervention is effective in stopping bullying in a majority of instances.<sup>99</sup> Boys and girls were equally effective, and the effectiveness of the intervention was not related to whether or not it was an aggressive strategy. This finding demonstrates that nonviolent solutions can work.

### By the Numbers

Peers are present in **88%** of bullying incidents and intervene **17–19%** of the time.<sup>100</sup>

R. J. Hazler’s article titled “Bystanders: An overlooked factor in peer on peer abuse” showed that children who do not intervene may have various reasons:

They may be unsure of what to do

They fear retaliation

They worry about making it worse<sup>101</sup>

To combat bystanders’ fears, the book *Bully proofing your school: a comprehensive approach for elementary schools* recommends teaching young people to help targets through:

Creative problem solving

Seeking adult help

Joining with the victim as an ally

Being an ally to other allies

Developing empathy for the victim<sup>102</sup>

## School Spotlight: Huntington

## **The Power Demonstration**

1. Put the following graphic on the board.



6. End the activity with a group “POWER” exercise. Stand in a circle holding hands, then crouch down and softly say “Power.” Stand back up and finish the “Power” as loudly as possible with hands in the air.

You can explore the dynamics of power involved in a bullying situation more deeply by looking at the ways bullying reflects issues of privilege and bias that permeate our culture.

**(See**

### **Introduce Bullies, Targets, Bystanders, and Allies (15 minutes)**

- 1) Explain that the group is going to figure out what can be done when we see someone being treated unkindly or bullied.
- 2) Ask: What types of behavior constitute bullying? (e.g., repeated name calling; making fun of people; picking on people; hitting, kicking, shoving, pushing, pinching, or threatening people; excluding someone from a group.)
- 3) Ask for a show of hands of everyone in the room who has seen someone being bullied or been bullied themselves. (Likely everyone will raise their hands.) Point out that everyone in this room will—or already has at some time—be in a situation where they are either a target of bullying (the person being bullied) or a bystander (someone who witnesses the bullying). When we witness a situation in which an individual or a group is targeted, we can make a choice to be a bystander who doesn't say or do anything to change the situation. Or we can choose to be an ally— someone who works with and acts in support of a targeted person or group.
- 4) Explain that students will learn: 1) how to be an ally when you see someone being bullied; and 2) how to stand up for yourself if you're bullied.
- 5) Divide students into groups of three. Distribute cards so that in each group there is one student per role: ally, target, and bystander. Give each student 1 minute to tell about a time when s/he was an ally, a target, or a bystander (the role as assigned on their card).
- 6) Allow bystanders and allies a minute to respond.
- 7) When everyone has finished, give the groups 3 minutes to debrief (1 minute per question): What did it feel like to be the target? What did it feel like to be the bystander? What did it feel like to be the ally?
- 8) Brainstorm with students a list of things you can do when you or someone else is being hurt or bullied. Explain that you are looking for ideas that are nonviolent.
- 9) Now record ideas on chart paper in two columns: ideas that mean confronting the bully and ideas that do not. Add to the students' ideas with suggestions from the following:
  - Refuse to join in (doesn't involve confrontation).
  - Report bullying you know about or see to an adult (doesn't involve confrontation).
  - Invite the person being hurt to join your group (might involve confrontation). Then ask the person who was bullied if it's okay to have the bully join your group if the bully apologizes (does involve confrontation).
  - Speak out using an "I" message. Say, "I don't like it when you treat him like that;" "I want you to stop calling him that name;" or "I wouldn't want someone to say that to/about me" (does involve confrontation.)
  - Be a friend to the person who has been bullied by showing him you care about him.
  - Put an arm around her or him, give him a word or two of compassion (doesn't involve confrontation).



## Curriculum Connections

Following are a few examples of how to tie bullying into your curriculum:

**Literature:** Have students read Lois-Ann Yamanaka's book *Wild Meat and the Bully Burgers* (Harvest Books, 1997), the coming-of-age tale of a 12-year-old Japanese-American girl named Lovey Nariyoshi living in Hawaii. Lovey struggles to fit in in a world where it feels important to have "straight blond hair and long Miss America legs." Use this book as a launching point to discuss the various ways young people in your school who do not fit in, or are different in some way, are treated. Explore the role of peer pressure in acts of bullying, and bystander intervention as a response. Ask: "Has there ever been a time that you did something like make fun of someone else, just to fit in? How can we make being caring and appreciative of differences "cool" in our school? Any ideas?" A literary cl

4. Listen actively to the response; paraphrase what the other person is saying and what

## Cooperative Learning

within the circle is a sacred symbol of life . Th.

