An essential guide for educators on bullying based on

INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER

Barbara Coloroso

FULLY REVISED AND UPDATED

author of the bestselling *kids are worth it!*

the bully, the bullied, and the not-so-innocent bystander

From Preschool to High School and Beyond: Breaking the Cycle of Violence and Creating More Deeply Caring Communities

This essential guide for educators on the topic of bullying is excerpted from *The Bully, The Bullied, and The Not-So-Innocent Bystander* and adapted for those who teach, would like to teach, are in teacher training programs, and those who find themselves teaching their children at home during this time of COVID19

An Essential Guide About Bullying For Educators
The Bully, The Bullied, and The Not-So-Innocent Bystander at School

By Barbara Coloroso

Far too many of our students are not all right. Some are frightened, others are emboldened, some keep their birth certificates handy, and others yell, "Go home." Some go to school every day filled with fear and trepidation, others feign illness to avoid being taunted or attacked on the way to school or in the school yard, hallways, and bathrooms; still others manage to make themselves sick at school so as to avoid harassment in the locker room. Students who are bullied spend a lot of time thinking up ways to avoid the trauma and have little energy left for learning, or getting involved in constructive activities, or maintaining healthy relationships with their peers.

It is not only the bullied student who suffers the consequences of bullying. Some students who use physical bullying when they are young diversify and magnify their cruelty in their teen years to include dating violence, or vicious racist attacks on their peers. Many students who bully continue these learned behaviors into adulthood and are at increased risk of bullying their own children, failing at interpersonal relationships, losing jobs, and, for some, ending up in jail. Some "high status social bullies" hone their skills on the field, in the hallways and in the classrooms and end up in our boardrooms, intimidating those "beneath" them.

Bystanders are also affected by bullying. These onlookers may observe the bullying and turn a blind eye, walk away, jump in as accomplices, or actively intervene and help the targeted child. All of these options come at a price.

Breaking the cycle of violence involves more than merely identifying and stopping the bullying student. It requires that we examine why and how one becomes a bully or the target of a bully (and sometimes both) as well as the role bystanders play in perpetuating the cycle. We must look at the cultural climate of the school that may be contributing to cultivating the bully, reinforcing the corrupting behavior of the not-so-innocent bystanders, undermining the target of the bully, and making it difficult for brave-hearted witnesses, resisters, and defenders to stand up for the targeted student, step in, and speak out against the injustice.

A deadly combination is bullies who gets what they wants from their targets; targeted students who are afraid to tell; not-so-innocent bystanders who either watch, participate in the bullying, or look away; and adults who discount bullying as teasing, not tormenting; as a necessary part of growing up, not an impediment along the way; as"boys will be boys," or "girl drama," not the predatory aggression that it is.

If this triad of relationships is not radically transformed, we have enough incidents in our recent past to convince us that it is not only the bully who may terrorize and haunt our community. Some victims whose cries went unheard, whose pain was ignored, whose oppression went unabated and unrelieved, have struck back with a vengeance and a rage that have racked our communities with incomprehensible horror and sorrow. Others who reached what they felt was an utterly hopeless and irretrievable point, have turned the violence inward and killed themselves. Feeling they had no other way out of the pain and torture heaped on them by their tormentors, no one to turn to, no way to tell, they made a tragic and final exit.

The common thread in most accounts of school violence that have bullying as one of the root causes is that the bullying went on without substantial objections, indignation, adequate intervention, or outrage. We are devastated by the final act of violence but rarely outraged by the events that led to that final act. The bottom line: These tragic outcomes need not have happened. Bullying is a learned behavior. If it can be learned, it can be examined, and it can be changed.

I+Thou=We

Students need to know that they do not need to "like" every person in their class or their school, but that all of us—educators and students alike--must honor one another's humanity and treat each other with dignity and regard. The philosopher, Martin Buber called it "meeting one another as an I and a Thou." To see others as"Thou"is to honor their *uniqueness* and *individuality*, and at the same time to recognize our common bond, our solidarity, our interdependence, and our interconnectedness. What seems a paradox is actually two necessary parts of the whole: individuality and commonality. We are both an "I and Thou" and a "We."

Compassion is the sympathetic consciousness of another's sorrow, pain, or misery, together with the passion and desire to alleviate it. This passion is more than a sentiment or a thought. It is knowing, feeling, and being compelled to do something to alleviate another's misery or hurt. There is no compassion without action. What we as educators do to help create a school climate where the uniqueness of every student and our commonality as a school community matters.

The driving forces behind compassion are empathy and sympathy. Empathy and sympathy are often mistakenly referred to as if they are one and the same. They are not. When we empathize we *resonate* with another, we echo or amplify that person's feelings. When we sympathize we *respond* to another, and our feelings are in harmony with the other's but are not the same. Both empathy and sympathy are critical to human bonding. For young people, feeling empathy—echoing or resonating with another's feelings—is the beginning of their knowledge that we are all made of the same delicate fabric. Sympathy is sorrow or concern in response to someone

else's distress or misery. Empathy helps create the sense of "We" through feelings in common; sympathy helps create the sense of "I and Thou" through two unique feelings, each bound to the other by the "and." The more young people can do both—respond and resonate—the better able they will be to act compassionately when one of their peers is targeted.

Activities in your classroom and in your school as a whole to encourage students to care deeply about one another, share generously of their gifts and talents, and to help willingly, will reaffirm this sense of their uniqueness, individuality and commonality—vital tools to help create a deeply caring community that is safe harbor for every student.

Empathy can be corrupted, perverted, or negated. Young people who bully often have empathy in the sense that they are able to vicariously experience the targeted student's feelings, but instead of resonating with these feelings, they take great glee in causing further distress to the one they targeted.

Sympathy can be just as easily corrupted. Sympathy is not merely feeling sorry or upset about someone else's plight. It is a much greater regard, a deep sorrow and concern for the weal and woe of the other. Often labeled as sappy, sentimental, or patronizing, sympathy is none of these when it is a sincere response to another's pain. Perverted or corrupted, it can be all three. When people want to appear sympathetic but are not really open to taking in the others person's distress, their *reaction*—not response—will tend to be artificial, sappy, sentimental, and/or patronizing. With flowery words and a condescending tone, the imposter talks a good talk but has no intention of relieving the other person's pain. Bullies crying and offering a meaningless apology to the peer they targeted ("I'm sorry if you were offended.""We didn't mean to hurt you") are usually crying and offering the apology only because they got caught and they care about what could happen to them, not because they care about their peer. Such a show of sympathy is merely an act of self-indulgence, the embodiment of sympathy corrupted.

Empathy and sympathy can be *negated* by rationalizing that the targeted students brought their problems on themselves, or that they somehow deserved the misery, or that they are"not like us."Empathy and sympathy can be *overwhelmed*, especially when the tragedy, such as a school shooting, is so devastating that the one who feels the empathy or sympathy begins to feel helpless and hopeless. Both emotions can be overwhelmed by anger. When bullied teens finally strike back, sympathy for them can be overwhelmed by the frustration and anger we feel because of the act and the hurt inflicted, not only on those who targeted them but often on innocent parties as well. Both empathy and sympathy can be drowned by a clamor for revenge, and totally deadened by hatred.

Our story about our human nature in today's social and cultural climate is part and parcel of our human nature *and* our social and cultural climate. A social and cultural climate saturated with

bigotry, intolerance, and contempt will greatly influence how we individually and collectively relate to the "other"—as an *It* not a *Thou.*

Three Characters and a Tragedy

The bully, the bullied, and the not-so-innocent bystander are three characters in a tragedy performed daily in our schools. The play is real and the consequences can be deadly. A student who is playing "the bully" dresses, speaks, and acts the part, as do "the bullied" and "the not-so-innocent bystander." It is the posturing, the words, the actions, and the consequences of these elements combined that is the concern of this educators' guide. Young students might try out all three roles and play each one with relative ease. Some play both the bully and bullied and move effortlessly between the two. Some abandon the bully and bullied roles to become bystanders. A few become a fourth character, the antithesis of the bully—brave-hearted witnesses, resisters, or defenders. A few get typecast and find it almost impossible to break out of the role they have mastered, with no opportunity to develop more constructive social skills or healthy personal relationships.

Typecasting raises the issue of language. When any one of these terms—the bully, the bullied, or the not-so-innocent bystander—is used in this guide, it is intended to identify only a *temporary role* that a student is performing at that moment, in that one scene of one act in a longer play. It is not intended to define or permanently label a student's personality characteristics. The goal is to gain a clearer understanding of these roles and how the interactions involved in such role-playing, though commonplace in our culture, are not healthy, not normal, and certainly not necessary. These interactions can be devastating to students playing any of the three characters and to the community as a whole.

Our students are not merely acting out their scripts, they are living them. They can't go home after a performance and "get real,"because home is a part of their stage. But the scripts can be rewritten, new roles created, the plot changed, the stage reset, and the tragic ending scrapped. The actors can't do it alone. We adults have to get out of our seats—we cannot afford to be a passive, inattentive, bored, alarmed, or deeply saddened audience. We can't walk out, close the show, and send it somewhere else. We can't merely banish the bully and mourn the bullied. It's the roles that must be abandoned, not our students. They need a new play, and along with them, we educators can become active participants in a total rewrite.

Once we understand these roles, we can begin to help our students rewrite the script and create alternative, healthier roles that require no pretense and no violence. We can re-channel the governing or controlling behavior of the bully positively into leadership activities. The nonaggressive, deeply caring, sensitive behaviors of the bullied can be acknowledged and

developed as strengths. The role of the not-so-innocent bystander can be transformed into that of a brave-hearted witness, resister, or defender: a person willing to stand up for a target, to speak out and act against an injustice.

Bully

Bullies come in all different sizes and shapes: some are big; some are small; some bright and some not so bright; some attractive and some not so attractive; some popular and some absolutely disliked by almost everybody. You can't always identify bullies by what they *look* like, but you can pick them out by what they *act* like. They have their lines and actions down; their roles are often rehearsed at home. Sometimes they take their cue from the movies they see, the games they play, the peers they hang with, the school they attend, and the culture that surrounds them. To the untrained eye, it may look as if they are only teasing, just pretending, having a good old-fashioned fistfight. They are not. They are involved in serious acting with serious consequences for themselves, the peers they bully, and the community as a whole.

There are lots of reasons some students use their abilities and talents to bully other people. No one factor tells the whole story. Bullies don't come out of the womb as bullies. Inborn temperament is a factor, but so, too, are young people's home life, school life, and the community and culture (including the media) that permit or encourage such behavior.

Four things we know about bullies:

1. They are taught to bully.
2. They bully because they can.
3. They choose to bully.
4. They chose whom to bully.

They make a choice to use their leadership skills to manipulate, control, dominate, and humiliate those whom they see as a threat to their status, or those they see as being less than themselves. They tend to see their targeted peers as "objects" of scorn; using them for their sadistic pleasures, and to enhance their own popularity.

Just as bullies come in all sizes and shapes, there are different *kinds* of bullies. There are seven kinds of bullying roles students can choose to play.

1. **The confident bully**
   The confident bully doesn't walk onto the scene; he swaggers onto it, throwing his weight around figuratively and literally. He has a big ego (as opposed to a

strong one), an inflated sense of self, a sense of entitlement, a penchant for aggressive behavior, and no compassion for his targets. He feels good only to the degree that he feels a sense of superiority over others. Peers and teachers often admire him because he has a powerful personality and strong leadership skills. This does not mean that he has a lot of friends. Friendships are based on trust, loyalty, and mutual respect, not typically characteristics of any bully. Such a savvy bully knows how to play the game so he is not caught.

2. **The social bully**
   The social bully uses rumor, gossip, verbal taunts, and shunning to systematically isolate her selected targets and effectively exclude them from social activities. She is jealous of others' positive qualities and has a poor sense of self, but she hides her feelings and insecurities in a cloak of exaggerated confidence and charm. Devious and manipulative, she can act as if she is a caring and compassionate person, but it is only a guise to cover for her lack of true concern for anyone she targets and a tool to get what she wants. She may be popular, but she is not someone her peers would want to confide in, lest they, too, become a target for her bullying. She uses her full charm to gain favor with those who she feels can help her.

Both the confident bully and the social bully are also known as "high status social bullies," who use their leadership skills to manipulate their peers and charm the adults around them. Seeing these two characters as strong leaders who are "nice kids," adults often dismiss the complaints of those they target, because "these are nice kids, they come from nice homes and would not intentionally hurt anyone." The targeted student is not believed and the high-status bullies become even more emboldened.

3. **The fully armored bully**
   The fully armored bully is cool and detached. He shows little emotion and has strong determination to carry out his bullying. He looks for an opportunity to bully when no one will see him or stop him. He is vicious and vindictive toward his target but charming and deceptive in front of others, especially adults. He appears to have what is known as a flat affect—that is, a cold and unfeeling demeanor; in reality he has buried his feelings so deep in a place of darkness and growing angst that even he has trouble finding and identifying them.

4. **The hyperactive bully**
   The hyperactive bully struggles with academics and has poorly developed social skills. He usually has some kind of learning disability, doesn't process social cues accurately, often reads hostile intent into peers' innocent actions, reacts

aggressively to even slight provocation, and justifies his aggressive response by placing blame outside of himself: "He hit me back first." The hyperactive bully has trouble making friends.

5. **The bullied bully**
   The bullied bully is both a target and a bully. Bullied and abused by adults or older students, she bullies others to get some relief from her own feelings of powerlessness and self-loathing. Least popular of all the bullies, she strikes out viciously at those who hurt her and at weaker or smaller targets. The bullied bully is often the one most seriously impacted by bullying. She is at high risk for depression, gripping social anxiety, and drug usage, carrying both the damaging effects of being bullied and of being a bully.

6. **The bunch of bullies**
   The bullied bully is a group of friends who collectively do something they would never do individually to someone they want to exclude or scapegoat. Bullying, done by a group of "nice kids" who know that what they did was wrong and that it hurts their target, is still bullying.

7. **The gang of bullies**
   The gang of bullies is a scary lot drawn together, not as a group of friends, but as a strategic alliance in pursuit of power, control, domination, subjugation, and turf. Initially joining to feel a part of a family of sorts, to be respected and to be protected, in their zeal they become so devoted to their group that they disregard their own lives, the carnage they inflict on their victims, and the overall consequences of their actions. Added to this zeal is a lack of empathy and remorse.

Although their ways and means of bullying may be different, when students choose to play the role of bully they have these traits in common. They:

1. Like to dominate other people. ("If you want to be in my group, don't sit with the new girl." "He's a wimp, stay away from him.")
2. Like to use other people to get what they want. ("Put that ugly rumor up on your Instagram so he boyfriend will drop her." "Grab him and throw him in the showers, I'll watch the door.")
3. Find it hard to see a situation from the other person's vantage point. (He just can't take a joke. We were only teasing and he started crying. What a wimp.")

4. Are concerned only with their own wants and pleasures and not the needs, rights, and feelings of others. ("Give me your lunch money." "It was my own private Instagram, I can post what I want on it.")
5. Tend to hurt peers when adults are not around. (Bullying a peer under the radar of adults and then denying it when called to account.)
6. View weaker siblings and peers as prey; not as people to be treated with dignity and regards. ("Twisting the arm of a younger sister; dunking a targeted peer's head in the toilet.)
7. Use blame, criticism, and false allegations to project their own inadequacies onto their target. ("She just went bonkers on us when we were just teasing her." "He was asking for it, the way he acts is so weird." "She was the one who posted it, not me."—when in reality the bully posted it under the targeted peer's name.)
8. Refuse to accept responsibility for their actions. ("She's so sensitive, can't even take a joke." "It wasn't my fault; he tripped over my foot.")
9. Lack foresight—that is, the ability to consider the short-term, long-term, and possible unintended consequences of their current behavior. ("I didn't mean to break his arm, just twist it a bit." "We were just having fun with him when we told him to kill himself; no one thought he would actually do it.")
10. Crave attention.
11. Get pleasure from inflicting pain on their targeted peers. (The involuntary smirk on the face of the bully when tormenting the targeted peer is a sure give-away that the bully intended to cause harm and was getting pleasure from seeing the targeted peer in distress.)

