

Lesson 1

The Concept of Bullying

MATERIALS

The Colorado School Climate Student Report (optional, available in the *Bully-Proofing Your School: Administrator's Guide to Staff Development*)

Handout 8: Recognizing the Difference

Handout 9: Optional Sociogram

OBJECTIVES

To introduce the concept of bullying to the students (including information about bullying tactics and the types of children likely to be bullies and victims) to determine the extent of bullying occurring in the classroom.

STEPS

1. Introduce the Concept of Bullying to the Students
Teacher: "Today we are going to be discussing the topic of bullying. We'll be talking about what bullying is, why some kids bully and how they bully, and the characteristics of the kids who are bullies and of the kids who are victims. We'll discuss how bullying is different from normal peer conflict that happens between friends and why bullying is harmful for the victims and for the bullies. When we are talking about bullying, you may think of examples from here at school or in your neighborhood. I'll want to hear these examples, but I'll ask you not to use specific names. Instead, say 'someone I know ...' or 'a girl in our neighborhood.' Well, let's get started. Does anyone have some ideas on what bullying is?"

Write students' ideas on the board. Then make sure the students have included the following items by adding them to the list on the board:

- An imbalance of power (psychological, physical, or social);
- Repeated incidences of negative actions, not just one time (unless very severe);
- Done by either a single individual or a group;
- Done to gain attention or popularity;
- Done to get one's way or material things; and
- Between children who are not friends and don't usually play together.

2. Discuss Why Children Bully Others
Teacher: "Now let's discuss why children bully others. Who has an idea on why kids bully?"

Again write the students' ideas on the board and then make sure that the following ideas are included in their list by adding them:

- to get power,
- to gain popularity and attention or material things,
- to act out problems at home,
- to copy what another person they may admire does,
- to have fun, and
- to act out unresolved emotional issues.

3. **Discuss What Types of Children Are Likely to Be Bullies**

Teacher: "What types of children are likely to be bullies? Any other ideas?"

Again write the students' ideas on the board and then make sure that the following ideas are included in their list by adding them:

- A child who likes the rewards that aggression can bring.
- A child who lacks compassion for his or her victim.
- A child who lacks guilt.
- A child who believes that the victim provoked his or her attack and deserved what happened.
- A child who likes to be in charge and to get his or her own way with power.
- A child whose parent(s) (or older brothers and sisters) are bullying him or her.
- A child who misperceives how others treat him or her.

4. **Discuss How Children Bully**

Teacher: "How do children bully other children? What kinds of things do they do?"

List students' ideas on the board. Then teach the students the four general categories of bullying behavior:

- By physical aggression (e.g., spitting, tripping, pushing, shoving, destroying another's things, hitting, threatening with a weapon);
- By social alienation (e.g., gossiping, spreading rumors, ethnic or racial slurs, excluding from a group, publicly humiliating, threatening with total isolation from the peer group);
- By verbal aggression (e.g., mocking, name calling, teasing, intimidating telephone calls, verbal threats of aggression); and

- By intimidation (e.g., graffiti, a public challenge to do something, playing a dirty trick, taking possessions, coercion).

Now go back through the list on the board and have the students help categorize the behaviors by writing a "P" for "physical," "S" for "social," "V" for "verbal," and "I" for "intimidation" next to it.

5. **Discuss What Types of Children Are Likely to Be Victims**

Teacher: "Now let's discuss what types of children are likely to be the victims of bullies. Who has an idea on this topic?"

Again write the students' ideas on the board and then make sure that the following ideas are included in their list by adding them:

- A child who is isolated and alone during much of the school day.
 - A child who is anxious, insecure, and has trouble making friends.
 - A child who is small or weak and therefore unable to defend himself or herself.
 - A child who cries easily, gives up when bullied, and is unable to successfully stick up for himself or herself.
 - A child who may have suffered past abuse at home.
 - A child who may have a learning disability.
 - A child who is willing to keep quiet.
- Sometimes a victim (even though he or she may not seem like a victim) is:
- A child who is often restless, irritable, and who teases and provokes other children.
 - A child who will fight back, but ends up losing.

- ▶ A child who tries not to give in to the bully, and gets very upset when he or she does lose.
6. Discuss the Difference Between Normal Peer Conflict and Bullying
- Teacher: "It helps us understand what bullying is to compare it to normal peer conflict that might come up with your friends. This chart (use *Handout 8*) shows some of the differences."

Bullying is different from regular conflict because it involves danger—the danger of someone being physically and/or emotionally hurt. For example, if a child teasingly sits in another's chair, there really is not any danger. This is a normal peer conflict. But if a child is repeatedly called names, this can result in harm to that child's self-esteem, so it is dangerous.

7. Discuss the Emotional Consequences for the Victim
- Teacher: "Bullying is dangerous to the victim. What are some of the bad effects that can happen to the person who is bullied?"

Again list student ideas and make sure the following are included:

- ▶ Drop in self-esteem to self-defeating, fearful attitude;
 - ▶ Feeling scared, withdrawn, isolated, and/or sad;
 - ▶ Physical symptoms (e.g., headache, stomachache, general fatigue);
 - ▶ Not liking school; and
 - ▶ Panic and irrational retaliation.
8. "The Colorado School Climate Student Report" (optional)
- If you would like to get a copy of the "Colorado School Climate Student Report" please see *Bully-Proofing Your School: Administrator's Guide to Staff Development*.

9. Scoring the "Optional Sociogram"
- Questions A, B, and C from "The Social Survey" (*Handout 9*) may be used for a sociogram at each elementary grade level. Begin with a list of all the students at a grade level within your school or in one specific classroom at a grade level. Put a plus sign (+) next to a child's name each time he or she is listed in response to Question A. Put a minus sign (-) next to a child's name each time he or she is listed in response to Question B. Put a zero (0) next to a child's name each time he or she is listed in responses to Question C. Popular children will end up with many plus signs, bullies with a mixture of plus and minus signs, provocative victims with many minus signs and zeros, and passive victims will end up with many zeros.

The sociogram helps teachers assess social interactional patterns within a grade level or classroom. It is an easy way to identify the socially isolated students.

NEXT LESSON

In the next lesson, the students will be given the classroom rules and "no-bullying" posters will be introduced. (If you obtained the "Colorado School Climate Student Report," feedback can also be given to students in the next lesson.)

Remember the "Golden Rule"

Recognizing the Difference

Normal Peer Conflict	Bullying
Equal power or friends	Imbalance of power; not friends
Happens occasionally	<u>Repeated</u> negative actions
Accidental	Purposeful
Not serious	Serious with threat of physical or emotional harm
Equal emotional reaction	Strong emotional reaction from victim and little or no emotional reaction from bully
Not seeking power or attention	Seeking power, control, or material things
Not trying to get something	Attempt to gain material things or power
Remorse — will take responsibility	No remorse — blames victim
Effort to solve the problem	No effort to solve problem

Optional Sociogram

Social Survey

A. List the three children in your grade who you most like to do things with:

B. List the three children in your grade who you don't like to spend time with:

C. List the three children in your grade who you think most need a friend:
