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Bullying Prevention and Response
Training and Continuing Education
Online Program

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What is bullying?

Bullying is any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths...that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm.

www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-definitions-final-a.pdf

Challenge #1:

Is the behavior unwanted aggression or is it rough play?

- “Unwanted” means that the targeted youth wants the aggressive behaviors to stop
 - Two children may enjoy taunting each other in a playful manner. This should not be considered bullying.
- Cues for adults:
 - The relationship between the children
 - Expressions, body language, atmosphere

Challenge #2:

The Question of Repeated Behavior

- The child must either:
 - Experience multiple incidents of aggression (there is a pattern of aggression), OR
 - There is a strong concern that a single aggressive behavior has a high likelihood of being followed by more incidents of aggression

Challenge #3:

What constitutes a power imbalance?

- Physical characteristics
 - Age, size, strength
- Popularity or association with popular peers
- Background/demographic characteristics
 - Member of majority/minority group, socio-economic status
- Abilities and skills
 - Academic, physical, artistic
- Access to money, resources, information
- Being outnumbered
- Presence of weapons

Examples of **School Factors** Related to Involvement in Bullying

- School climate
 - Students' sense of belonging to the school
 - Degree of respect and fair treatment
- Good adult supervision
- Awareness and responsiveness of staff

Likelihood of Reporting

Why are children and youth reluctant to report being bullied?

- Negative messages about “tattling” and “snitching”
- Concern about retaliation
- Gender stereotypes
- Lack of confidence in adults’ actions



Chapter 5: Misdirections in Bullying Prevention and Response

Misdirection #1: Zero Tolerance for Bullying

- Also referred to as “student exclusion” policies.
Concerns:
 - They potentially affect a large number of students.
 - Threats of severe punishments may actually discourage children and adults from reporting.
 - Bullying can be an early marker of other problem behaviors. Children who bully need positive, prosocial role models, including adults and students in their school.
- School safety may occasionally demand that a student be removed from a school environment, but these situations should be rare.

Misdirection #2: Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation

- Are often used to address conflicts among students. Concerns:
 - Bullying is a form of victimization, not conflict.
 - Mediating a bullying incident may send inappropriate messages to the students who are involved.
 - Mediation may further victimize or traumatize a child who has been bullied.

Misdirection #2: Conflict Resolution and Peer Mediation

- A trauma-informed approach should recognize that children who have been bullied may have experienced trauma and need special care to address the trauma and avoid practices that may re-traumatize them.
- In some cases, restorative practices, which focus on restoring relationships and repairing the harm done, may be appropriate, but these typically require considerable time and training by professionals—situations that are not common to most peer mediation programs in schools.

Misdirection #3: Group Therapeutic Treatment

- Group treatment with children who bully
 - May involve anger management, skill-building, empathy-building, self-esteem enhancement.
- Well-intentioned but often counter-productive.

Why?

- Group members can serve as poor role models and reinforce each others' antisocial and bullying behavior.

Misdirection #5: Simple, Short-Term Solutions

- Often administrators and staff adopt a short-term, piecemeal approach.
 - Bullying may be the topic of a staff in-service training, PTO meeting, school-wide assembly, lessons taught by individual teachers
 - These efforts may be good first steps, but are unlikely to reduce bullying on their own. Why?

Research has shown they are not likely to significantly reduce bullying problems. To reduce the prevalence of bullying, the school's climate and its exceptions for student behavior must change.



Chapter 6: Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Response

#1: Focus on the Social Climate

- Bullying prevention requires changes in social climates of schools and organizations.
- Students feel connected to schools where they know, care about, and support one another, and have common goals.
- Changing social norms around bullying requires commitment, time, and effort but can have a positive effect on behavior.
- Increasing adult supervision is also important.