It can be argued that the bullies do not have a full understanding of the consequences of their taunting; what can't be argued is the delight they got out of seeing their classmates traumatized and fearful.

The bullies learn their lines well, master the ability to act the part of the wronged party, get others to collude with them, and try to play on both the emotions and biases of the adults.
In order to practice being bullies, they need to find peers to target on whom they can heap their cruel acts.

Bullied

Just like bullies, young people who are bullied come in all sizes and shapes, there are different young people who are bullied come in all sizes and shapes. Some are big, some are small; some bright and some not so bright; some attractive and some not so attractive; some popular and some disliked by almost everybody. The one thing that all students who are targeted have in

common is that they were targeted by a bully (or by a bunch of bullies). Each one was singled out to be the object of scorn and thus the recipient of verbal, physical, or relational bullying, merely because he or she was different in some way, and the differences identified as the justifications for the attacks are spurious at best, contemptuous excuses at worst.

Targets can be just about anybody—the student who is:

1. New on the block.
2. The youngest in the school—and thus usually smaller, sometimes scared, maybe insecure. Bullying escalates when a new class enters middle school or high school.
3. One having been traumatized—who is already hurt by a prior trauma, is extremely sensitive, avoids peers to avoid further pain, and finds it hard to ask for help.
4. Submissive—who is anxious, lacking in self-confidence, and easily led and who does things to please or placate others.
5. One who has behaviors others find annoying.
6. Unwilling to fight—who prefers to resolve conflicts without aggression.
7. Shy, reserved, quiet or unassuming, timid, sensitive.
8. Poor or rich.
9. One whose race or ethnicity is viewed by the bully as inferior, deserving of contempt.
10. One whose gender/sexual orientation or sexual identification is viewed by the bully as inferior, deserving of contempt.
11. One whose religion is viewed by the bully as inferior, deserving of contempt.
12. Bright, talented, or gifted—targeted because she"stands out"—in other words, is different.
13. Independent and unconcerned about social status, doesn't conform to the norm.
14. One who expresses emotions readily.
15. One who is fat or thin, short or tall.
16. One who wears braces or glasses.
17. One who has acne or any other skin condition.
18. One who has superficial physical attributes that are different from those of the majority.
19. One who has physical and/or mental disabilities—such students are at high risk for being targeted because they have an obvious disability and thus a ready excuse for the bully; often they are not as well integrated into classes and thus have fewer friends to come to their aid; and they often lack verbal and/or physical skills to adequately defend themselves against the aggression. A student with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder may act before he thinks, not reflecting on the possible consequences of his behavior and, purposely or inadvertently, annoy a bully.
20. One who has a serious food allergy.

21. In the wrong place at the wrong time—attacked because the bully wanted to aggress on someone right here, right now.

The myths that abound in our society about targets—weak and pathetic, frail, insecure, loner, in a "dance"with a bully, asking to be bullied, had it coming, deserving of what they got, "losers deserve to lose"—all feed into the rationalizations young people (and many adults) make for not putting the onus for the bullying on the bully, or for joining in, for turning away from the targets, or worse, for blaming the targets for what happened to them. These myths about who is the target of bullying often are based on what bullied students looks and acts like after having been bullied repeatedly. Once the bully has targeted a peer how the targeted peer responds will influence whether or not she moves from target to victim (succumbing to the bullying). If a student succumbs to the attack—gives the bully what is demanded by showing distress, fear, or apathy; or fails to respond assertively—she changes emotionally, mentally, and physically. She becomes someone she was not before the attack; and all future attacks will be against this ever-weakening target. The guilt, shame, and sense of failure felt by a target unable to cope with the brutalization contribute to the destruction of her sense of well-being. As she becomes more isolated from her peers, has trouble concentrating on schoolwork, and develops survival strategies instead of social skills, her life changes radically. How bystanders respond to both the bully and the target have a tremendous influence on how emboldened the bully becomes and/or how weak the target gets.

Many students who are targeted are deeply caring, respectful people who have a strong sense of fair play and a low propensity to violence. Others have been weakened already by being targeted by their siblings at home. And others, who have behaviors that annoy or amuse their peers, still have a right to be treated with dignity and respect, just like anyone else. Granted, they may need to change their behaviors, or, as in the case with students who have Asperger's syndrome, may need to memorize the clues that their peers read instinctively so as to not so readily be made the fool by peers who think it's okay to play tricks on them.

We need to ask why young people would feel they have a right to disregard, scorn, or hate a peer simply because that peer was different in some way from themselves. Why would students take their pleasure from a peer's pain?

The Not-So-Innocent Bystanders

The not-so-innocent bystanders are the third group of players in the tragedy. They are the supporting cast who aid and abet the bully through acts of omission and commission. They can stand idly by or look away, or they can actively encourage the bully or join in and become one of a bunch of bullies. Whatever the choice, there is a price to pay. Actively engaging with bullies or

cheering them on causes even more distress to the targeted peer, encourages the antisocial behavior of the bullies, and puts the bystanders at risk of becoming desensitized to the cruelty or becoming full-fledged bullies themselves.

When young people observe the aggressive antisocial activities of bullies, they are more likely to imitate those activities if they see the bullies as popular, strong, and daring role models. It is not uncommon for preteen and teen boys and girls to use verbal, physical, and relational denigration of a targeted peer to elevate their own status in their peer group. The apparent lack of negative consequences coupled with a bounty of prizes such as elevated status among peers, applause, laughter, and approval (or in some cases monetary rewards) for the bullying contribute to the breakdown of the bystanders' inner controls against such antisocial activities.

Add to these conditions a group of peers who are caught up in this drama and you have a third ingredient: a decreased sense of individual responsibility. The bullies are no longer acting alone; the bystanders have become a bunch of bullies who together denigrate the target further. This spiraling down equally reduces the guilt felt by each one doing the bullying and magnifies the negative attributes hung on the targeted peer. "But he is such a cry baby. He whines when we just look at him.""She's such a dork; she wears such stupid clothes and walks around with her head hung down. She won't even smile." (Rarely do people make the connection that the target's performance and/or attitude is what it is, in part, because of being bullied.)

Four Reasons and Nine Lousy Excuses

Why would young people who would not instigate bullying be so willing to become a part of the attack or turn a blind eye to the plight of the targeted peer? There are four valid reasons and lots of excuses:

1. *Bystanders are afraid of getting hurt.* The bully is bigger and stronger and has a reputation that justifies the fear; jumping into the melee doesn't appear to be a smart thing to do.
2. *Bystanders are afraid of becoming a new target of the bully.* Even if the bystanders are able to intervene successfully, there is a chance that they will be singled out later for retribution. Bullies are quick to disparage and malign anyone who tries to intervene.
3. *Bystanders are afraid of doing something that will only make the situation worse*. They are afraid if they tell school personnel that their friend has made threats to harm the student who bullied him that the targeted student will be expelled from school for making those threats.

4. *Bystanders do not know what to do.* They haven't been taught ways to intervene, to report the bullying, or to help the target. Students must be taught ways to stop it and care enough to want it to stop.

As legitimate as they are, these reasons do not shore up the self-confidence or self-respect that is eroded when a student witnesses a bullying incident and is unable or unwilling to respond effectively to stop the cruelty. All too often these fears and lack of skill can turn into apathy—a potent friend of contempt. Contempt grows best in a climate of indifference.

Bystanders have more excuses than valid reasons for not intervening. These excuses help poison the social environment, increasing the likelihood that bystanders will side with the bully and eventually assume the role of bullies themselves. They include but are certainly not limited to these nine:

1. *The bully is my friend.* Students are less willing to intervene when the bully is seen as a friend, even if this friend is being unfair, disrespectful, or mean.

2. *It's not my problem!* This is not my fight! Socialized not to interfere in other people's affairs, to do their own work, and to look out for number one, bystanders can excuse themselves by claiming to be minding their own business. This is also known as indifference.

3. *She is not my friend*. Students are more willing to intervene when the targeted peer is a friend. Bullies often select peers who have few friends.

4. *He's a loser.* In a highly competitive culture it is easy to write off targets as losers. Bystanders fear they might lose their own status in their group if they are even seen with the targeted peer, let alone seen defending her.

5. *She deserved to be bullied, asked for it, had it coming.* Why stop something that is warranted? She didn't even stand up for himself, so why should anyone else stand up for him? This excuse appears to get the bystander off the hook, but it fails to take into account the basic principle that bullying is about contempt. No one deserves to be stripped of his dignity and self-worth. Targeted students cannot always act alone to successfully fend off a bully or bunch of bullies.

6. *Bullying will toughen him up*. Bullying does not toughen up a target; it humiliates and often enrages him.

7. *Young people have a deeply embedded code of silence.* Who wants to be called a snitch or a rat, blamed for getting someone else in trouble? What isn't considered in this excuse is the immorality of silence in the face of malice.

8. *It's better to be in the in-group than to defend the outcasts.* In a clique, once the leader of the pack identifies a peer as a target, the rest of the group tends to fall mindlessly in line, doing the bully's bidding without much consideration for the rights and feelings of the outcast. The in-group becomes so tightly connected and single-minded that there is no room for protest, dissent, or differences. The need for approval and acceptance within such a clique is so strong that even if the bystander felt the momentary urge to protest the harm being done to a targeted peer, that urge would be quickly squelched. When cliques are the norm, there is a clear demarcation of"us," and "them--those below us"--and thus deserving of contempt and certainly not worthy of concern.

9. *It's too big a pain in the brain.* A bystander must weigh the pros and cons of remaining faithful to the group versus siding with the targeted peer. This mental calculation can create tremendous intellectual and emotional tension. The fastest way to reduce the tension is to magnify the pros of marching lockstep with the group and magnify the cons of helping out the bullied peer. Add the four legitimate reasons above to excuses number one through eight and the answer seems simple—don't get involved. Added bonus—the headache is gone. To a young person—and to many adults—standing up and speaking out can be complicated, risky, difficult, and painful.

Taken together, these reasons and excuses contribute to the erosion of civility in peer group interactions. When civility is diminished, it is replaced by a false sense of entitlement, an intolerance toward differences, and a liberty to exclude that allow students to harm another human being without feeling empathy, sympathy, compassion, or shame. This erosion of civility also erodes students' ability to communicate, negotiate, and compromise—three vital skills necessary for solving problems, resolving conflicts, and reconciling differences peaceably.

A Fourth Character--The Brave-Hearted

Bystanders are rarely acknowledged for their not-so-innocent involvement, nor are they recognized as the potent forces they can become to stop bullying. Stifling a bully requires a simple ethical principle: do the right thing on behalf of the targeted individual, regardless of the actions of the bully or other bystanders. The Brave-Hearted wears three different and vital garbs—those of resister, defender, and witness. They confound and disturb those who are unquestionably obedient to the bully and cruel to their targeted peer. They actively resist the tactics of the bully, stands up to the bully, speaks out against the cruelty, and/or protects,

defends, and speaks for those who are targeted. The cycle of violence can be interrupted when even one person has the moral strength and courage to resist the bully, defend those who have been targeted, or give witness to the cruelty (document it and/or report it) in order to get it stopped.

This character is an awkward and embarrassing reminder that such choices are possible. This is the young girl who sits with the new girl when the high-status social bully in eighth grade says to all the other girls, "I don't like the new girl. You want to be in my group, don't eat lunch with her." This is the young boy who steps in to protect the smaller boy when the bully says to all the other boys in the locker room,"Look at that weird kid. Let's throw him in the shower with his clothes on." These are the two boys who buy fifty pink shirts and invite their schoolmates to wear pink in support of a younger boy who was taunted by a group of bullies simply because he wore a pink shirt on the first day of school.

Brittne Friar was the senior class president, cheer captain and the homecoming queen in a small town in Texas. When she saw a new student being targeted by their peers supposedly for dating a senior, Brittne stepped in to stop the cruelty. The schoolmates turned on Brittne, verbally and physically attacking her; once trying to run her off the road on her way to school. They tormented her on-line and taunted her in the hallways. Reporting the incidents to school officials did little to stop the bullies and their henchmen. It reached a point where Brittne no longer felt safe at the school and didn't want to go. Three months before her graduation, Brittne moved to a high school in another district, forfeiting her role as valedictorian, and losing her eligibility for some scholarships. When asked if she regretted stepping up to help her peer, Brittne replied emphatically, "I'd do it again!"

All of these brave-hearted students do what they do at the risk of being taunted themselves by the bullies and their henchmen. Yet they do it, not only *knowing* that it is the right thing to do, but *caring* enough about their targeted peer to do something to make the bullying stop.

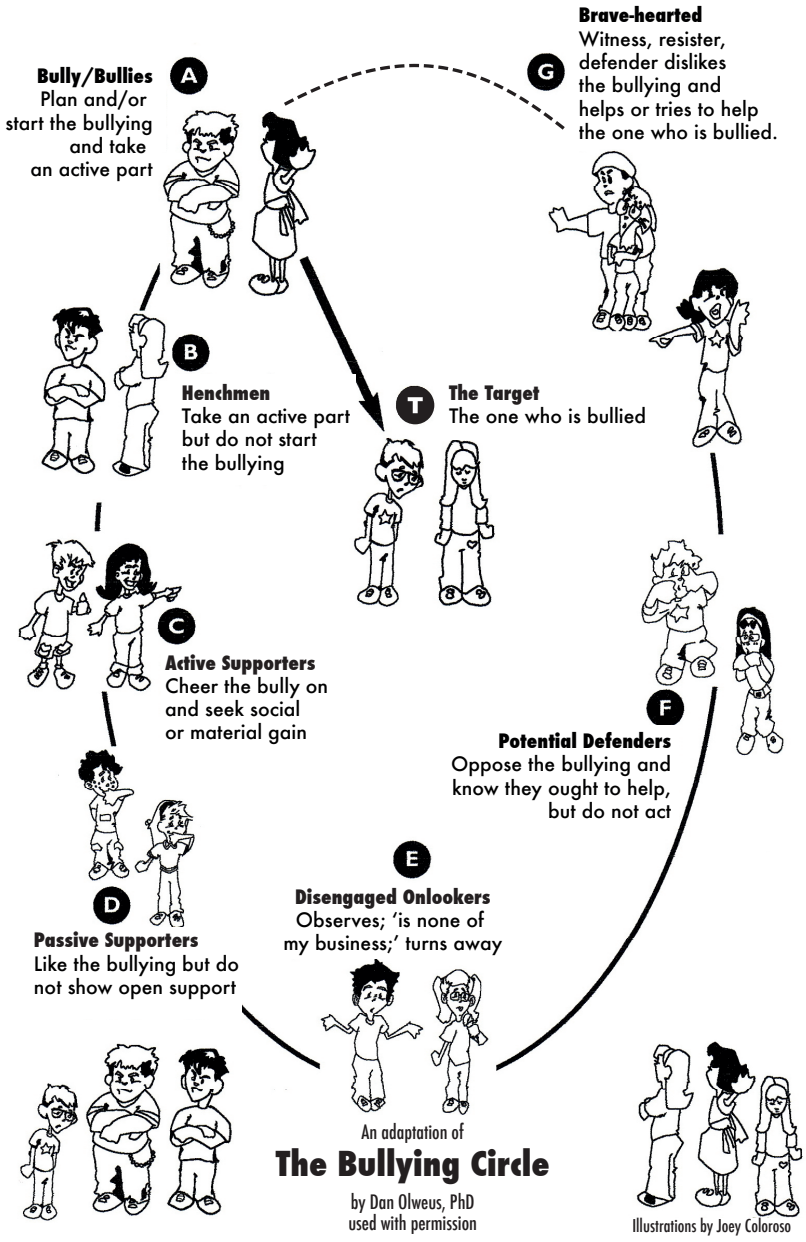
The Bullying Circle—The Trap of Comradeship

The Bullying Circle is adapted from the Bully Circle, with permission from creator Dan Olweus, PhD, of the University of Bergen, Norway, one of the world's leading researchers on bullying and peer harassment. It illustrates all the roles of a bully, all of the not-so-innocent bystanders, their targeted peer in this tragedy and what they are doing or not doing in a bullying scenario. Starting with the bully/bullies on the left side of the circle and moving counterclockwise in order of complicity are the various characters surrounding the target.

A. Bully/Bullies—Planners, instigators, and perpetrators who instigate, plan, and/or start the bullying and take an active part.
B. Henchmen— Do the bully's bidding by taking an active part but do not actually plan the bullying.
C. Active Supporters—Cheer the bully on and seek to reap the social and/or material gains that result from the bullying.
D. Passive Supporters—Enjoy the bullying but do not show open support. Get pleasure from the pain inflicted on the target.
E. Disengaged Onlookers—Mere observers who say, "It's none of my business," turn a blind eye, and pretend they don't see.
F. Potential Defenders—Oppose the actions of the bully and know that they should help the target but don't, for a variety of reasons and excuses.
To Dr. Olweus' list, I have added a fourth character—the antithesis of the bully:
G. Brave-Hearted Witnesses, Resisters, and Defenders—Dislikes the bullying and help or try to help the one who is bullied, the target.

This vicious social arrangement makes the bullying possible by inviting the merger of role and person that, in turn, creates the capacity for internalizing the cruelty and shaping later cruel behaviors. In other words, each person in the scenario becomes a character actor—someone who specializes in playing a role of an unusual or distinctive character. Slipping into the role offered in the Bullying Circle, it is easy for bystanders to become invested in the logic and cruel practices of the bully and become not just complicit but"owned by it." In this tight-knit circle, characters find that the more cruel acts they perform or condone, the more their reputation is enhanced among their participating peers and with the bully.

For young people, it is these insidious day-to-day changes in attitudes, beliefs, and prejudices that begin the slow descent into what Sebastian Haffner, in his book, *Defying Hitler*, labels "trap of comradeship."This is the trap in which a culture of cruelty flourishes when these not-so-innocent bystanders discard their garb of personal responsibility as they further dehumanize the targeted peer. One of the most disturbing aspects of this comradeship is how a group of young people begins to behave as a collective entity, ignoring or belittling anything that could disturb their collective self-satisfaction. The bullies and the not-so-innocent bystanders become a cruel combination that is more than the sum of its parts.


A
Bully/Bullies
Plan and/or start the bullying and take an active part
G
Brave-hearted
Witness, resister, defender dislikes the bullying and helps or tries to help the one who is bullied.
B
Henchmen
Take an active part but do not start the bullying
T
The Target
The one who is bullied
C
Active Supporters
Cheer the bully on and seek social or material gain
F
Potential Defenders
Oppose the bullying and know they ought to help, but do not act
D
Passive Supporters
Like the bullying but do not show open support
E
Disengaged Onlookers
Observes; 'is none of my business;' turns away
An adaptation of
The Bullying Circle
by Dan Olweus, PhD
used with permission
Illustrations by Joey Coloroso

What Bullying Isn't and What It Is

In order to begin to flesh out the solutions, we need to understand the conditions that allow such cruelty to flourish and that weaken our moral inhibitions against such violence. We need to believe that we can create conditions that will strengthen our inhibitions against violence and nurture the bonds that connect us one to another. To do this we must understand what bullying isn't and what it is. Bullying can hide behind myths and misperceptions. A prudent and judicious use of the term is critical.

Bullying—What It is Not

Failing to recognize an act as bullying, mislabeling it a conflict, overextending the term, or inappropriately labeling behaviors as bullying when they are ignorant faux pas, impulsive aggression (spontaneous, indiscriminate striking out with no intended target), or conflicts, can derail efforts to appropriately deal with real acts of bullying.

Ignorant Faux Pas

Using a racist, sexist, ageist, physical attribute, or mental ability stereotype is never a good thing to do, but it may not have the markers of bullying. Making statements such as the following often indicates an ignorance of the source or the bias of the word or phrase, or an apathy toward the group that has been marginalized or vilified or discriminated against by the comment:

- I jewed him down when I bought the car.
- I got gyped on that deal.
- How many (name a group) does it take to unscrew a light bulb?
- Don't be an Indian giver.
- She's got her dumb blonde act down.
- He runs like a girl.
- That's so gay.
- It's not over until the fat lady sings.

What is needed is a brief tutorial on the stereotype or bias that the words convey, the possible effects the words can have on others, and an admonishment to not use that phrase again—to find a more creative, intelligent way to say what the student really meant. Often these phrases were learned at home, at school or through the media and the person spouting these words is oblivious to their origin or bias. These comments are crude and offensive and can set the stage for bullying but they are not bullying.

Impulsive Aggression

Acts of impulsive aggression—in other words, aggression that is a spontaneous, indiscriminate striking out, with no intended target is not bullying. Such aggression is usually reactionary and

emotionally charged. It can be related to a physical or mental handicap, such as ADHD, autism or Asperger's syndrome (high functioning autism), and must not be dismissed or excused, but it is not bullying. Spontaneous, deliberate, indiscriminate striking out also may be a response by a bullied student (one who may or may not have a physical or mental disability) to an attack by a bully, but it is not bullying Far too many students who end up in alternative school programs have physically struck back at the person who had been bullying them with verbal taunts, or intentional social exclusion, and the targeted peer "just couldn't take it anymore." The taunts and social isolation ignored or dismissed by educators and the physical attack is dealt with severity, without effectively dealing with what was behind the spontaneous physical attack.

Conflict

Conflict—even handled poorly—is not bullying. Conflict is a normal, natural, and necessary part of our lives. It involves either a disagreement or clash between people, their ideas, goals, or principles. Conflict is inevitable in our schools, and so is the pain and discomfort that goes along with it. But conflict can be resolved and made less painful if it is dealt with directly, creatively, responsibly, and non-violently—not passively or aggressively. Students who avoid conflict or always give in, end up as passive human beings likely to "take all kinds of abuse lying down," or as human beings seething with suppressed anger and rage. The former are likely to be vulnerable targets for bullies; the later direct their hostilities outward in acts of violence against others or inward against themselves. When conflict is viewed as a contest—something that someone has to win, and someone else will inevitable lose—emotional or physical aggression often becomes a tool of choice. The other option is flight—avoiding conflict at all cost, playing "peacemaker." Neither is productive. It is our job to figure out how to reach fair, equitable, and just solutions and resolutions to our own conflicts and to help our students do the same.

Sometimes it takes a mediator who is neutral and impartial to help the two parties arrive at a solution that they both see as fair, equitable, and just. We can teach young people through example, guidance, and instruction that violence is an immature, irresponsible, and unproductive technique to resolve conflict, and that using non-violent tools to resolve conflict is a mature and courageous act. When conflict is viewed, not as a contest, but as a crisis, i.e. "a sudden change or turning point in a situation," young people can learn not to attack aggressively or flee from the conflict, but embrace it, seeing it as a challenge and opportunity to grow and change. Conflict then becomes a cooperative challenge, a process, and a movement back and forth between two or more people.

Unresolved conflict can escalate to an armed confrontation. Criminal activities that may have begun as a conflict and escalated to a serious physical assault, a serious threat of physical assault, or an assault with a weapon require legal intervention as well as disciplinary procedures and therapeutic intervention, but they are not bullying.

Ignorant faux pas, spontaneous aggression and conflicts do not bear the markers of bullying. They are issues that we must recognize and deal with effectively in order to create a more deeply caring community. They can contribute to the breakdown of healthy human relationships if they are dismissed, ignored, or left to fester.

Hate Crimes—Criminal Bullying

It is important to note that some violent activities *do* bear the markers of bullying as well as of criminality. These are commonly called hate crimes: criminal acts against a person, group of people, or property in which the bully chooses the target because of the target's real or perceived race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, gender, or ethnicity. Not only do these require legal intervention, they require disciplinary procedures and therapeutic intervention that address the elements of contempt and arrogance that are packaged with the violence. They are not faux pas, nor are they spontaneous acts of aggression, and they certainly do not require conflict resolution techniques.

If we aren't tuned in to the possibility that bullying is happening in front of us, or behind our backs—expecting to see only conflict or drama, and armed with the policies and procedures to deal with just those, we will end up retargeting the target and emboldening the bully. Once bullying is framed as a conflict, the range of responses is restricted to consent-based alternatives for resolving that supposed conflict.

Many of the anti-bullying programs developed for schools have as their foundation conflict resolution solutions. Educators who complete such well-intentioned bullying prevention programs become skilled at handling different kinds of conflict and learn effective anger management skills, but they still have no clue how to identify and effectively confront bullying. It is disturbing how often school districts' procedural handbooks mention the use of a mediator "to resolve" a bullying issue, as if it is a conflict. In doing this we are asking targeted students to be willing to reach some sort of "agreement"with the perpetrators. In conflict, both parties must be willing to compromise or give something up in order to come to a resolution. In bullying, the bullies are already in a position of power and have robbed the targets of their sense of well-being, dignity, and worth. How much are we asking the targets to give up? Bullying is not a party to any form of conflict resolution, be it negotiation, truce or reason. Both bullying's inception and its solution lie elsewhere.

Bullying—A Definition

To start the conversation, we need a common language and an understanding of the dynamics of bullying. There are numerous definitions of bullying—some far too narrow and some far too encompassing. As mentioned above, some define it and its solution as a conflict needing resolution. Others limit it to continual and repeated behaviors. The definition I use has been developed through my experience in dealing with the topic over the past forty years, watching the evolution of the ways and means of bullying, the programs that have been created to combat it, and the research delving into it:

Bullying is a conscious, willful, deliberate offensive, malicious, or insulting activity that is intended to humiliate and harm the target while providing the perpetrator(s) pleasure in the targeted person's pain or misery. It often induces fear through threats of further aggression and can create terror. It can have as its overlay race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, sexual identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, weight, allergies, or economic status. These overlays often increase the cruelty and its impact on the target. If it is directed at a protected-status group, it could be a form of bullying commonly called *harassment.* If severe enough, it could constitute a *hate crime*—a criminal act against a person, group of people, or property in which the bully chooses the target because of the target's real or perceived race, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, gender, or ethnicity. Not only does a hate crime requires legal intervention, it requires disciplinary procedures and therapeutic intervention that address the elements of contempt and arrogance that are packaged with the violence.

Contempt is the Key

Bullying is about *contempt*—a powerful feeling of dislike or distain toward somebody considered to be worthless, inferior, or undeserving of respect. Just as contempt can range from disregard to scorn to hate, so bullying can range from mild to moderate to severe. The biases at the foundation of this contempt are often deeply rooted attitudes found in our homes, our schools, and our society. Any bias or prejudice can and will be used by a bully to validate and justify contempt for an individual student or a group of students. Once someone has contempt for another person, it becomes possible to do anything to the targeted person and not feel any empathy, sympathy, compassion, or shame. In the mind of the bully, the bullied has become an"it"—less than human, not worthy of respect, concern or care, but certainly good for some laughs, and a great target to humiliate and torment.

A teenager took photos of four African American schoolmates, photo-shopped nooses on their necks and paired them with pictures of apes on his private Instagram account. When he shared the pictures with twelve friends, one showed it to one of the targeted girls, who then reported it to the school administration. The bully thought of the girls as "less than human" using one of the

oldest and most derogatory racist taunts to diminish and humiliate them. The boy who created the Instagram post showed no remorse, only contempt for the girls, basically laughing at their pain, and complained about what was happening to him. Using the claim of freedom of speech, he sued the school system for the way the school district personnel treated him.

Bullying violates, denigrates, and diminishes not only the "I and Thou" but also the "We." Each one of us depends on the well-being of the whole; if the "We" is diminished, each one of us less.

Contempt comes packaged with three apparent psychological advantages that allow young people to harm another human being and get pleasure from the pain they inflict on their target. If any of these exist in your school, there is fertile soil for bullying:

1. *A sense of entitlement*—the privilege and right to control dominate, subjugate, and otherwise abuse another human being. Is there any one group that feels, acts, and is treated as superior to other groups in the school? Are there rituals and traditions that reinforce the notion that some students have more worth or value—and thus more dignity?

2. *An intolerance toward differences*—different equals inferior and thus not worthy of respect. The opposite of intolerance is not tolerance. Asking students to merely tolerate their peers can feed into bigotry and contempt. The opposite of intolerance is to *care deeply* about others. This caring implies a must to relieve someone else's suffering, and wishing them well. (It does not mean that you especially like them or want them as a friend, but if you saw them being hurt you would care deeply enough about them as human beings to want to relieve their suffering, to speak up, to step in to stop the cruelty.)

3. *A liberty to exclude*—to bar, isolate, and segregate a person deemed not worthy of respect or care. Does your school have rigid cliques and groups that revel in their exclusiveness and regularly exclude others? Do they treat those outside the clique as"less than"? The more opportunities students from diverse backgrounds and interests have to work and play together, the less likely they will be to form cliques that have as their hallmark exclusion and derision of those "beneath" them. The more administrators and other adults in the school as well as in the community refuse to elevate one group over all the others—with all the accompanying privileges—the less likely it will be that these groups will have the notion that they can bully someone who is not a part of their "elite"group. To establish a bullying prevention policy and at the same time condone a poisonous social environment that implicitly supports social stratification and social privilege, which in turn results in injustice, oppression, subjugation, and

humiliation, is to be silently complicit in fueling the rage of those at the bottom of the heap.

Bullying is arrogance in action. Young people who bully have an air of superiority that is sometimes a mask to cover up deep hurt and a feeling of inadequacy. They rationalize that their supposed superiority entitles them to hurt someone they hold in contempt, when in reality it is often an excuse to put someone down so they can feel"up."For others, this air of superiority is not masking or covering up a deep hurt; these students have been taught that they are superior and that those whom they target are not worthy of respect or concern. They inflate their own ego by deflating someone else's.

Four Markers of Bullying

Whether it is premeditated or seems to come out of the blue, is obvious or subtle, "in your face" or behind your back, easy to identify or cloaked in the garb of apparent friendship, done by one student or a group of students, bullying will always include these three markers:

1. *Imbalance of power:* The bully can be older, bigger, stronger, more verbally adept, higher up on the social ladder, or a different ethnicity, or of the opposite sex. The bully has more power and influence than the bullied. Sheer numbers of students banded together to bully can create this imbalance.

2. *Intent to harm*: The bully means to inflict emotional and/or physical pain, expects the action to hurt, and takes pleasure in causing and witnessing the hurt. This is no accident or mistake, no slip of the tongue, no playful teasing, no misplaced foot, no inadvertent exclusion.

3. *Threat of further aggression*: Both the bully and the bullied know that the bullying can and probably will recur. This is not meant to be a onetime event, especially if the target appears vulnerable. Often it begins with verbal bullying (insults, racial slurs, derogatory sexual terms, demeaning comments about the physical or mental abilities of the target) then escalates to relational bullying (shunning, rumor, gossip, and exclusion), and then, if the climate and culture of the school allow, the bully freely and with abandon escalates the abuse to the physical (slapping, kicking, tripping, caging, hazing, requiring demeaning or impossible physical activities of the target, and/or depriving the target of necessary physical accommodations and comfort) knowing no one will intervene to stop the cruelty.

When bullying escalates unabated, a new marker is added:

4. *Terror:* Terror struck in the heart of the targeted student is not only a means to an end, it is an end in itself.