## Action Research

Teach your son or daughter to be critical of common media messages and manipulations.

Expose your children to media that promote the values you'd like them to learn.

Be alert to the four danger signs a young person may exhibit when overexposed to anti-social media:

⇒ Desensitization to violence

⇒ Numbing

⇒ Imitation

⇒ Intimidating behavior

Encourage young people to get involved with peers in activities that promote creative, responsible, pro-social, and civil behaviors.

## Helping Kids With Disabilities

By the Numbers



disabilities. Awareness and education help students understand why some people look,

acceptance, though they tend to focus on visible disabilities. (Information available at <http://www.kotb.com/> )

Include a social skills curriculum in the school; it can be part of character education. Reconsider “zero tolerance policies.” The behavior of children with special needs can be misunderstood and may call for a more individual response. For example, a child with a sensory disorder may bump or crash into a classmate out of a need for sensory stimulation; but the other student (and teacher) may think the child was hitting on purpose, out of malice, or to start a fight. Or an accidental bump in the hallway may cause the special needs student to believe someone hit them on purpose. A child with impulse problems (caused by, *e.g.*, ADHD, fetal alcohol syndrome, or autism) may also upset another student (or teacher) unintentionally when they do or say something without thinking about the consequences. Such situations require sensitivity and adult intervention, as the child with neurological issues may not understand why s/he is being disciplined or why s/he upset someone. Have adequate staffing on the playground, in the halls, and in other unstructured times and places.

Prepare students for the introduction of students with special needs into your class or into a group activity. Knowing what to expect is the key to acceptance.

Be inclusive in your classroom activities so physically and mentally challenged students can participate. When appropriate, give them opportunities for leadership and responsibility.

Use verbal instructions that children with neurological disorders and developmental delays will understand. Use written or pictorial instructions whenever appropriate. Many children with neurological disorders are visual/spatial learners. They may have challenges processing auditory information and may need to hear the instructions more than once.

Give extra help to special needs students without obviously singling them out or making them feel different from their classmates. Extra attention can embarrass young people who just want to “fit in.”

Offer opportunities for mainstream students to serve as “buddies” to students with disabilities during class, lunch, or recess, or to volunteer as a tutor for younger students with disabilities (having mainstream students tutor grade-level peers can lead to the students with disabilities feeling even more different and “slow”). Working and socializing one-on-one allows students to get to know young people with disabilities as individuals and to become invested in their success.

## **Social Skills and Bullying Prevention Curricula for Middle School**

- ✚ *Adventures in Peacemaking: A Conflict Resolution Activity Guide for School-Age Programs* by William J. Kreidler and Lisa Furlong is available through Educators for Social Responsibility at [www.esmational.org](http://www.esmational.org) or by calling 1-800-370-2515; or through Project Adventure at [www.pa.org](http://www.pa.org) or by calling 978-524-4500.
- ✚ *Conflict Resolution in the Middle School* by William J. Kreidler, available through Educators for Social Responsibility at [www.esmational.org](http://www.esmational.org).

✚ *Don't Laugh at Me*, Grades 6–8 by Laura Parker Roerden, a joint project of Operation Respect and Educators for Social Responsibility and Educate

## **Chapter 4: Interventions That Help Bullies, Targets, and their Families**

“Educators need to begin by identifying themselves as part of the solution and by searching for an effective path for helping the child to help him/herself”

Requests for extra money  
Missing clothing or possessions  
Unexplained drop in grades and lack of interest in school  
Avoidance of social events (in school and out of school)  
Increasing isolation from peers

### **Tip: Bring It Home**

Make sure parents know the warning signs of bullying, because they may see many of the behaviors at home.

## **Responding to Bullying**

### **What to Do**

When a young person has been targeted, follow the *10 Steps to Safety*:

1. **Validate the child's right to physical and emotional safety:** "You have a right to feel emotionally and physically safe at school and we will help you be sure that you can have that."
2. **Share your own experiences with bullying when you were that age** (either as a target or bystander). It can help the child not feel so alone; they might be surprised to learn that an adult they respect could have been targeted.
3. **Give assurance that there is nothing wrong with the target:** "You've done nothing to deserve this; it's the bully who is at fault."
4. **Validate feelings.** "That must really hurt. I remember how hard that was when I was your age."
5. **Provide protection.** Provide increased adult supervision of the young person throughout his or her day; build a protective peer network around him through cross-age buddy pairing.
6. **If you're the parent, tell the school what's going on.** With the school you can develop an action plan.
7. **Talk to parents of both targets and bullies:** Talking to parents of bullies should be done by the school, not the target's parent{s}. It might escalate the behavior for a parent to go directly to a bully's parent(s).
8. **Get the target and bully help.** Counseling may be necessary for both parties. Help both parties develop social skills and learn new behaviors. Reassure the target that s/he did nothing to create the problem, but explain that are a few ways you can help him or her to be more effective in the situation and make friends and allies.
9. **Confront the bully in private.** Be firm about what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior.
10. **Intervene immediately.** Waiting to deal with a problem might be interpreted as a condoning it.

## What Not To Do!

Do not tell the person being bullied to:

- ⇒ Toughen up
- ⇒ Avoid the bully
- ⇒ Fight back
- ⇒ Try to solve the problem themselves

Do not confront the bully or the target in front of their peers. Research shows this sort of attention might make the problem worse by elevating the bully's prestige and sense of power and diminishing the person being bullied.

Do not ignore the incident. Inaction will be perceived as condoning it.

Do not try to mediate the problem between a target and bully. The power imbalance makes this approach very unwise.

## Targeting as a Symptom of School Climate Problems

It is important to listen to young people who have been targeted by bullying and offer appropriate resources and support. Yet it is also very important that the larger school structure address the overall power imbalances that are associated with bullying.

A school setting in which bullying is common affects the quality of the learning experience and the safety of all students, not just those most immediately involved. Episodes of bullying witnessed by adults are usually just the tip of the iceberg; it is likely there are many more manifestations of unhealthy power imbalances plaguing the school climate. A holistic approach to violence prevention is needed to build and sustain a non-violent school community where all students can learn and contribute their unique talents.

## Things to Think About

How can teachers give all students the opportunity to receive respect and appreciation for their unique talents?

How can you facilitate learning approaches that appeal to all students and create new opportunities for participation?

As non-violence is learned through role-modeling, practice, and a deepening understanding of the value of respect for others, what is your school doing to facilitate this learning?

What other beneficial resources exist for students in the home or community?

## Teach Assertiveness Skills to All Students

Teach youth how to respond assertively. Give young people plenty of opportunity to practice responding assertively in role-playing exercises and show them how subtle things, such as body language and tone of voice, can contribute to the message they send. (**See** Chapter 5 for more information about building skills for responding to bullying.)

## Build Self-Esteem

Research shows the best ways to build young people's self-esteem is by giving them opportunities to take on challenges and meet those challenges successfully. But such success does not come without support. Top-performing athletes and others know the value of a coach, positive self-talk, practice, and hard work in developing needed skills.

Intervention programs that help young people develop a new skill—be it chess, art, music, or martial arts—can be extremely effective in developing resilience in young people to meet life's complex challenges. Draw attention to the positive qualities of students in individual and group settings, and always praise young people in a way that is concise, specific and sincere.

### Tip

Debra Pepler and Wendy Craig at York University in Toronto advise that targets who have successfully learned to stand up for themselves do so in the first encounter with their bully. This way they will have intervened before the power dynamic becomes too entrenched. Once it has become entrenched, bystanders and caring adults are critical to intervention efforts.



## Home Connections: Helping Families of Targets

We had no way of knowing how much she was taunted."

– **Parents of a girl who shot a classmate in retaliation for taunting**

Research shows that families of targets are typically very close-knit.<sup>110</sup> While caring is a strong value in such families, there might be a quality of over-protectiveness to the parenting. When working with such families, draw attention to the positive aspects of the family. These same positive qualities can also be harnessed as protective factors. Families need to know that you will partner with them to do everything you can to keep their children safe at school and keep them informed every step of the way. Likewise, they need to keep you informed of any changes in their children's moods or behavior, or incidents of bullying that occur outside of school.

## Things to Think About (For Families)

Does my child have the skills s/he needs to maintain friendships or relationships?

Do I support my child's friendships as needed (e.g., with rides, privacy as appropriate)?

Does my child have what s/he needs to fit in with his or her peers? (While it's great to encourage individuality in a child, respond as sensitively as possible, within your financial means, to requests for specific jeans or shoes, for example. Fitting in and appearing as normal as possible can be very important for targets.)