#7: Set Policies and Rules About Bullying

- All state laws require public schools to develop anti-bullying policies,
- As part of these policies, school personnel should:
 - Establish and communicate clear rules about bullying behavior and expectations if bullying is witnessed.
 - Apply developmentally appropriate and proportional consequences for bullying others.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

Do:

- Separate the children involved.
- Make sure everyone is safe.
- Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs.
- Stay calm. Reassure the children involved, including bystanders.
- Model respectful behavior when you intervene.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

DO: Find Out What Happened & If It's Bullying

Whether you've just stopped bullying on the spot or a child has reached out to you for help, follow the steps below to determine the best way to proceed:

- Keep all the involved children separate.
- Get the story from several sources, both adults and kids.
- Listen without blaming.
- Don't call the act "bullying" while you are trying to understand what happened.

It may be difficult to get the whole story; collect all available information.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

Don't:

- Ignore it. Don't think children can work it out without adult help.
- Immediately try to sort out the facts.
- Force other children to say publicly what they saw.
- Question the children involved in front of other children.
- Talk to the children involved together, only separately.
- Make the children involved apologize or patch up relations on the spot.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

DO: Support Kids Who Are Bullied

- Listen and focus on the child. Learn what's been going on and show you want to help.
- Assure the child that bullying is not their fault.
- Know that kids who are bullied may struggle with talking about it. Consider referring them to the school counselor.
- Give advice about what to do. This may involve role-playing and thinking through how the child might react if the bullying occurs again.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

DO: Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child. The child, parents, and school or organization may all have valuable input.

- Ask the child being bullied what can be done to make him or her feel safe. Changes to routine should be minimized.
 - He or she is not at fault and should not be singled out. For example, consider rearranging classroom seating for everyone, not just the children involved.
 - If bigger moves are necessary, the child who is bullied should not be forced to change.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

DO: Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child.

- Develop a game plan and maintain open communication between schools, organizations, and parents.
- Discuss the steps that are taken and the limitations around what can be done based on policies.
- Be persistent. Bullying may not end overnight. Commit to making it stop and consistently support the bullied child.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

DO: Work together to resolve the situation and protect the bullied child.

- Encourage kids to speak to a trusted adult if they are bullied or see others being bullied. The adult can give comfort, support, and advice, even if they can't solve the problem directly.
- Encourage the child to report bullying if it happens.
- Talk about how to stand up to kids who bully. Give tips, like saying "stop" directly and confidently. Talk about what to do if those actions don't work, like walking away
- Talk about strategies for staying safe, such as staying near adults or groups of other kids.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

DON'T:

- Never tell the child to ignore the bullying.
- Do not blame the child for being bullied. Even if he or she provoked the bullying, no one deserves to be bullied.
- Do not tell the child to physically fight back against the kid who is bullying.
- Parents should resist the urge to contact the other parents involved. It may make matters worse. School or other officials can act as mediators between parents.
- Follow-up. Show a commitment to making bullying stop. Because bullying is behavior that repeats or has the potential to be repeated, it takes consistent effort to ensure that it stops.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

DO: Address Bullying Behavior

- Make sure the child knows what the problem behavior is.
- Young people who bully must learn their behavior is wrong and harms others.
- Show kids that bullying is taken seriously. Calmly tell the child that bullying will not be tolerated. Model respectful behavior when addressing the problem.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

DO: Address Bullying Behavior

- Work with the child to understand some of the reasons he or she bullied. For example:
 - Sometimes children bully to fit in. These kids can benefit from participating in positive activities. Involvement in sports and clubs can enable them to take leadership roles and make friends without feeling the need to bully.
 - Other times kids act out because something else—issues at home, abuse, stress—is going on in their lives. They also may have been bullied. These kids may be in need of additional support, such as mental health services.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

DO: Use Consequences to Teach

- Consequences that involve learning or building empathy can help prevent future bullying. For example, the child who bullied can:
 - Lead a class discussion about how to be a good friend.
 - Write a story about the effects of bullying or benefits of teamwork.
 - Role-play a scenario or make a presentation about the importance of respecting others, the negative effects of gossip, or how to cooperate.
 - Do a project about civil rights and bullying.
 - Read a book about bullying.
 - Make posters for the school about cyberbullying and being smart online.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

DO: Use Consequences to Teach

- Involve the kid who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation. The goal is to help them see how their actions affect others.
- For example, the child can:
 - Write a letter apologizing to the student who was bullied.
 - Do a good deed for the person who was bullied or for others in your community.
 - Clean up, repair, or pay for any property they damaged.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

DON'T: Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences.