Now the bully can act without fear of recrimination or retaliation, the targeted person rendered so powerless that he is unlikely to fight back or report the bullying. Bystanders are counted on to become involved in or supportive of the bullying or at least not doing anything to stop it.

The Ways and Means of Bullying

There are four ways and three means of bullying. For far too long, the act of physical bullying has taken center stage in research, surveys, and in the minds of educators and students alike. Less thought and attention have been given to the gravity of and the damage caused by other means of bullying. For almost as long, the accepted definition of bullying has specified that, to qualify, a behavior must be continual and repeated over time. Both the emphasis on physical harm and the insistence that cruel acts be continual and repeated in order to be defined as bullying have hindered our ability to break this cycle of violence. If your school district's definition says this, it is easy to modify by stating that "it is *often* continuous and repeated, but can be a one-time significant event."

The Four Ways of Bullying

The four ways of bullying include:

1. One-time malicious act
2. Continuous mean and cruel acts repeated over time
3. Hazing
4. Cyber, digital, or technology enhanced or assisted.

One-Time Malicious Act

Being dunked into a toilet (swirling) once counts; being called an Irish slut once matters; being intentionally locked out of a chat room once hurts. All of these are acts intended to harm the target, and the perpetrators get pleasure from the targeted person's pain and humiliation. "Just joking,""just fooling around," "just having fun"are the lame excuses bullies use in an attempt to reframe the acts as "normal kids' stuff." But the fun is at the expense of the young person who is being targeted. If these one-time malicious acts are recognized as bullying and dealt with effectively, there is less likelihood that they will be repeated, or become the first in a series of attacks on the targeted peer.

If these individual acts are written off as unimportant, as something the targeted peer should not be bothered by, or as "girl drama," the stage is set for a "culture of mean" to flourish, and for the targeted person to begin feeling the sting of humiliation, rejection, and isolation.

In his book, *The Ethics of Memory*, Avishai Margalit explains the difference between "the memory of insult and the memory of injury (that is, the physical pain)."

> "In remembering torture, the victim dwells on the humiliation, whereas in experiencing torture he dwells on the pain…we remember insults better than the pains in the sense of reliving them. The wounds of insult and humiliation keep bleeding long after the painful physical injuries have crusted over." (pg. 120)

A targeted student will probably not *forget* the one act of physical cruelty, but the *memory* of the physical pain experienced during the act will likely fade. However, if that act of cruelty is not adequately addressed, the targeted student is likely to relive and dwell on the humiliation, rejection, and isolation that was felt when the physical pain was inflicted, and the aftermath, when the not-so-innocent bystanders snicker and sneer, or taunt, or further isolate her—seeing her as an ever-weakening target.

And it is not just physical pain that need be inflicted to begin the painful "memory of insult." Using fMRI's, researchers have been able to demonstrate that when a student is intentionally excluded from his or peer group, or verbally taunted, the pain response in the brain is similar to the pain response to a physical assault. Thus, a student who is verbally or socially (relationally) bullied also experiences in the brain a similar pain and the "wounds of insult and humiliation (that) keep bleeding." Targeted students who are shunned and isolated by their peers will often express that they wished the bully would have just hit them—the pain would have been less.

Continual and Repeated Acts of Malice

If bullies become emboldened by the apparent approval and complicity of the not-so-innocent bystanders as well as by the lack of consequences for his or her cruelty, the bullying will most likely continue and escalate. The most common way of bullying is continual, repeated acts of malice. These continual acts of malice can have devastating effects on the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the targeted student.

Hazing: "It's Part of the Game"

The National Federation of State High School Associations, on its website, www.NFHS.org, defines hazing as"any humiliating or dangerous activity expected of a student to belong to a group, regardless of their willingness to participate."Hazing is more than horseplay. It is abusive and degrading, creates a climate of fear, and breeds mistrust and apathy. Often written off as a harmless initiation rite, hazing has all of the markers of bullying:

1. *imbalance of power* (including the target of the hazing being outnumbered or lower on the social ladder than those doing the hazing);

2. *intent to harm* (being forced to drink or exercise until passing out; to eat disgusting things, to be tattooed, pierced, or shaved; being beaten or made to beat someone else; being forced to wear embarrassing or humiliating attire are all done to get pleasure from someone else's pain or humiliation.);
3. *threat of further aggression* (whether stated or implied—"do it or else," is the message received by the target of the hazing");
4. *terror* (Not knowing what will happen next or when it will stop is a recipe for terror. "I was afraid of what else they might do to me.")

It is important for all of us to feel that we belong. It can be such a powerful force for young people that they often will do unspeakably cruel things to themselves and others in order to be accepted into a group. When someone complains or is hurt or is killed in the hazing episode, often people protest that the targeted person consented to the hazing.

No longer can consent of the target be used as a defense in criminal suits in jurisdictions that have laws concerning hazing, or bullying, as the law recognizes that it may not be *actual consent* when considering the pressure students face when the offender is an older peer, or a group of peers who could easily make the club or the locker room even more hostile for the one who does not "consent" to the hazing.

Fear of being ostracized, further hazed, or removed from the club or team does not make it easy for someone to object. The question should not be "Did he or she consent?" Rather, "Is the activity that is required demeaning, humiliating, abusive, and/or degrading?" A second question that can affirm that the activity is hazing is "Who is having fun and at whose expense?" If the perpetrators are laughing at the target's humiliation, pain, or degradation it is a sure sign that the activity is not merely horseplay or a practical joke; it is hazing. Are there any ritualized activities in your school community that needs to be eliminated or changed? Don't just think athletics; hazing has occurred in the arts, in the chess club, in journalism class, in the choir and in the band.

Nine students from a high school in Washington state, were disciplined for hazing that involved paddling, egging, and forcing younger students to wear diapers. When the principal intervened, racial slurs were thrown at him. In a radio interview, one girl defended the practice of "Frosting", i.e. hazing freshman, as fun and bonding; while another girl described how she had participated in the "Frosting" activities, and after the fact, did not feel good about participating and wished this humiliating ritual would go away. Yet, we need to notice that this same girl felt such a strong need to go along with the group, that she participated in an event she did not feel good about.

We need to develop healthy, appropriately rigorous rites and rituals to mark the passage from childhood into adulthood, or to mark the acceptance of a young person into a group. Rites of initiation can be powerful and meaningful—and fun. They do not have to be humiliating or demeaning. Celebrations with teammates or club mates can be exciting and creative. They do not have to be cruel or sadistic. A school climate can be lightened with humor. The laughter just needs to be shared levity, not laughter at the expense of a peer.

Digital (or Cyber) Attack (a.k.a. Technology Enhanced or-Assisted Bullying)

The fourth way of bullying is the use of technology to intimidate, threaten, stalk, ridicule, humiliate, taunt, and spread rumors about the targeted person. Young people are venturing into the global neighborhood via the Internet, the cell phone, personal assistance devices (PADs), iPads, and tablets. In such a media-saturated world, the fundamental nature of childhood is changing. So, too, is the nature of bullying. Bullies have long tormented, intimidated, threatened, stalked, ridiculed, humiliated, taunted, and spread rumors about their targeted peers with low-tech verbal, physical, and relational tools; now they are using high-tech tools to do the same. The characteristics of bullying—an imbalance of power, the intent to harm, the threat of further aggression, and the creation of terror—are magnified with the use of electronic technologies. Faceless and sometimes nameless electronic transmissions make it easy for bullies to torment their targets anywhere and at any time, with apparent anonymity and few, if any, consequences.

Worse yet, students are combining low tech, face-to-face bullying with high tech bullying, making a combination that is more harmful than the mere sum of their parts. There are two types of cyberbullying that combine offline bigotry, intolerance, and contempt with the online ability to spread the venom more rapidly and viciously—cyber hate and cyber sexual bullying.

Cyber Hate

Narrow-minded bigotry that renders another person invisible or less than human is one of the hallmarks of hate. The Simon Wiesenthal Center keeps track of hate websites—which are growing rapidly in number--has noted a surge in the number of online games in which gamers can "shoot . . . illegal immigrants, Jews, and blacks." If young gamers playing a videogame routinely brutalizes or kills their on-screen opponents, and feel excitement or thrills at doing so, rather than sadness, sympathy, or fright, then when they sees a real peer being hurt or bullied they are more likely to join in the "fun" than to come to the targeted peer's rescue. Throw in being rewarded in the game for maiming and killing, and you get youth more willing to participate in violent activities if they are promised some of the bounty, or are awarded higher status in a group of their peers.

Cyber Sexual Bullying

Just as low-tech peer-to-peer sexual bullying is one of the most widespread forms of violence today, high-tech sexual bullying is one of the most widespread forms of violence experienced by both teenage girls and boys in the cyber world. Because our sexuality is an integral part of who we are, sexual bullying cuts to the core of our being and can have devastating consequences. Sexual bullying in cyberspace can multiply the humiliation and magnify the damage. Feeling neither compassion for their targeted peer nor shame over what was done, cyberbullies can destroy a peer's reputation with a few keystrokes, or terrorize the target with threats or posting humiliating and degrading pictures, and get great pleasure from the pain inflicted. The ability to inflict pain anonymously, and with such a wide audience to reinforce the humiliation, often emboldens the cyberbully to inflict far greater damage on the target than would have been imaginable in a face-to-face encounter.

Revenge Porn

Two thirteen-year-old girls invited to a sleep over a classmate they had tormented. The third girl, so excited to finally be included, happily went along with the other girls, taking videos of one another dancing in all stages of dress and undress during the evening. While the third girl slept, the first two girls deleted the videos of themselves and posted the third girl's video on line for all of their classmates to see. A first for their elite private school, the administration had no policy or procedures in place to handle this revenge porn.

The problem of nonconsensual distribution online of intimate images, i.e., "revenge porn" or "nonconsensual porn," is a growing concern of tween, teens, and young adults. It can destroy a young person's reputation and well-being in an instant and can have long term consequences as it becomes pernicious and permanent online. Just as we need to help our students understand the difference between flirting and sexual bullying, we need to help them understand that posting sexually explicit pictures of themselves or another person can get them into legal trouble for creating and/or posting child pornography. If they post nonconsensual sexual images of another person it can fall under both categories of child pornography and revenge porn. A simple formula for students is: "If in doubt, don't upload it, download it, share it or store it."

The campaign "End Revenge Porn" (www.EndRevengePorn.org), organized by the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative to fight this menace and provides direct support and referrals for take-down services to young people who are targeted by former friends or lovers. ERP operates a Web support system for people who have been targeted throughout the world with a twenty-four-hour toll-free hotline (844-878-CCRI) for young people needing such help in the United States.

The Three Means of Bullying

There are three means of engaging in the four ways of bullying: verbal, relational (or social), and physical. Each one alone can pack a tremendous wallop, but are often combined to create a more powerful attack. Boys and girls use verbal bullying equally well. Boys tend to use physical bullying more often than girls do, and girls tend to use relational bullying more often than boys.

Physical bullying is not exclusive to boys. Bigger girls are known to trip, shove, and poke smaller girls or smaller boys. Girls just have a more powerful tool in their social arsenal to use against other girls—relational (or social) bullying. Compared with boys, girls tend to play in small, more intimate circles with clearly defined boundaries, making it easier to harm a girl merely by excluding her from a social circle.

Verbal Bullying

Verbal abuse is the most common means of bullying. Words are powerful tools and can break the spirit of a young person who is on the receiving end. The bully often rationalizes or defends this behavior by saying "I was just kidding" or"I didn't mean any harm." It accounts for 70 percent of reported bullying. It is easy to get away with and can be whispered in the presence of adults and peers without detection. It can be yelled out on the playground and blend into the din heard by the playground supervisor, written off as crass dialogue among peers. It is quick and painless for the bully and can be extremely harmful to the target. Younger children who haven't yet developed a strong sense of self are the most susceptible to it, although repeated attacks will eventually wear down even those who have a healthy sense of self and a strong support system.

If verbal bullying is allowed or condoned, it becomes normalized and the target dehumanized. Once a person has been dehumanized, it becomes easier to attack that person without eliciting the normal compassion from those who are within earshot. When a targeted peer becomes the regular butt of jokes, he or she is often excluded from other more prosocial activities, the last to be chosen, the first to be eliminated. Who wants to have a loser on their side?

Verbal bullying can take the form of name-calling, taunting, belittling, cruel criticism, personal defamation, racist slurs, and sexually suggestive or sexually abusive remarks. It can involve extortion of lunch money or possessions, abusive phone calls, intimidating e-mails, gross text messages, suggestive Twitter comments, anonymous notes containing threats of violence, untruthful accusations, false and malicious rumors, and gossip.

Relational (or social) bullying

The most difficult to detect from the outside, relational (or social) bullying is the systematic diminishment of a bullied youth's sense of self through ignoring, isolating, excluding, or

shunning. Shunning, an act of omission, joined with rumor, an act of commission, is a forceful bullying tool. Both are unseen and hard to detect. The student being talked about may not even hear the rumor but will still suffer from its effects. ("Stay away from him, he stinks."“Don't invite her, she's weird." "She lied to us; you can't trust her." "His family is gross.")

With cyberbullying, the rumor that is spread is public, permanent, and pernicious (causing great harm or damage, often in a way that is not easily seen or noticed). No amount of apology after the fact can remove the rumor from cyberspace, nor can it remove the unfavorable impression that has been created.

Relational bullying can be used to alienate and reject a peer or to purposefully ruin friendships. It can involve subtle gestures such as aggressive stares, rolling of eyes, sighs, frowns, sneers, snickers, and hostile body language. It is at its most powerful in the middle school years, with the onset of adolescence and the accompanying physical, mental, emotional, and sexual changes. It is a time when young teens are trying to figure out who they are and trying to fit in with their peers. Intentionally excluding a peer from the lunch table, birthday parties, and playground games is often overlooked as a form of bullying because it is not as readily identifiable as name-calling or a fist in the face; the results are not as obvious as a black eye or a torn jacket; and the pain it causes is usually hidden or, when expressed, dismissed“(You wouldn't want to hang with that group anyway.").

It is important for young people to learn that it is not kind to purposely exclude a peer. They need to learn to play with one another, to respect differences, and to celebrate diversity. It is just as important that they learn to assert themselves and take care of their own needs and safety without trampling the basic human rights and dignity of another child. ("You can join us at our lunch table if you don't say mean things about the new girl."“I want you to play with us, but you can't keep taking the ball away from Jaimie. He is a part of our team, too.")

Physical Bullying

Although it is the most visible, and therefore, the most readily identifiable means of bullying, physical bullying accounts for less than a third of the bullying incidents reported by youth. It is rarely the first means employed by bullies. Usually they will verbally and/or relationally bully the targeted peer and, seeing that they can get away with such abuse, move on to physical attacks, where the signs of distress are more visceral and the results more obvious. If you have a student who has been physically bullied, you can almost always be sure that he or she has experienced verbal and/or relational bullying in advance of the physical attack.

Physical bullying can include, but is not limited to, slapping, hitting, choking, poking, punching, kicking, biting, pinching, scratching, twisting limbs into painful positions, spitting, forceful confinement, and damaging or destroying clothes and property belonging to the targeted youth. It can include weapons or objects used as weapons against the target. The older and stronger the bully, the more dangerous this kind of attack becomes, even if serious harm is not intended: "I only meant to scare him. I didn't mean to break his arm."

The Masquerade of Deception

Individual incidents of verbal, physical, or relational (social) bullying can appear trivial or insignificant, nothing to be overly concerned about, part of the school culture. But it is the imbalance of power, the intent to harm, the threat of further aggression, and the creation of an atmosphere of terror and fear that should raise red flags and signal a need for intervention. Sadly, even when the four markers of bullying are clearly evident, educators have been known to minimize or dismiss the bullying, underestimate its seriousness, blame the bullied youth, and/or heap on additional insult to injury simply by failing to properly identify what is really going on.