What interests outside of school does my child have? How can I encourage her or him to gain skills or achievement with that interest?

## Working with Bullies

“Hatred deforms the hater more than the hated.”—**St. Augustine**

Communicate your intolerance of bullying behavior, but not intolerance of the perpetrator. Many young people who bully are able to break out of patterns of aggression when given appropriate guidance.

### Give Them Opportunity to Reflect

Bullies benefit from the chance to reflect on their actions. While this step is just one part of a comprehensive program, it is part of a bully’s coming to understand that you take the incident seriously and that, while there are consequences, you believe s/he can reform. You can prompt reflection through an interview, a survey, or some other self-administered tool. Be sure to include an opportunity to reflect on:

Why the behavior was wrong

What the impact was on the target (Encourage empathy and perspective taking; *i.e.*, “How would you have felt?” “How do you think X felt?”)

What the intent of the comment or action was (or what was the need it was meeting in the perpetrator)

How many incidents the student has been involved in

What they think should be the consequence of their action. How s/he might make amends to the target. In many cases it is not a good idea to have the target and the bully confront one another; but in some cases, especially those where the problem is in its early stages or is not too severe, the bully might be able to write a note of apology or offer another non-threatening way to take responsibility for his actions.

Also include:

An opportunity to recommit to the classroom or school agreements related to the incident

A definition of the action (bullying, harassment, hate crime) or restatement of the policy the action violates

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### School Spotlight: Brookline<sup>111</sup>

#### Harassment Policy Process Sheet

#### (The Bay Cove Academy)

*Definition:* Harassment on the basis of race, gender, national origin, religion, disability,



What was the harassing behavior?

At whom was it directed?

How do you think the behavior affected the other person(s)?

What was the intent?

What do you think the consequences of this kind of behavior would be at a job?

How many times have you been called on this policy?

*Provided by Bay Cove Academy, Brookline, MA<sup>112</sup>*

### **Anti-Discrimination Process Sheet**

*Definition:* When an individual refers to another person's nationality, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or physical appearance negatively, in an offensive way, or with the intent to offend, consequences will occur.

1. What were your words/actions that were discriminatory?

2. What was the intent of your comment? For example:

*I was mad at the person*

*I wanted to hurt the person's feelings.*

*To make kids laugh*

*To get attention from staff*

*To be cool*

*I don't know*

*Other* \_\_\_\_\_

3. How do you think your comments affect the other person(s)?

4. Has anyone ever used those words towards you?

5. How did you feel then?

6. I realize that my words were offensive in the area of nationality, religion, age, race, sexual orientation, gender, or other.

7. How many times have you been called on this policy?

### **Re-channel Bullies' Need for Power**

Perpetrators of bullying can do well if they are placed in leadership roles that allow them to re-channel their power in positive directions. For example, when appropriate, pair them with younger students as a mentor or have them join the school safety patrol. But be honest with them about their strengths and weaknesses, and monitor their behavior to ensure the safety of other children and that positive change follows. Be sure they contribute to the school in a way that leverages their strengths and does not rely on weaknesses. What's important to them? How do they think they might best contribute?

Bullies with a chronic pattern of aggression might be paired with an older mentor (high-school students or a respected adult) who can help them develop different ways to relate to other young people. Research from the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence shows that the "Big Brothers Big Sisters" program, which involves adults volunteering as individual mentors, has been effective in reducing violence at schools.<sup>113</sup>

### **Delve Deeper: Are They Bullies?**

Screening tools such as the *Systematic Screening for Behavioral Disorders* (Walker & Severson, 1992) might be helpful in identifying young people who are having behavior problems and are in need of professional intervention.

### **Home Connections: Working with Families of Bullies**

Parents of bullies might have difficulty believing their children are engaging in the behavior. In some instances, parents might even condone the behavior because of the many myths about bullying (e.g., the students can handle it, it's normal to bully, or the target had it coming to him).

Interventions with parents of bullies need to model the type of relationships they should be providing at home. Be clear about boundaries and expectations for behavior at your school, be consistent in your communications, and help develop a secure and understanding relationship between the school and the family.