- Zero tolerance or “three strikes, you’re out” strategies don’t work.
 - Suspending or expelling students who bully does not reduce bullying behavior. Students and teachers may be less likely to report and address bullying if suspension or expulsion is the consequence.
- Conflict resolution and peer mediation don’t work for bullying. Bullying is not a conflict between people of equal power who share equal blame. Facing those who have bullied may further upset kids who have been bullied.
- Group treatment for students who bully doesn’t work. Group members tend to reinforce bullying behavior in each other.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

DO: Followup

- After the bullying issue is resolved, continue finding ways to help the child who bullied to understand how what they do affects other people.
 - For example, praise acts of kindness or talk about what it means to be a good friend.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

10 Ways Parents Can Help Kids Build Resilience

1. Set family goals and have children play an important role in working towards them.
2. When your child is defensive or aggressive, help them reflect on the situation to understand what is causing their behavior. Children may lack the skills to handle what's happening. They may need support. Help them build the skills they lack so they can respond in better ways in the future.
3. Practice role playing how to handle different problems. This helps children develop ways of handling challenges.
4. Model an attitude of grit and optimism in the face of family challenges.
5. Work on solving problems together.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

10 Ways Parents Can Help Kids Build Resilience

6. Teach your child how to manage stress. Participating in wellness activities together, like exercise or healthy cooking, can be helpful.
7. Find someone (like a tutor, mentor, or school counselor) to help your child improve specific academic or life skills.
8. Volunteer together to help others in need.
9. Talk to your child about past challenges and how they helped you grow.
10. Help your child find practical solutions to problems as they come up.

#8: Respond Consistently and Appropriately When Bullying Happens

See Conversation Starter Cards for Parents for More Ways to Engage With Your Child

can string attached lines

Foreword

Did you know that research has found that avoidable things can happen if parents and caregivers aren't at least 15 minutes of each other a day, listening and talking with their children? Research also tells us that children who do have one-on-one parent and caregiver time are able to handle difficult challenges and decisions.

The document in your hands helps you and other caregivers learn more about bullying and how you can help your child. Each time you talk, an important conversation happens. Research shows that frequent, healthy, bidirectional communication is the best way to help your child develop and grow. It's important to have and share stories to promote healthy child development and to prevent conflict and avoid negative coping.

The intention here is to help the child's story be the advice they get from caregivers. It's not to tell them what to do or how to feel. It's to help them understand what's going on and what they can do about it. The stories and advice here are meant to be shared with your child, not to be read to them. They are meant to be shared with your child, not to be read to them.

Thanks for reading this book. We hope you find it helpful. We've gathered together our best stories and examples to help you get started. We hope you find it helpful. We've gathered together our best stories and examples to help you get started. We hope you find it helpful. We've gathered together our best stories and examples to help you get started.

— about Bullying

Welcome to...

Thanks for reading this book. We hope you find it helpful. We've gathered together our best stories and examples to help you get started. We hope you find it helpful. We've gathered together our best stories and examples to help you get started.

— about Bullying

Listen - Learn - Respect

These cards are to be used to start conversations about bullying and bullying prevention.

Feel free to adapt the questions to your own conversational style.

The questions are designed to generate open and honest discussions. Please be careful to avoid any questions or sensitive issues raised by the stories.

Agents of protection do exist, please read the additional materials provided by their program. Take a break and talk about the issue later or with the help of a mental health professional.

— about Bullying

General Questions

What does "bullying" mean to you?

MAKE TIME...LISTEN

— about Bullying

General Questions

Do you ever feel lonely at school or left out of activities? Let's talk about what happens and what you feel.

MAKE TIME...LISTEN

— about Bullying

General Questions

What is lunch time like at your school? Who do you sit with, what do you do, and what do you talk about?

MAKE TIME...LISTEN

— about Bullying

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