Mislabeling

It is in the interest of bullies to create a context ("We were just joking." "It was only a prank." "No harm intended.") that distracts attention from the true nature of their goals and behaviors, and the rhetoric of conflict lends itself to this effort. It does not matter if it is mild, moderate, or severe: bullying is not normal, natural or necessary. It is antisocial and needs to be addressed as such. This is why current zero-tolerance policies (those that attempt to respond to a one-on-one fight, bullying, and assault with one solution—expulsion) are really zero-thinking policies. Such policies are about efficiency and finding fault, not about effective solutions for breaking the cycle of violence. What needs to be found is a social solution to this antisocial activity. Bullying is not a party to any form of conflict resolution, be it negotiation, truce or reason. Both bullying's inception and its solution lie elsewhere.

Taunting is not teasing no matter how much those doing the taunting protest that they were "just joking." Sexual bullying is not even related to flirting, and no matter what form it takes—verbal, relational, or physical—it is an act of contempt-fueled aggression, not passion. Racial or ethnic bullying can never be "just having fun."Hazing by its nature is mean and cruel; it is not a healthy way to celebrate anything—let alone an important rite of passage or a milestone. These four—taunting, sexual bullying, racial or ethnic bullying, and hazing—are often cloaked in the garb of locker-room humor, innocuous behavior, innocent banter, harmless antics. They are none of these.

Comedy Is Not a Prelude to a Tragedy—Teasing Is Not Taunting

Teasing is not taunting, and there is no slippery slope on which teasing slides into taunting. They are very different from the start—and at the finish. By learning the unique characteristics of teasing and taunting, and giving each its own name, students will be able to label what they are doing and understand more clearly why one is acceptable and the other is not. Identifying taunting as bullying communicates the gravity and meanness of it to the bully and any bystanders who might be inclined to join in the cruel game. Labeling it as bullying also lends credibility to the legitimate pain their bullied peer is experiencing.

Teasing is laughing *with* one another

1. Allows the teaser and person teased to swap roles.
2. Isn't intended to hurt the other person.
3. Maintains the basic dignity of everyone involved.
4. Pokes fun in a lighthearted, clever, and benign way.
5. Is meant to get both parties to laugh.
6. Is only a small part of the activities shared by two friends who have something in common.
7. Is innocent in motive, but if be said at the wrong time, in the wrong way, in the wrong place, then the person teasing
8. Stops when the person teased becomes upset or objects to the teasing.

Taunting is laughing *at* the targeted person, or a group laughing *with* one another *at* a targeted peer.

1. Is based on an imbalance of power and is one sided: the bully taunts, the bullied peer is taunted.
2. Is intended to harm.
3. Involves humiliating, cruel, demeaning, or bigoted comments thinly disguised as jokes.
4. Includes laughter directed *at* the target, not *with* the target.
5. Is meant to diminish the sense of self-worth of the target.
6. Induces fear of further taunting or can be a prelude to physical bullying.
7. Is sinister in motive.
8. Continues especially when the target becomes distressed or objects to the taunt.

In taunting there is glee, excitement, or amusement over the success of the attack. The motive of bullies is not to make a new friend, engage in friendly banter, or lighten a difficult situation; it is purely to belittle and demean a peer. It can be argued that the bullies did not have a full

understanding of the consequences of the taunting; what can't be dismissed is the delight they got out of seeing their classmates traumatized and fearful.

Flirting and Sexual Bullying

Just as bullies who taunt their peers will argue that they intended no harm—were just teasing—so, too, do bullies who add sexist or sexual overtones to their bullying plead that they were only joking or flirting. If students are taught the difference between teasing and taunting at a young age, they are more readily able to distinguish between flirting—which is normal, natural, and helps keep the human race going--and sexual bullying which is more about control and contempt, and very little about sex.

Flirting

1. Allows and invites both persons to swap roles with ease.
2. Isn't intended to hurt the other person—is an expression of desire.
3. Maintains the basic dignity of both persons.
4. Is meant to be flattering and complimentary.
5. Is an invitation to have fun together and enjoy each other's company.
6. Invites sexual attention.
7. Is intended to make the other person feel wanted, attractive, and empowered.
8. Is discontinued when the person who is being flirted with becomes upset, objects to the flirting, or is not interested.

Flirting has a playfulness about it that sexual bullying does not. It is never intended to harm and is an invitation for two people to get to know each other better. As with any other invitation, it can be accepted or rejected—and the person who initiated the flirting honors either response.

Sexual Bullying

1. Is based on an imbalance of power and is one sided: the bully sexually taunts, the targeted person is demeaned and degraded.
2. Is intended to harm and exploit.
3. Is invasive and intended to assert the higher status of the bully.
4. Is intendeds to be degrading and demeaning.
5. Is intended to express control and domination.
6. Is intended to violate the boundaries of the targeted person.
7. Is intended to make the targeted person feel rejected, ugly, powerless, or uncomfortable.

8. Continues especially if the targeted person becomes distressed or objects to the sexual comments.

In sexual bullying there is no invitation—just an attack. The target is embarrassed, humiliated, and shamed and tends to feel powerless. It is not the intention of the bully to engage in healthy sexual flirtation with another person—the attack is meant to exert control and to hurt. If a female target protests, she is often labeled a "bitch"who is uptight and can't take a joke.

Relational Sexual Bullying

Add sexual overtones to all the ways students use relational bullying to systematically diminish a targeted peer's sense of self-worth—sexual rumors or sexual epithets on bathroom walls or lockers, shunning a target because of his or her sexual orientation or sexual identification, "scanning" a target's body, staring at breasts, leering, or making obscene gestures—and what you have is a hard-to-detect, easy-to-execute method of cutting to the core of the targeted student.

Add to all of these the displaying or circulating of sexually explicit material intended to shame or humiliate or degrade, the wearing of clothes or pins that have sexist or sexually offensive sayings or pictures, or the existence of sexually explicit graffiti, and you have the ingredients for creating a hostile environment that interferes with a targeted student's ability to learn.

Physical Sexual Bullying

Physical sexual bullying can include, but is certainly not limited to touching or grabbing in a sexual way, pinching, bra snapping, pulling down pants or pulling up skirts, brushing against a target in a sexual way, or sexual assault. It is important to note that criminal activity can have sexual bullying as one of its components.

Several recent high-profile cases in which young girls were raped (criminal sexual bullying) by their peers and then targeted online and offline after photos of the rapes were posted on the Internet, have brought to light the horrific consequences beyond the rapes themselves—blaming, shaming, and stigmatization--faced by these young girls.

The #ME TOO Movement and the TIMES UP Movement that are gaining traction in all walks of life across the globe are giving a voice to those who are targeted--and for far too long, silenced, at the same time helping to break the code of silence that has protected the perpetrators. But as a global society, we have a long way yet to go. Often the target is not believed, sometimes being blamed instead, and more often than not the bully gets away with the assault. Typically, it is the

target who is vilified, gets called “fag” or “slut,” and is forced to leave the school while the perpetrators remain.

Sexist and sexual attitudes can collide with bullying. And all three means of bullying—physical, verbal, and relational—can be wrapped in sexual overtones. Because our sexuality is an integral part of who we are, sexual bullying cuts at the core of our being and can have devastating consequences.

Racist Bullying: A Double Whammy

Just as sexist and sexual attitudes can collude with bullying, so too can racist attitudes. Racist bullying doesn’t just happen. Young people have to be taught to be racist before they can engage in racist bullying. Racist bullying takes place in a climate where children are taught to discriminate against a group of people, where differences are seen as bad, and where the common bonds of humanity are not celebrated. Students systematically learn the language of racial slurs and the rules of bigoted behavior through words (stereotype), feeling (prejudice), and action (discrimination). First, they are taught to stereotype—that is, to generalize about an entire group of people without regard to individual differences: [insert a group] are hot-tempered, ugly, lazy, stupid, no good, crazy . . . Second, children are taught to prejudge a person based on this stereotype. Prejudice is a feeling: We don’t like [_____].
Combine racist thought and feeling and you get students willing to discriminate against individuals in that group: “You can’t play with us. You don’t belong here.” “Be with your own kind.” “We don’t want you on our team. Get out of here, you *****.” This is racist bullying and needs to be addressed as such.
In The Anti-Bullying Handbook, New Zealand professor Keith Sullivan, internationally recognized for his work in bullying prevention programs, described what happens when this collusion takes place.

Rangi is working by himself in the classroom. The door opens. “What are you doing, Maori boy?” taunts David. “Did ya fall in the shit, black boy?” He struts closer. “Are you reading something? I didn’t know you could read.” “Hey, nigger,” the other boys say as they start to filter in and see Rangi on his own. Instead of ignoring these taunts and provocations, Rangi loses his temper. He turns on David. The two boys attack one another. Rangi is the better fighter and is winning. David’s friend, Jim steps in, grabs Rangi around the neck, and pulls him away from David, throwing him on the ground. He helps David up. The duty [supervising] teacher arrives, and David and Rangi are taken to the deputy principal’s office. David has been crying and says that he was just having fun and that Rangi went “psycho” and really hurt him. When questioned, Rangi is surly and insolent and is suspended from school for a week for fighting and being rude to the deputy principal. David’s friends back him up and say that Rangi went “psycho” for no apparent reason. David is given a warning about fighting but is seen as the innocent party.

Rangi is identified by those in authority as the aggressor. He is not listened to. Instead, the high-status bully, with more credibility in the school, is believed. The boys will probably not bully Rangi again; rather, they will find someone they can bully more easily. Yet their racist attitudes have not been challenged. There is a good chance Rangi will nurse a grudge against the boys, rage against the injustice, and turn against the school because of its inability to address the problem justly.

The incident with David and Rangi demonstrates not only what often happens when a bullied student strikes back, but also what a bully tends to do when called to account:

1. Denies that he did anything wrong.
2. Trivializes the event: "I was just having some fun with him."
3. Counterattacks: "He just went 'psycho' on us."
4. Claims victim status by crying and accusing the targeted student of starting the episode. This usually provokes the bullied student to strike back.
5. Gets off the hook by casting the bullied peer as the bully. David is seen as the innocent party.
6. Counts on the support of the bystanders to deny, dismiss, or belittle anything the targeted peer says or does in defense of his actions. David's friends back him up, saying that Rangi went "psycho" for no apparent reason.
7. Intimidates others into going along with him.

The bully learned his lines well, mastered the ability to act the part of the wronged party, got others to collude with him, and played on both the emotions and biases of the adults. The cycle of violence continues.

Maori children are in the minority in this South Island school, as well as being oppressed First Nations people of New Zealand. Replace Maori with Dene, Inuit, Cherokee, Blackfoot, Navajo, Hopi, Lakota, Sioux, or any other racial or ethnic minority and you see a similar picture of what is happening in many schools across the United States and Canada.

When it comes to racism, school policy, procedures, and programs have to work hand in hand. Step one is to acknowledge that racism exist in our schools. Then we can be open to the possibility that racist bullying is happening inside those walls as well.
Two excellent resources are the Southern Poverty Law Center's Web site: www.splcenter.org; and Facing History and Ourselves Web site: www.facinghistory.org. Both provide educational material to deal with bigotry, intolerance, and hatred in general and racism in particular.

Shame, Secrets, and Sorrow

How could these situations reach such a point without any intervention, without an educator noticing? Why didn't these students just tell somebody? In many other instances, since bullying tends to occur under the radar of adults, adults are the last to know. In far too many instances adults did know; students did ask for help. Few got any relief.

Reasons for Not Telling

Young people have many reasons for not telling adults about a bullying situation:

1. *They are ashamed of being bullied*.
The bully intends to make the target feel unworthy of respect, unpopular, isolated, and shamed. The bullying is often directly related to the target's race, ethnicity, age, physical or mental ability, or sexuality (including sexual orientation and sexual identification)—things that are intimately connected to the core of a target's being, or are things they can't change, such as a food allergy or their family's economic status. Most targets are caring, sensitive people who would not bully someone else, and who can't figure out why someone would be so cruel to them for no good reason.

Boys are less likely than girls to tell an adult. Boys are culturally inculcated with the idea that they are supposed to "take it,""be strong," and"go it alone," in concert with "Don't cry" and"Don't snitch," two of society's traditional admonitions. Girls and boys are both unlikely to report sexual bullying and instead"put up with it," seeing it as an ugly part of the social and school culture that isn't going to change any time soon. Younger students are more likely to tell than older ones. Younger students still think they can ask an adult to help and expect that adults will help. Older students know that's not necessarily true and often have experience that would validate their thinking.

2. *They are afraid of retaliation if they tell.*
Bullies fuel this fear with threats. The fear and the implied or actual threats of retaliation combine to foster the"code of silence"that enables bullies to get away with their brutalizing activities.

3. *They don't think anyone can help them.*
Feeling more and more isolated by the bullying, they believe that they are in this alone. Bullies are too powerful, too sneaky, and too smart to be stopped. If your school's policy is that in order for something to be dealt with, it must have been seen, students may write off any school personnel effectively dealing with the bullying. Most bullying is done under the radar of adults and won't be seen by them.

4. *They don't think anyone will help them.*
They are told to try to get along with the bullies, to just stay out of their way, to"ignore"them, to fight back, and not to be a"wimp."The problem with trying to get along with bullies is that they aren't interested in getting along with the target. The problem with staying out of the bullies' way is that they will hunt down the target, and once again the target will have failed to stop the bullying. The problem with"ignoring" is that it is almost impossible to do. The taunts, the exclusion, the rumors, the punches all eat at the target's sense of well-being. Fighting back often makes the situation worse. Bullies are cowards; they are not ignorant. They picked on their targets because they knew they could beat them; and their targets' ineffectual attempts to fight back will only reinforce the"wimp"label.

5. They have bought into the lie that bullying is a necessary part of growing up.
It might hurt like hell, but the hell is part of the landscape of childhood.

6. *They may believe that adults are part of the lie, since it is not only peers who are bullying them.* Some of the adults in their life may bully them, too. These adult bullies might have given other students"permission" to torment them, sanctioned such behavior, or turned a blind eye to it.

7. *They have learned that "ratting" on a peer is bad, not cool*—even if that peer is bullying them.
"Sucking it up"and just letting it go is supposed to be a more"mature" response to getting verbally abused, physically abused, or shunned.

8. *They fear that educators will take the bully's word over theirs.*
This is not a misperception on the part of the targeted student. Often bullies can spin tales of deception and lies about the target being weak, pathetic, or the villain—and certainly not the one being abused.

The bottom line is that often targets are fearful and mistrusting of those they could tell. Students might not tell an educator outright that they are being bullied for any or all of the reasons listed above, but they usually give us clues. We just need to be tuned in to them. Some of the warning signs, you will not see or be aware of but will be reported to you by a parent or guardian of a targeted student. Believe them.

Warning Signs

1. *Shows an abrupt lack of interest in school or a refusal to go to school.*

According to a National Association of School Psychologists report, 160,000 children in the United States miss school every day for fear of being bullied. Why voluntarily get in the path of the school bullies?

2. *Takes an unusual route to school.*
Going north and three blocks east to get to a school that is south of home makes a lot of sense if going directly south will put targets in the path of a bunch of bullies who have promised to beat them up, take their jacket, or relieve them of their lunch money.

3. *Suffers a drop in grades.*
It's hard to concentrate on schoolwork when students are trying to figure out how to avoid the bullies, shaking in fear of what will happen next, and still recovering from the last attack. Later in the bullying cycle, their time and energy are used up plotting schemes to get revenge instead of doing a math assignment.

4. *Withdraws from family and school activities, wanting to be left alone.*
When students feel isolated, shamed, scared, and humiliated, they just want to curl up in a ball and not talk to anyone—or lock themselves in their bedroom and cry.