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**Tips for Parents of Bullies**

Help your son or daughter develop alternative options to aggression (and always intervene in aggression with clear, firm consequences). Ask: "How could you solve this problem differently next time?" Help your child learn problem-solving skills. Monitor and limit exposure to violent media. Adolescents, whether or not they admit it, need limits and can feel that your efforts to protect them are a sign of caring. Help your child address anything that might be bothering him or her: Ask how they are, then listen, listen, listen. If s/he is having problems, together create a plan for addressing the problems.

formal complaint process, and the school determines that informal resolution is appropriate for the incident in question.

Teach students who engage in harassing conduct more acceptable behavior, especially when the students are very young or the conduct was not intended to be harmful.

### **Delve Deeper:**



See the free resource from [www.nssc1.org](http://www.nssc1.org) called "Working Together to Create Safe Schools" for great ideas for working with communities (under "Free Handout").



### **Home Connections: Violence and Prejudice Reduction Resources**

Resources abound for teaming up with parents to prevent bullying and harassment.

A useful fact sheet on preventing violence and bullying can be found at [www.yic.gov/drugfree/prevention.html](http://www.yic.gov/drugfree/prevention.html).

"What to Tell Your Child About Prejudice and Discrimination," a joint effort of the National PTA and Anti-Defamation League (ADL), is available through the ADL's Resource Center, 823 United Nations Plaza, NY, NY 10017, or by calling 212-885-7951 or visiting [www.adl.org](http://www.adl.org).

## **A Note for Parents**

If your child is being targeted or you suspect your child might be a perpetrator of bullying, there are a few options for approaching the school. Many schools advise going directly to the school administrators with your concerns. Certainly, it's important for parents to work with the school's administration and teaching staff to address episodes of bullying.

Victim advocate and harassment lawyer Sylvia Cedillo and bullying prevention expert Susan Limber recommend that parents also join forces with other parents through their PTA or other networks to address the issue, because the nature of the problem is systemic and not likely to be confined to one child. Collectively communicated concerns are more likely to get a systemic (and therefore more effective) response.



## Reflection

Which groups in your school seem to have more power and privilege?  
Which groups in your school seem to be most often targeted for bullying?  
In what ways does your school encourage inclusion?  
In what ways does your school encourage exclusion?

## Delve Deeper

Challenge Day is a powerful full-day experience for young people where they can explore the devastating effects of bullying and harassment. For more information, see [www.challengeday.org](http://www.challengeday.org).

## You've Got the POWER!

The next time you see someone being bullied or are targeted yourself, remember you've got the **POWER**:

- P**lay it cool: Keep your cool; don't respond aggressively or violently.
- O**pen to options: Seek help from an adult; know there is a way out.
- W**ork together: Join together with others, rather than go it alone.
- E**liminate hate: Stop rumors; include excluded students; challenge bias.
- R**esolve to solve: Commit to ending bullying now; know that you can make a difference.

## Play it Cool

Bullying behavior is reinforced by the perception that the bully has caused the target distress. The target might be able to withhold that reinforcement by pretending that she or he is unruffled by the harassment. A target might shrug and say, "Whatever," or simply walk away. However, if there is the possibility of physical danger, the nearest adult should be told immediately. Whether you are a bystander or a target, never respond to a bully's aggression with aggression or violence yourself. It will only make the situation worse and may end in someone getting hurt.

## Be Open to Options

Sometimes it can feel like there is no way to stop a bully. Bullies depend on people keeping silent about their bullying so they can continue it. Some targets even say, "This is just how my life is going to be." But it is important not to give in. Being a target or witnessing a bullying event can certainly feel overwhelming, but remember that you have options. As a target, you can get help from others. Tell an adult what is happening. Practice some ways to

respond in role plays with friends, teachers, and family. Bystanders can likewise find options for supporting the target and help end bullying throughout the school. (**See** “20 Things You Can Do When Someone is Being Bullied”, below).

## 20 Things You Can Do When Someone is Being Bullied

1. Tell an adult.
2. Tell the bully that you don't like the behavior.
3. Be a buddy (walk with a targeted person in places they are likely to be targeted).
4. Include young people who are usually excluded.
5. Stop gossip in its tracks.
6. Tell a target that you don't think s/he should be treated like that.
7. Invite a target to have lunch with you and your friends.
8. Don't laugh when someone makes fun of someone—even if it has humor to it.
9. Tell a target something that you like about him or her.
10. Support other students when they stand up to a bully.
11. Tell someone who stood up to a bully for someone that you really admired what s/he did.
12. Listen to a target's story and keep it confidential from other students; (remember that it's okay to tell an adult if someone needs help.)
13. Remove graffiti from walls.
14. Surprise a target with a thoughtful gift.
15. \_\_\_\_\_  
(your idea)
16. \_\_\_\_\_  
(your idea)
17. \_\_\_\_\_  
(your idea)
18. \_\_\_\_\_  
(your idea)
19. \_\_\_\_\_  
(your idea)

### Personal Bullying Buster Pledge

Everyone has a role to play in ending bullying. What will be your role?