5. *Avoids the lunchroom or eats alone.*
The bully takes great pleasure in extorting lunch money. The lunchroom ranks third behind the playground and hallways in the order of places where bullies attack their targets, so it's a good place to avoid, even if the target has lunch money.

6. *Is taking parents' money and making lame excuses for where it went.*
Once again, the bully separates their targets from their money. The threats of retaliation can convince targeted students that stealing from their mom's purse or their dad's wallet poses a lesser risk to body and mind than not showing up with the money for the bully.

7. *Makes a beeline to the bathroom when they get home.* Since bathrooms are number four on the list of places bullies like to attack, targeted students figure it's best to"hold it,"even at risk of a bladder infection. (A bladder infection can't possibly hurt as much as having your head dunked in a swirling toilet or seeing your reputation attacked via insulting graffiti on the mirrors over the sinks.)

8. *Is sad, sullen, angry, or scared after receiving a phone call or an e-mail.*
Targeted students don't know how to tell any adults at school—or even their parents--that the girls on the other end of the phone line called them ugly names and then all laughed before hanging up. They are ashamed to talk about the obscene lies the boy in English class wrote about them and sent to everyone on his e-mail list. They are

paralyzed with fear after opening their e-mail. The bully assured them there is no escaping the taunts. What could adults possibly do that would help and not make it worse?

9. *Does something out of character.*
Targeted students would rather get caught skipping school than caught in the schoolyard by the bunch of bullies who circle around them every day and "pretend" to be playing. They would even be willing to pull their pants down at recess if those girls promise to quit taunting them and will let them into their social circle.

10. *Uses derogatory or demeaning language when talking about peers.*
If targeted students are being called ugly names, poked, shoved, shunned, and laughed at, they won't have any terms of endearment for their peers who started the bullying or for those who joined in or looked the other way. Who's left to talk about?

11. *Stops talking about peers and everyday activities*.
Targeted students have no everyday activities that are not tainted with pain, frustration, fear, and terror. What's left to talk about?

12. *Has disheveled, torn, or missing clothing and a lousy explanation.*
Targeted students don't tend to like to resolve conflict by duking it out, and it wasn't a one-on-one fight between equals with competing claims. But saying that they got in a fight sounds better than saying they got beaten up, called ugly names, and threatened with further beatings if they told. Or they surrendered their favorite jacket rather than risk an attack, but saying that they"accidentally" left it in the locker room will go over better at home than admitting how they really lost it.

13. *Has physical injuries not consistent with explanation.*
Saying that they walked into a locker sure sounds better than admitting they were shoved into one. Saying they sprained their ankle running to class beats revealing that those girls tripped them in the bus aisle, and then laughed as they limped back to their seat. "I don't know how I got that black eye; I must have fallen out of bed," rings less painfully than recalling how they were held down and kicked in the face on the way to school.

14. *Has stomachaches, headaches, and panic attacks, is unable to sleep, sleeps too much, and is exhausted.* Bullies can be real pains in the brain and in the body. The body responds to the stress of being targeted by turning on its chemical defense system so you can fight or flee. But with daily attacks, this system can never shut down. Adrenaline keeps getting released. The body stays on hyper alert, churning up the stomach, twitching the limbs, and numbing the brain. Constantly resisting and fearing the bully taxes the

mental and physical defenses. Eventually the system breaks down and the mind and body collapse into a state of exhaustion.

15. *Creates art that depicts severe emotional distress, inner turmoil, or outright violence.* This is no Picasso's Blue Period. In fact, it's all black and blood red, and not because there were no other colors available. A sudden, unexplainable shift in a targeted student's artwork to content that depicts violence directed at specific people or depicts a specific plan for violence should be not be dismissed as a period piece or a phase. Coupling this art with destructive, violent, and cruel music, games, or movies will not soothe the pain or ease the distress, and can quickly ramp up the inner turmoil to an unbearable level that will likely be expressed in more than a piece of art.

Students speak in five ways: with body, face, eyes, tone of voice, and words. Sometimes their words are an excuse or cover for what they are really trying to say. Don't dismiss changes in a student's behavior as merely a phase, something that will pass. Be alert to the frequency, duration, and intensity of any changes. Bullying can have long-term emotional, mental and physical consequences. When you see warning signs, listen beyond the words and look beyond the actions to see what is really going on "under the mask of normal."

A Few Do's and Don'ts

If you make it safe to tell without fear of retribution, help your students to like themselves, to think for themselves, and to approach difficulties as problems to be solved, they are more likely to ask for your help if they are targeted or see a peer being targeted knowing from past experience that your help will be instructive and constructive—and not make the situation worse. They will also know that when they have been bullied they can count on the following messages from you:

1. *I hear you; I am here for you; I believe you; you are not alone in this.* Bullies try to convince adults the targeted student should not be believed and have convinced the targeted student that he is alone and isolated. No matter what the targeted student has to say or how he is saying it, a good line for you is "Tell me about it," then be quiet and listen. Asking a student to talk about the bullying without your asking a lot of questions up front to frame his answers will give you insight into that student's perceptions, concerns, and anxieties. You may be able to get at reasons why the attack might have cut at the core of the student's sense of dignity and self-worth. (Is he beating himself up for being beaten up by a bully? Is he ashamed of the way he responded or didn't respond to the bully? Was he humiliated by the peers who supported the bully and abandoned or shunned him?) After he has talked about his own hurt and pain, you can begin to gather

the facts of who, where, and when. To jump immediately to the facts is to miss the most important part of the incident—what it has done to your student's sense of well-being.

2. *It is not your fault.* The blame belongs to the bully. No one deserves to be bullied. There may be behaviors that your student is engaging in that aggravate or annoy the bully. But those behaviors never justify the contemptuous behavior of the bully. This is no time for "If you would have . . ." "If you didn't . . ." "If you weren't so . . ."Remember, the bully has already demeaned your student: "You are not worthy of respect; you can't protect yourself; you have no control over what happens to you at school; and nobody likes you." The targeted student needs your help to counteract these ugly injunctions.

3. *There are things you can do.* "How can I help? You are not helpless and hopeless. And you don't need to do it alone. Together we can come up with an effective plan." You can help your student figure out ways to assertively stand up to the bullying, steer clear of dangerous situations, take her power back, and more fully develop the gifts and skills she has. She will need your help to explore options, analyze choices, and eliminate those that would make the situation worse or would put her in more danger or provoke more violence. Once those are eliminated, she can act assertively on a constructive option. "What else can you do?""How will that be helpful?"

4. *Notify the parent(s) or guardians of the targeted student, the bully, and any others that participated in the bullying*. Let them know the details and what you will be doing to help the targeted student, and hold accountable those who took part in the bullying.

5. *Report the bullying to your administrator.* He or she needs the facts—the date, time, place, students involved, and specifics of the incidents—and the impact the bullying has had on the targeted student. The administrator will also need to know that you are following through on the disciplinary steps necessary to work through the process of restorative justice with both those who targeted their peer and the targeted student. If the bullying has been severe, an administrator will need to take over the accountability and restorative process. Severe bullying can result in suspension, expulsion and/or criminal charges for those involved in the bullying. And if the harm has been grave, additional services, including therapeutic intervention may be required to help the targeted student heal.

There are five things you don't want to do:

1. *Don't minimize, rationalize, or explain away the bully's behavior*. Bullying hurts a lot. No, the bully wasn't just teasing or flirting or having a conflict; and yes, the bully intended harm. By minimizing, rationalizing, or trying to explain away the behavior of

the bully, you are inadvertently telling a student that she really is in this all alone. It won't take her long to figure out it's best to suffer in silence.

2. *Don't rush in to solve the problem*. Unless a student is in serious physical danger, your taking over the situation will convey to him that he is even more helpless than he thought, convey to the bully that the bullied student is a vulnerable target, and convey to his peers that the bully had it right—he is a "wimp." That said, we can't put all the responsibility on students to stop the bullying. We can give them tools to fend off and to stand up to a bully, but it is also our job as adults to create an environment that is not conducive to bullying and to confront bullying when we see it or hear about it.

This is not the same as rushing in to take care of the bullying situation and rendering even more powerless the target. A bully learned to bully. She needs to learn how not to bully, and part of that teaching needs to be done by an adult. Since the majority of bystanders in some way support the bully, it is a system that has to be changed. All of the young people playing out their own scripts are going to need support, instruction, and guidance to change the theme of this tragedy.

3. *Don't tell the targeted student to avoid or ignore the bully*. You are inadvertently telling him to keep running and hiding, remaining in fear of the bully. Bullies can "smell" that fear. The targeted student will begin to act like an ever-weakening target and in turn signal to any and all bullies in the schoolyard that he is an available target. It is okay to avoid the bully to avoid immediate and present danger, but it is not a long-term solution to the bullying.

To avoid is hard; to ignore is almost impossible. In attempting to ignore the relentless taunting and attacks, the bullied student is likely to begin to internalize the messages of those who are targeting her, "I am dumb, I am stupid, I'm no good."

4. *Don't tell a student to fight back.* Do you really want to teach him that fighting is the answer? It isn't. The bully probably picked on him because he saw him as a less than equal match. After the targeted student loses, there will be bigger bullies waiting for him. Defend himself, yes. Be assertive, yes. But being assertive more often than not will involve the student using his head and his feet—in that order."This is a dumb place to be; I'm out of here." He heads out not because he is chicken, but because he is smart. Young people who respond assertively to the bully are more likely to successfully counteract the bullying than those who try to fight back.

5. *Don't confront the bully or the bully's parents alone.* The bully learned to bully somewhere, and it might just be from her parents. They may be defensive and uncooperative and quick to blame the target. When the mother of a bully was confronted with the fact that her seven-year-old daughter had enlisted the help of several classmates to circle another classmate and call the targeted girl "brown and ugly," the mother insisted that her daughter wouldn't do such a thing, and that even if she did, the other little girl must have asked for it. If at all possible, have two of you from the school be at the meeting with the parent(s) of the bullying students.

No matter how you learn of the bullying, your first step is to respond targeted students' expressed fears or signs of being bullied with encouragement and support. They need to know that nothing is too silly or too serious to talk about and that you are there as a caring adult to support and empower them.

Telling and Tattling—Discerning the Difference

Young people need to know that they can and should tell an adult about the bullying, even if they were able to stop the bullying themselves. If not confronted, the bully will find another peer to harass—one who may not be as capable of fending off the bully. A target who tells an adult in order to prevent someone else from sharing the same fate is playing the all-important role of brave-hearted witness.

In the Sesame Street episode "The Good Bird's Club," after Big Bird is relentlessly bullied by another bird in the neighborhood, Abby tells Elmo that they need to tell an adult about the bullying. Elmo replies, "I don't want to tattle." Abby responds, "It's not tattling; it's helping."Just like the bullying Big Bird was enduring, most bullying done by students is done under the radar of adults, and just like Elmo, young people are hesitant to report it. We have to convince our students that we can be trusted, are powerful allies, and will act—if only they would tell us. That requires that we teach them what Abby already knows—to discern the difference between telling and tattling. From the time children begin telling tales on their siblings and peers, we admonish them, "Don't tattle, don't snitch." Then, when young people keep potentially lethal information from us, we ask,"Why didn't you tell me?" Even the words we use—tattle, snitch, rat, squeal, fink—have a harshness that communicates to our students that it's not a good thing to ever tell on anybody. These words entrench young people in the deeply embedded code of silence. What is lost in this code is the immorality of that silence in the face of malice.

Just as we can teach our students the difference between teasing and taunting, flirting and harassing, and fighting and bullying, we can teach them the difference between telling and tattling. I use a simple formula:

> Tattling: If it will only get another student in trouble, don't tell me.
> Telling: If it will get you or another student out of trouble, tell me.
> If it is both, I need to know.
> And if you can't figure it out, tell me and we can figure it out together.

This formula does not tell students what to report to an adult. It is a tool to help them discern what and when to tell, no matter what kind of situation they are facing. Using everyday events as opportunities to practice, you can start teaching four-year-olds the difference between telling and tattling"James is sucking his thumb again." (Telling me is an attempt to get him in trouble; don't tell.) "James's front tooth fell out, and his mouth is all bloody."(Telling me can get him out of a mess; tell.) "James's front tooth fell out when he was sucking his thumb, and his mouth is a bloody mess." (It's both; I need to know.)

By the time students are six, they can be taught the difference between teasing and taunting and conflict and bullying. "If Johnny isn't sharing the swing, telling me will only get him in trouble, so don't tell me. Use your skills that I've taught you to negotiate with him." If this distinction is taught to students when they are young, it can pay off in the teen years. Adolescents will understand that it is not tattling, snitching, ratting, or squealing to tell you that their friend who has been tormented by peers is giving his possessions away and saying subtle good-byes to classmates. Telling may help get him out of the mess he is in; not telling could be life-threatening. One of your student's friend who is five months' pregnant and is binding herself up in an attempt to hide her pregnancy has sworn her friend to secrecy about the baby. Telling might get her in trouble with some people, but it will certainly get her and her baby out of trouble. A young person has the tools to discern what to do. Will she do it? We don't know, but having the tools will help. There is going to be a fight after school, and an arsenal of weapons has been hidden in the lockers of rival teens; telling will get some young people in trouble in the short term but out of big trouble and serious regret in the long term.

As well as practicing with everyday situations, keep the lines of communication open by being truly present and listening to what your students are saying—or trying to say—with their fumbled words, body language, and actions. Young people won't say a word if they think their telling will be met with judgmental statements, disbelief, or threats: "Don't say such crazy things.""Don't tattle." "He wouldn't kill himself.""If I ever catch you doing something as stupid as he did, you'll be grounded." What teen would want to hear that his friend wouldn't be stupid enough to kill himself, that her pregnant friend is a slut, that fights like that don't happen in this part of town?

Been Bullied—Tips to Give Parents for Reporting

Since most bullying occurs under the radar of adults in the school, it may be parents who will be the first to know what is happening to their child. They can be allies in the effort to intervene. It is important that we have a procedure parents or guardians can follow and know that they will be listened to and taken seriously. These are the five steps you can suggest that parents do:

1. Arrange a meeting for you and your child with the appropriate person at the school. If there are specific persons in the building assigned and trained to intervene effectively, make sure that parents know how to contact them and that it will be "safe to tell." It is important that the student who was bullied be an important part of finding a solution to the problem of the bullying. If all the adults get together to talk about a solution without the student—even very young ones—being actively involved, the young person is even further disempowered. If the student is a teenager, she can take the lead in this initial meeting, with the parent(s) and trained personnel as her support.
2. Bring to the meeting the facts in writing—the date, time, place, people involved, and the specifics of the incidents—and the impact the bullying has had on the targeted youth as well as what he or she has done to try to stop the bullying that didn't work. (This is often an emotionally charged meeting and having details in writing will help the student, the parent(s) and the educators quickly get at the problem and more effectively create a plan to put an end to the targeting of the student.)
3. Be willing to work with your child and educators on a plan that addresses you're your child needs right now in order to feel safe, what she can do to avoid being bullied or to stand up to any future bullying, and to whom she can go to for help. (This plan will also include what the adults at school are going to do to keep this student and other potential targets safe and stop further bullying.)
4. Find out what procedures the bully will be going through and what kind of support the school is expecting from the parents of the bully. (At this point, you can discuss the steps any students who are bullying will be going through and how they will be held accountable. Then you can discuss the possibility of the targeted student and the bully meeting at a later date for the third step in the discipline process—reconciliation. No one is likely to see this as an option right now, but let the parent(s) know that this third step is at the behest of the targeted student only. It is helpful if the healing take place if possible after the bully (or bullies), individually have gone through their disciplinary steps that can lead up to a possible reconciliation. The goal is to empower the targeted student and humble—not humiliate—those who bullied him or her
5. Set up a time that the parent, student, and educator will review the plan to see if it is working, or needs to be adapted. (This is usually on a weekly basis, but each individual situation will dictate realistically how often this will occur. And let parents

know that they can contact the school anytime if a new bullying situation occurs or if the targeted student is in further distress.

6. If you feel the problem is not being adequately addressed by the school, know that you can express your concerns and let the teacher and/or administrator know that you will take the next step to the school district board office and if necessary—especially in cases of serious abuse or racist or sexual bullying—to the police (in the United States, you can contact the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights[OCR], which can often initiate legal action against the bully or the school board). Schools are responsible for protecting students and are culpable when they don't.

A Cautionary Note: Often parents will want to know who targeted their child. Our typical response is "I can't tell you," which upsets or infuriates a parent. An alternative response could be, "Ask your daughter. She may want to tell you, but don't push her. We have to let her talk when she is ready; be there to listen." This not only empowers the targeted youth, but gives her an opportunity to retell her story. Another typical question is, "What are you doing with the students who bullied my child?" Our typical response is, "That is private (or privileged) information that I can't share with you," which is guaranteed to infuriate the targeted student's parents. An alternative response could be, "We have a strong anti-bullying policy and procedures that we follow for any student who has targeted another student. Trust that these steps are being followed. And when (sometimes it is "if") your daughter feels comfortable enough to sit down with the girl who targeted her, we will go through the third step in the restorative justice process. Our goal is to empower your daughter even more, and to humble (not humiliate) the one who targeted her."

Tools for Reporting

There are state run and commercially developed programs to make reporting anonymous and safe by parents, guardians, the target4ed student or brave-hearted peers. There are two that I am most familiar with and am impressed with their research, initiatives, and follow through. One is my own state operated **safe2tell Colorado (safe2tellco.org)**, developed after the school shooting in my home town of Littleton, Colorado. **safe2tell** has demonstrated its' effectiveness through its model of "conducting intentional conversations that help empower youth to speak up without fear of retaliation, embarrassment, or labeling." They have a mobile app that young people and parents can easily and anonymously, and a 24/7 response by trained personnel and dispatchers who work closely with school personnel.

The second is **STOPit (stopitsolutions.com)** (1-855-999-0932) developed by Todd Schobbel after the bullicide of 15-year-old Amanda Todd who had been targeted by an online predator and tormented by her peers. It is used in many countries throughout the world. **STOPit'**s app has

been used by thousands of students, parents, and concerned community members to safely report, and to have a two-way-anonymous communication with school personnel. Both **safe2tell** and **STOPit** have stories on their websites of suicides prevented and school violence stopped.

A student has a right to be educated in an environment that is free of fear and harassment. A bullied student is likely to need a lot of support if he has been bullied for a length of time. Know that he may be in shock, physically and emotionally harmed, fearful that the bullying will happen again, incredibly sad, and just plain unwilling to trust the peer (or bunch of peers) who bullied him. His thoughts may have turned to revenge, his feelings to rage. To help him begin to heal, you will need to create for him an atmosphere of compassion, kindness, gentleness, and patience and provide a safe and secure environment. But this atmosphere and environment are not enough; he will need the tools to deal effectively with any other situation where he is targeted, know who he can come to, and what he can do to help heal the hurt that was done to him.

Four Powerful Antidotes to Bullying

The four most powerful antidotes to bullying are a *strong sense of self, being a friend, having at least one good friend who is there for you through thick and thin, and being able to successfully get into a group (and know when to get out).* A bully will try to sabotage all of these, first by harassing the targeted peer, chipping away at his sense of dignity and worth; second by effectively isolating him so that he is unable to develop critical relationship skills with his peers; and third by enlisting peers to join in or at least not stop the bullying—further shutting him off from any positive peer relationships and critical friendships. Being bullied can lead to further rejection by peers. At a time when he is most in need of support from them, he is least likely to receive it. It seems nobody likes him no matter how hard he tries to fit in and be accepted. The targeted student begins to see school as a threatening, lonely place where he can't count on anyone to help him out. The more he is bullied without any relief or intervention, the more he will have to change what he does, where he goes, and whom he can hope to socialize with. The cycle of violence grinds on.

The cycle of violence is easier to break early on; but no matter when in the cycle you become aware one of your students is being bullied, you can help him strengthen his sense of self, show him how to be a good friend, teach him how to nurture strong, healthy friendships, and teach him how to introduce himself into a group.

Strong Sense of Self

If students see themselves as being capable, competent, cooperative, responsible, resourceful, and resilient, not only are they less likely to be cruel and combative bullies, they are more likely to be able to effectively fend off an attack by one. The first response of bullied children is critical. When a bully comes along, who has contempt for a particular group and students fit in that group, they may get targeted no matter how strong they stand, how secure they look, how quick with words they are. To tell students that if they use their bully-proofing skills, a bully won't target them is a lie—a hopeful one, but a lie nevertheless. The reality is that the better your students feel about themselves, the less likely they are to succumb to the tactics of a bully should one be so foolish as to target them.

Young people who use positive self-talk to develop confidence and respect for themselves are more likely to see the cause of the bullying as coming from the outside and, therefore, not something to beat themselves up over. The line I like to give students is, "I am a decent, caring, human being. I didn't ask for this. I don't deserve this. That kid is sure trying to get his needs met in a lousy way." Sometimes these lines are best spoken under their breath as they walk away from the taunting; sometimes the words are spoken directly to the bully. Either way, the targeted student affirms his own dignity and self-worth and begins to put the problem where it belongs—on the bully.

On the other hand, if a student lacks a strong sense of self, is praise-dependent, and tends to beat herself up for things that go wrong in her life, she will likely blame herself for being bullied. Young people who blame themselves for being bullied are more likely to succumb to the tactics of a bully and become vulnerable to more attacks. If they think the attacks are directed at something inherent in their makeup or character, they are more likely to get depressed and anxious (I am stupid, I am ugly, I am clumsy, I am friendless, I am inferior, I am crazy). When they ask the question "Why me?" they are right there bullying themselves to validate why the bully targeted them. These thoughts are self-defeating and reinforce their feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. When young people practice the art of self-affirmation—positive self-talk—they tend to feel better about themselves. You can't just teach students to mouth the self-affirming lines. They need people in their lives who offer them encouragement, feedback, and unconditional love. And they have to be guided to behave in ways that make them feel and act like decent, caring, and responsible people who like themselves, think for themselves, and know they are capable of solving problems. Young people who can freely express their feelings, make mistakes, grow from those mistakes, and know that they can act in their own best interest, stand up for themselves, and exercise their rights while respecting the rights and legitimate needs of others, are less likely to succumb to the bullying.

Sometimes self-affirmation is not enough. They will need comeback lines—assertive retorts to the bullying. It is important that these one-liners be assertive, not aggressive or passive. Aggression—be it verbal, physical, or relational—only begets more aggression. Young people who respond aggressively to an attack, angrily striking at the bully, usually end up losing the struggle. The bully was no fool and now has a target who is distressed, frustrated, and defeated.

In my research, I came across some disturbing aggressive one-liners a psychologist recommended targets say to the bully. I think these would probably agitate a bully even more and make a first-class bully out of the targeted child as well.

These are lines I suggest you not give your students:

- Respond with a comment like "It takes one to know one."
- Reverse the teasing. Give the bully the same put-down.
- Call the bully by name and ask, "What did you say?" and "Could you say that again?" The bully may repeat what he or she said two or three times. Then you, in a condescending manner, say something like "Good boy, Sam! You said that three times."
- Make the bully look foolish when he or she says something obvious. Example: "He noticed that I don't have any hair. Wow!"
- Make fun of the bully for repeating taunts: "You keep saying the same thing over and over. Can you say it in a different way, or even sing it?"

Why would anyone recommend that you teach your students to ridicule, taunt, make condescending comments, or make fun of another person—even if that person is a bully? We can begin to break the cycle of violence by confronting that kind of speech when we hear it and eliminating it from our own vocabulary. There is a Buddhist aphorism that states: "Believe nothing merely because you have been told it. . .. But whatsoever, after due examination and analysis, you find to be kind, conducive to the good, the benefit, the welfare of all beings—that doctrine believe and cling to and take as your guide." None of those one-liners is kind, conducive to the good, or to the benefit and welfare of anybody.

Passivity invites further aggression. Students who respond passively to an attack—slumping over, begging, pleading, or quickly submitting to a bully's demands—only encourage the bully to keep up the bullying. Lines that a student might say to a friend who has inadvertently hurt him can backfire when said to a bully. "Hey, that hurts." "Don't do that. I don't like it." "Please leave me alone, I don't like what you're doing." To the ears of a bully, they are invitations to keep bullying. To cry in front of a bully or to let him know you don't like what he is doing is letting him know he has accomplished his goal. He'll crank up the volume and intensity of his contemptuous behavior. And each time he does so, his innate ability

to feel any empathy is stifled or corrupted, his sense of shame is diminished, his callousness grows thicker.

Assertive lines and actions have the potential to dissipate the aggression of the offending party, and they will most certainly leave intact the dignity and self-worth of the person speaking the lines.

- "Yikes! I'm not up for this. I'm out of here."
- "Wow, man, you poured that on thick; I don't need this; I'm gone."
- "That was a gross thing to do."
- "That was mean (or cruel, or bigoted, racist, sexist)."
- "That comment was beneath both of us."

These lines can be spoken out loud or said as self-talk. Either way, they affirm the targeted student's power to control how he acts and what he does with what the bully is throwing at him. You can practice with the targeted student, having him stand strong, shoulders back, head held up, and projecting a strong assertive—not aggressive—voice.

Will standing strong, walking confidently and with purpose, and speaking assertively always do the trick? No, but it is one more valuable tool your students will have. The key is to have several well-rehearsed scripts and a few actions readily available, with the ability to discern which one is the most appropriate for the given situation. Sometimes words spoken under a student's breath are best, sometimes words spoken out loud are, sometimes yelling for help is better, and there are times when you had best save your breath and start running. And there are times when handing over money or a jacket is the wisest thing to do. Your students need to know that nothing they own is worth more than their safety.

A pre-emptive assertive action is to be friendly with a potential bully. Students who are friendly and communicate to others that they care for them are less likely to be targeted by even those who may be inclined to bully. A note of caution: A dangerous and cruel message is being given to young students after violent acts in their schools. If they had only been kinder to the perpetrator of the violence, the violence would not have happened--as if kindness would heal the often deep and profound wounds, and mental health issues of the perpetrator. Telling young people to be kind to classmates who have been vicious and cruel to them without the adults holding those perpetrating the violence accountable for their cruelty and getting them the needed interventions and support, is to fail to protect those whom we are asking to be kinder.

Three vital elements to a young person responding assertively are a belief that no one can strip her of her own sense of dignity and worth, an understanding that she can control how she responds to a bully, and a refusal to get down in the mud with a bully and bully back.

Buddies, Friends, and Other Former Strangers

Stopping bullying is harder than preventing it in the first place. Having older students as buddies, being a friend, and knowing how to hang around with potential friends can radically reduce bullying incidents.

Buddies

If a student is at risk of being bullied on the way to school, on the bus, on the playground, in the lunchroom, or in the hallways, it is helpful to find an older student to be your student's buddy. And since any child could possibly be at risk, an ideal plan is to "buddy" students up early in the school year. The buddy program can serve a dual purpose: The younger child is less likely to be targeted by a peer when he has a bigger student right next to him who is in a sense "protecting" him; and older students who are buddies to younger children are less likely to bully any younger children. These older students are too busy "being good," "doing good," and "willing good" to have the time or inclination to target someone smaller. The four essentials for successful peer relationships—empathy, sympathy, compassion, and perspective taking—are nurtured and strengthened. Some of the best buddies are reformed bullies. Their leadership skills and power that were inappropriately used to wreak havoc in the past can be great assets to them in their new role.

Friends

Just as being a friend can be good for a bully who is trying to turn his life around, it is equally good for a student who could be a target. Friendship skills play an important role in preventing bullying, buffering students from the harmful effects of bullying, and helping them cope after a bullying episode. Students need to be taught to make friends wisely, to keep friendships growing, and to walk away from friendships that are harmful.

The way we interact in the classroom, hallways, lunchrooms, and bus lines influences the way our students develop their social skills that help them make and keep friends. They need the opportunity to develop their abilities to listen, exchange ideas, and work with others toward a common goal. They need to be able to control their own behavior and anticipate the consequences of words they speak and actions they take.

Students who annoy or irritate their peers are at great risk not only of being the target of a bully, but of becoming increasingly isolated from even caring and compassionate peers. The more isolated they become, the higher their risk of being vulnerable targets, with bullies and bystanders joining forces against them. In turn, they are likely to become seriously depressed or

enraged. If one of your students is unwittingly contributing to rejection by his peers, he will need your help to find a solution to his problem. Be aware of how he behaves in his social circle. He may be resorting to inappropriate social tactics either because he does not know better or because he has run out of appropriate options in his repertoire of friendship skills.

It is important that students know how to accurately read social cues—words, actions, and body language. Young people help teach one another about social behaviors—what works and what doesn't; what is acceptable and what is not; what's funny and what is hurtful humor. A young person needs to notice how others are reacting to her behavior and recognize the cues her peers are giving her that are clues to what is working and what is not. "Tell me what happened when you grabbed the toy." "Did everyone walk away when you started to act silly?" "Did your classmate frown when you commented on his outfit?" "Did everyone laugh at the joke?" "Did the target of the joke give any signals that he was hurt by what was said?" "What can you do when your behavior is annoying someone?" "One of your friends is crying. What can you say and do?"

If a student has a serious handicap or learning disability, he has a risk factor for putting him on the radar screen of the bully, but he will be at far greater risk if he lacks necessary friendship skills. In fact, friendship skills can mitigate a handicap or disability. A word of caution is due here. As much as you have taught your student who has a disability to be kind, caring, and accepting, you must also teach him to be wary, skeptical, and willing to be rude if necessary to protect himself from unscrupulous peers who "buddy" up to him in order to glean enough information to be used against him. This student needs real friends who can help him see when someone is trying to "use" him, clue him in, and stand by him.

The quality of a student's friendships matter. If a targeted girl is hanging around exclusively with another girl who has been bullied, the two of them are more likely to spend their time commiserating with each other and making each other feel even more miserable. Misery loves company. But neither girl will have the strength to support each other or stand up for each other. If a bullied boy is hanging around with another bullied boy, the two of them are more likely to fuel each other's rage and spend time concocting ways to seek revenge on their nemesis and anyone else who failed to come to their aid. All four bullied students need support and guidance to either turn these friendships into strong, helpful ones or to move beyond them into more positive friendships.

The former may actually be easier than the latter. Inviting either twosome to join you in challenging activities that require cooperation, strategizing, and supporting each other in order to accomplish a common goal can build up both students and create a friendship devoid of the negative energies that brought the two together in the first place. Encouraging them to get involved in "doing good" in the community also enables them to get "outside" of themselves. It's

hard to be miserable and giving at the same time.

Other former strangers—joining a group

Just as being a friend and having friends are antidotes to bullying, so is a student's ability to introduce herself into a group. Students who find themselves alone on the playground, unwilling or unable to join in a game or other social activity, are prime targets for bullies. If one of your students looks like a shrinking violet against the school wall or another appears to be playing hide-and-seek, with him hiding and only bullies seeking him out, they both need to learn useful and effective ways to introduce themselves into a group and how to conduct themselves once they join—for example, observe, ask a question or say something positive about the group, ask to play or join, cooperate, play fair, share, and resolve conflicts non-violently. You can help them role-play various situations where they ask to join and are welcomed, rejected, or ignored. How they handle all three of these situations will increase or decrease their chances of being a part of any group in school.