After the following reflection, create your own pledge to end bullying.



## Mying Buster Pledge

e?

good friend to others is. . .

make a difference in the lives of students in other schools, or the people in your neighborhood, city, or town?

The following process can be used with a group

manner you established. Add a third ball. And a fourth! See how quickly everyone can do this! Do it a few times and see how good at it you can get.

5. Explain that you're all here to together plan a project that brings your bullying buster efforts to someone else. You might want to do something for another school or for your town or city. You don't know what you will do or for whom. And that's why you're all here together—to think about that. You'll have two sessions to plan your project.
6. Ask everyone to find another person they don't know very well. (Or if everyone knows everyone else well, you can count off up to half the number of people in the group twice. For example, if there are twenty people in your group, you'll count off to the number ten twice; then 1s, 2s, 3s and so on will be partners.)
7. In pairs, you will each have 2 minutes to finish a statement. (Put the statement up on poster paper so everyone can see it.) While one person is speaking, the other will merely listen and record—no commenting or interrupting. Another ground rule is that you should NOT name names of specific students or adults in your sharing. Then the partners will switch and the listener will speak and the speaker will listen. Here are the statements; assign one statement to each pair—it's okay for statements to be answered by more than one pair if you have a large group:

One thing I've noticed about bullying in our school is. . .

Ways our school has improved since we've been bullying busting. . .

Something important I realized or learned about bullying is. . .

Something I think encourages people to bully is. . .

If there were one thing everyone should know about bullying it would be. . .

Tell everyone when 2 minutes have elapsed and it is time to switch who is speaking and who is listening. Ask the pairs to write down their completed statements. When

community. Our job is to look for a problem to solve or an opportunity to spread caring and heal the hate.

Pretend you are visiting here from another country. You've never been to the United States; you've never even seen American television shows or movies. What do you notice about how people treat one another? What examples of caring do you see? What examples of uncaring behavior do you see? Keep notes of what you observe. (On a sheet of paper write two columns: *Caring Behaviors* and *Uncaring Behaviors* to use for the next session). Next week you'll meet to share what we noticed."

**(NOTE:** Keep the written statements from #8 for next session.)

## Session 2: It's Just Not Right That. . . .

**Materials Needed:** Rope cut into 3-foot lengths (one length per person); poster paper and markers; the written statements from session #1 (hang them around the room).

1. Begin with a game of "Our Island."<sup>116</sup> For this game, give everyone a length of rope and tell them it has magical properties. "When you step into this rope circle, you immediately are in a safe place where nothing and no one can harm you. We can create our own islands of caring." Invite everyone to become their own little island (they will put an unbroken circle on the floor with their rope and then step into it.) There is only one rule to this game: "Everyone has to be on an island (with his or her feet within a rope circle) or they will fall into the deep sea of despair."
2. "So how does it feel? Hmm. A little boring, huh? Maybe someone wants a little company?" Now (without warning) remove one rope circle from the floor. And then another. And then another. Hopefully, each person who has been left "shipwrecked" will be invited onto another island. If not, prompt the group by restating the only rule of the game: "Everyone has to be on an island (with his or her feet within a rope circle) or they will fall into the deep sea of despair."
3. Keep removing circles until there is only one circle left. (This will become a group problem-solving activity, as everyone tries to find a way to keep everyone from falling into the sea of despair.) Do not help the group problem solve, but keep restating the one rule of the game. **(NOTE:** Their feet have to be in the circle, but they do not have to be standing! Many groups have solved this problem by sitting in a circle with just their heels inside the rope circle, technically meeting the one requirement of the game.)
4. Now have a brief discussion: "How did it feel as each rope circle was removed?" "What went well?" "What could have gone better?"
5. "Give yourself a big hand for saving everyone from the sea of despair!" Explain that today you will both identify a problem in your community to solve and create a plan to solve it.
6. Have everyone bring out their "reporter notebooks" and on the poster papers chart suggested "Examples of caring behavior" and "Examples of uncaring behavior." As you chart, point out any common themes that emerge.
7. Break students into pairs to share: "Thinking of what you saw in your communities, and what you heard other young people saw, complete the statement 'A big problem

in our community is. . . .’ Give each person 2 minutes to share. Announce when it’s time to switch partners.

8. Ask each pair to report out about what they discussed and chart the responses. In the large group, look at the things that students identified as “really big problems” in your community. Tell students you want to choose one problem and then plan to solve it. Facilitate a discussion about which problem would be a good one to work on. Move the group to consensus about which problem they will solve together.
9. Now together follow steps 1 through 4 of the STP problem-solving process (below) for the problem you identified.

### **STP: A Problem-Solving Process**

1. Specify the problem
  2. List helping and hindering forces
  3. Specify multiple solutions
  4. Plan for action
  5. Anticipate obstacles
10. Create a timeline for the project. Now elect various committees to plan the execution of your action plan, addressing step 5 of the STP problem-solving process.



#### **Delve Deeper**

Great resources for young people can be found at [www.bullystoppers.com](http://www.bullystoppers.com).

## **In Conclusion...**

Bullying is characterized by an imbalance of power between target and bully; intent to harm; the threat of further aggression, and the creation of a hostile environment for one or more students. Bullying behavior which is left uncorrected harms targets, bullies, bystanders, and the overall school environment. When common myths about bullying are dispelled, students, educators, and parents alike come to realize the importance of both bullying prevention activities and interventions in episodes of bullying when they occur. This Guide provides tools useful in bringing about a syst

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as soon as possible. Inaction will likely be interpreted as condoning the behavior or suggesting that adults will do nothing about it.

Like the title character in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, students who are allies to targets are heroes whose moral courage should be held up as an example for emulation. There are many ways bystanders can help targets out, some of which involve confronting the bully and many that can defuse situations without confrontation. The social skills and character traits that lend themselves to being an ally to a target are also the qualities prized in model citizens.

While certain students like LGBT youth and students with mental or physical disabilities are at higher risk for being targeted, bullying also cuts across traditional social boundaries. Prejudice reduction efforts can help change a school climate which might be fuelling social conflict. Yet the culture of caring and respect advocated in this Guide is a prophylactic against cruel behaviors that do not necessarily reflect divisions in the society at large.

The moral and legal responsibility schools have for the well-being and academic development of students requires that bullying be acknowledged as a problem in need of solutions. This Guide is intended to equip all the relevant actors to make a difference in bully-proofing a school. The steps outlined are not exhaustive, but they can focus a school's willingness to act with the appropriate skills and techniques that have proven effective against bullying in Massachusetts schools in actual practice. Ultimately, however, each school and community need to take ownership of their own specific problems with bullying, and tailor responses to the circumstances of their site. There is no "one size fits all" approach. Most essential to effective anti-bullying strategies are a willingness to acknowledge the problem exists, and a collective effort among students, educators, school staff, parents, and the community.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States (2002). Available online at [www.secretservice.gov/ntac/ssi\\_final\\_report.pdf](http://www.secretservice.gov/ntac/ssi_final_report.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> National Association of School Psychologists, in Labi, Nadya. "Let Bullies Beware." Time online, March 25, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Lumsden, L. Preventing Bullying. *ERIC Digest*. (2002).

<sup>4</sup> Ballard, M., Argus, T., Remley, T. Bullying and school violence: A proposed prevention program. *NASSP Bulletin*, 83(607), 38-47 (1999).

<sup>5</sup> Olweus, Daniel (2003) A Profile of Bullying at School. *Educational Leadership*, 60 (6), 12–17.

<sup>6</sup> MaineProject Against Bullying. Available at [lincoln.midcoast.com/~wps/against/bullying.html](http://lincoln.midcoast.com/~wps/against/bullying.html) .

<sup>7</sup> The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School





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<sup>55</sup> Pepler, Debra and Zeigler, S. and Rosenstein-Manner, M. (1991) "Bullying in School," LaMarsh Center for Research on Violence and Conflict Resolution at York University.

<sup>56</sup> Kaufman, P., Chen, X., Choy, S.P., Peter, K., Ruddy, S.A., Miller, A.K., Fleury, J.K., Chandler, K.A., Planty, M.G., & Rand, M.R. (2001)

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

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