They also need to be able to evaluate the various groups and recognize that some groups are better to be a part of than others. Some groups help them learn to get along with others and help them develop close friendships with people who enjoy doing the same things they like to do. Some groups help them feel good by doing good deeds in the community. Some groups thrive on having a scapegoat and might welcome a classmate to play the part. Others find their pleasure by regularly excluding selected targets. Your empathic student may struggle with the conflicted feelings of belonging to a group and hurting someone in a way he knows only too well. If a student finds himself in a group that purposely excludes other students, makes other students feel unwelcome, is mean to students in the group or to a select few outside of the group, or requires that he conforms to standards with which he is uncomfortable or do things he doesn't really want to do, it's time for him to find a new group of real friends who care about themselves, one another, and others outside of their group. The question a student needs to ask himself to determine if the group is a good one to join is "Can I be good (and true to myself), do good, and will good in this group?"

Rewriting the Script for the Bully

It is good if you can stop the bullying in the early stages before the lines of the role are mastered a student is typecast as the bully. But it is never too late to change the dynamics. Just as the student was capable of being disrespectful and malicious and callous, so is she capable of being respectful, kind, and compassionate. She learned to bully; she can learn more prosocial ways to act with her peers. The list of traits bullies have in common on pages 8-9 can be summed up

in what bullies are not good at: caring about others, being kind to peers, sharing, getting along, and making friends. Helping the student who bullied develop these skills will go a long way toward helping her take on a new, more constructive role. There needs to be a change in both a student's thinking and behavior. There are things you can do:

1. *Intervene immediately with discipline--including the three R's: restitution (own and fix what you did), resolution (figure out how to keep it from happening again), reconciliation (heal with the person you harmed.)*

Discipline is not judgmental, arbitrary, confusing, or coercive. It is not something we do *to* children. It is something we do *with* a student and invites reconciliation. Its goal is to instruct, teach, guide, and help students develop self-discipline. In disciplining a student who has bullied someone, we are concerned not with mere compliance ("Don't bully, say you're sorry, and then just leave him alone"), but with inviting him to delve deeply into himself and reach beyond what is required or expected. When a student has developed his own moral code, committed himself to acting kindly and justly, believes he has both the ability to control his behavior and a choice in how he behaves, and takes responsibility for his own actions, he will be able to get his own needs met while treating others with the same dignity and regard with which he would like to be treated.

Discipline provides the tools necessary to begin the healing process when serious material or personal harm has occurred. It deals with the reality of the situation, not the power and control of the adult. It helps change attitudes and habits that led to the bullying and promotes genuine peace in the home. The process of discipline has four steps that the act of punishment does not have:

1. It shows the bully what she has done wrong—no mincing words, soft-pedalling it as a conflict, or minimizing the activity ("But everybody calls people names in the lunchroom.")

2. It gives her ownership of the problem—no excuses ("We didn't mean to hurt him; we were only teasing"), no blame shifting ("James started it; I didn't"), no buts ("But he is such a loser"), no "if only" ("If only he wouldn't act like that, then we wouldn't bother him").

3. It gives her a process for solving the problem she created: *restitution, resolution*, and *reconciliation;* in other words, she must fix what she did, figure out how to keep it from happening again, and heal with the person she has harmed.

4. It leaves her dignity intact—she is not a bad person; what she did was despicable; we believe she is capable of being a decent, caring, responsible student.

Discipline is a constructive and compassionate response to bullying that takes into consideration the intent, the severity of the deed, and the restorative steps needed to help the bully take on a new, more prosocial role. It will involve your time—or the counselor's, or the social worker's--as well as your student's time. However, the time you take is well worth it as your student begins to realize that all of his actions have intended and unintended consequences. He will learn that he is quite capable of taking responsibility and ownership for what he did and just as capable of taking full responsibility for the harm he caused, not because he fears reprisal, but because it is the right thing to do.

You can clearly state what the student did and affirm your belief that she is capable of fixing the mess she made. "You twisted your classmates arm. You hurt him and you need to make amends for this hurt. I'll walk through the three R's with you. I know you can handle this."

The first R, *restitution*, means fixing what she did. Had she broken her classmate's favorite pencil on purpose and with glee, she would have needed to fix or replace that pencil. Material damage is usually easier to repair than personal damage. The pain felt by her classmate, the fear he may have of his classmate hurting him again, and his lack of trust that she will treat him kindly are harder to fix than replacing a broken pencil.
An apology is in order, but it is requested, not demanded. To repent honestly and unconditionally means to assume responsibility for the deed, admit the wrongness of what has been done, express a strong desire not to do it again, assume responsibility for the damage, and begin to mend the torn relationship If you demand an apology, you will get either an insincere "I'm sorry"or repeated insincere apologies after repeated arm-twisting. Such obligatory repentance doesn't heal any rift. A sincere apology is more likely to be forthcoming if the student has seen it modeled or has been the recipient herself of a sincere "I'm sorry."

No matter how heartfelt, just speaking the words I'm sorry is not enough. To repent honestly and unconditionally means to assume responsibility for the deed, admit the wrongness of what has been done, express a strong desire not to do it again, assume responsibility for the damage, and begin to mend the torn relationship. Repentance cannot be forced upon the student, but you can help her arrive at repentance by helping her work her own way through the three Rs. Repentance is not a goal in itself. Rather, it is a by-product that comes about only as she works through the whole process of reconciliation.

The second R, *resolution*, means figuring out a way to keep the incident from happening again. It happened. She can't go back and undo the deed. Wishing it hadn't happened isn't productive, either. She needs to be able to figure out what she actually did (no, it wasn't an accident; she intended harm), what she did to bring it about (yes, she was jealous, and yes, she was angry—not at her classmate, but at the fact that he never seemed to get in trouble and she seemed to always get into trouble), and what she can learn from it (I am capable of hurting someone when I feel jealous or angry, when I disregard his feelings, and when I don't try to see the situation from his point of view. I can get my own needs met in a way that doesn't hurt my classmate; it's all right to be upset or angry, it is never all right to twist his arm to hurt him). It is at this point that you can talk with her about being aware of the consequences of her actions—the impact her actions have on her peer (it hurts to have your arm twisted), the impact her actions have on her relationship with her classmates (no one likes to be around people who hurt them), and the impact they have on her (twisting arms is a lousy way to play with other people; soon I will have no one who will want to play with me. I want to and can be a decent, caring, responsible kid who is fun to be around). You can help your student work through her feelings and help her practice more prosocial behaviors (see number two below).

The third R, *reconciliation*, is a process of healing with the person you have harmed. It involves a commitment by the offender to honor her plan to make restitution and live up to her resolutions. It also involves willingness on the part of her classmate to trust, risk, and rebuild a relationship with her. Students would most likely be inclined to stop at step two and be done with the whole ordeal. It is important that this third step take place. It is up to the adult to orchestrate it. With a student who has not yet become typecast in the role of bully—she's just practiced it a few times—this step can happen fairly quickly and help her readily assume a more prosocial role.

This is not the case when you are faced with a situation where the bullying student has been tormenting another student relentlessly and the other student has no desire ever to be in contact with the bully, let alone take part in a reconciliation, no matter how much he expresses true remorse, tries to make restitution, and comes up with great resolutions.

The student who bullied can work on all of the above up to the point of reconciliation and then must be willing to be patient in waiting for the bullied classmate to be open to true reconciliation with him. Time, in and of itself, does not heal relationships, but it does take time to heal. Even if he went to the other boy with a heartfelt apology and offer of restitution, the bullied boy might need more time to become stronger himself before he

can reconcile. The intention behind asking for time is not to hurt the bully, make him feel the same pain he inflicted, or make him suffer as much as he made the other boy suffer. The time may be needed for the target of the bullying to face the hurt, vent his emotions, and begin to release any grudges and destructive feelings, so that he not only reclaims his own peace of mind, sense of security and safety, and sense of well-being. (For severe acts of bullying or bullying that is criminal in nature, this third step may never happen between the bully and the severely bullied.)

The student who bullied can show respect by honoring the distance that may need to be kept during this waiting period. If anyone is to be inconvenienced at this point, it is to him. He may have to steer clear of any situation that would put the two of them together, whether it is in the hallway, in the science class, or at the soccer game. He may have to do home study if the student he bullied is too fearful to be in the same school as him. He may have to be more closely supervised and restricted to certain areas of the school. His actions will need to be closely monitored. The bullying student may balk at these conditions. You can remind him that it was he who did the bullying. When the other student is ready, they can come together to look for creative solutions to solving the problems that they face in order to be reconciled. This is not the same as seeing the bullying itself as a conflict. The problems that need to be solved relate to how the two can live together in the school community after the bullying has stopped and after the bully has worked through the steps of discipline. This third step is necessary to humble the bully and empower the targeted student.

Caution

Conflicts you resolve, bullying you stop. Too often, students who have bullied and the classmate they have bullied are forced into conflict resolution workshops—but remember, bullying is not about conflict; it is about contempt. There is no conflict to be resolved. The bully merely puts on his charm for the adults and shows the obligatory remorse—this is just another act with new lines. The bullied student gets no relief, or support, and the bully learns no genuine empathetic or prosocial behaviors. There is a chance the bully will seek revenge or the targeted student will recant his story out of fear of that revenge. The bullying will likely continue.

With slumped shoulders and an air of frustration and hurt, twelve-year-old Celeste complained to her teacher that one of her classmates had tripped her, called her gross names, locked her out of a chat room, and smashed her art project. The teacher put the two girls together to "resolve" this conflict. The bully made lots of excuses, "didn't mean to hurt her feeling," "I'm sorry if you were offended"; "She just fell over my feet;" "We didn't know we locked her out of the chat room, I fixed it this morning;" and "I didn't have anything to do with smashing her art project. It fell on the floor." Meanwhile Celeste sat there with her arms crossed looking like a member of

the *Chicks*, "I'm not ready to make nice." Frustrated with the failure of the conflict resolution tools, the teacher told Celeste that she needed to get along with her classmate who had supposedly apologized and wanted to "make nice." But Celeste knew that the bully didn't mean what she had said and the teacher had not really believed what Celeste had told her about being targeted. Celeste knew that as soon as the teacher was out of sight, the bullying would continue and probably get worse—and it did. The next time the bully attacked, she did it with an even bigger smirk on her face, knowing she got away with it before. Celeste would never again tell the teacher about the bullying that continued. She drew further into herself and her grades began to slip.

Just as Celeste's teacher did, we as observers, can have a disinclination to see and acknowledge bullying for what it is, i.e., the contemptuous and cruel behavior that is bullying; or to accept that young people—especially "nice kids"—are capable of this kind of cruelty. If we aren't tuned into the reality that bullying is happening in front of us, or behind our backs—expecting to only see conflict or drama, and armed with the policy and procedures to deal with just those, we will end up retargeting the target and emboldening the bully. Once bullying is framed as a conflict, the range of responses is restricted to consent-based alternatives for resolving that supposed conflict. And "nice kids" are fully capable of being mean. If in our minds "nice" is equated with being incapable of being mean, we will miss the cruelty that is in plain sight.

2. *Create opportunities to "do good."*

It's not enough to tell the bullying student what he cannot do; he needs to figure out what he can do. With your guidance and supervision, he can find opportunities to behave toward others in caring and helpful ways. What he can do now is to practice "doing good" before he even thinks of harming someone else, not just after the fact. The more times he behaves toward others in caring and helpful ways, the less likely he will be to want to treat them (or anyone else) with disregard. Students need to believe that they can contribute, can make a difference in their families, neighborhood, and school. "Doing good" is a step beyond a student getting his own needs met. It also helps him learn to notice and care about the rights and needs of others, which in turn helps him to nurture his ability to empathize with others.

Six grader, James, was regularly taunting his classmate Douglas, who had difficulty reading out loud. While working through the restorative process with Douglas, James was invited to work with second graders on their reading skills. Spending the time helping younger students who enjoyed his help gave James a stronger sense of self rather than the inflated ego he displayed while tormenting Douglas. Doing something good for others also enabled James to come to the restorative process more open to seeing Douglas in a different light.

3. Nurture empathy. Empathy is the core virtue around which all other virtues are built. From empathy can flow sympathy, which in turn can blossom into compassion for another human being who is suffering. (See Empathy, Sympathy, and Compassion, pages 3-5) Empathy is an inborn quality in human beings. Our emotional states are influenced by the emotional states of those around us. Bullies tend to have poor perspective-taking skills, seeing incidents only from their own point of view and being concerned only about their own feelings. The language of a bully is, "You will give me what I want; I don't care how you feel," or, "I do care how you feel: the worse, the better." If a student is bullying others, he does not lack empathy. It is still there, perhaps buried inside him or corrupted. It is going to take time and effort to uncover it or restore it to its healthier form.

Again, helping younger children with tasks that the older student has succeeded at can help. Roots of Empathy, a program created by Mary Gordon, is used in many schools in North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand. A Parent brings an infant into the classroom on a regular basis for the students to observe and interact with. All students can benefit from the program, but some of the most calloused students have warmed to this vulnerable baby, and found within themselves that empathetic connection.

4. *Teach friendship skills*—assertive, respectful, and peaceful ways to relate to others. There may be many reasons a student bullied his peer. It's okay to look for explanations as long as they are not seen as excuses. He may not have known how to be assertive or respectful, aggressively throwing his weight around and grabbing whatever it was that he wanted. He may not have known how to peacefully resolve inevitable peer conflicts. As he reacted aggressively to his peers, they began to see him as someone to fear and to stay away from or to "hang" with so as to avoid becoming one of his targets. Getting into the habit of acting tough and mean, he found himself with an inflated ego, not a strong sense of self; with acquaintances, not friends. A student may have resorted to bullying because he couldn't figure out another way to make friends in a new situation. Anything he tried made matters worse, not better. He might have figured, "If I can't be the best, I'll be the worst."To have friends, he needs to be a friend. In fact, one of the strongest buffers a child can have against being a bully is being a good friend. It is impossible to be a good friend and a bully at the same time. Being a friend is about caring, sharing, and helping.

5. *Engage in more constructive, entertaining, and energizing activities.* A student can attack a rock-climbing wall with the same fervor he once used to attack his classmate.

This time, he will achieve a goal without "taking anyone out" in the process; he will feel a sense of accomplishment; and he can "do good" by teaching his peers to climb the same wall. He can "cruise" the river looking for great rapids to conquer rather than "cruise" the school hallways looking for weaker peers to bully out of their lunch money. He can throw a basketball through a hoop with the same energy and accuracy he had used to throw a punch at a peer. The more constructive, entertaining, and energizing activities he engages in, the less time he will have to bully anyone else; the less he will need to use antisocial acts to get his needs met; the less likely he will be to even want to be antisocial. His poor social skills will be replaced with prosocial habits that reaffirm his own worth and abilities. He will be ready to take the next step in assuming a new role in his relationship with his peers—willing good.

6. *Teach the student to "will good."* The real test of student's ability to throw off the old role of bully and assume a new role of decent, caring, responsible human being will be when he is faced with a bully or a bunch of bullies who are taunting a peer. In his book Integrity, Stephen L. Carter writes of teaching children the concept of "willing good"—that is, speaking and doing what is right, "even when the burden is heavy." It involves helping students develop an inner moral voice (personal code) that guides them to do or say what is right, often in spite of external consequences and never merely because of them. This inner voice gives students the strength to act with integrity when confronted with difficult situations, such as peer pressure intended to cause harm.

Willing good involves three steps:

1. *Discerning what is right and what is wrong.* We can teach students the difference between right and wrong, but if they behave merely because they've been told to do so, or because they fear punishment, feel obligated, or are dependent on external approval, what we are trying to teach them will never become their personal code. If it never becomes their personal code, their conscience will be available for sale to the highest bidder. ("I was only doing what I was told to do.""She made me do it.""She deserved to be taunted.""Everyone else was doing it.""They told me I could join the group if I taunted him.") By being good and doing good, a young person has begun to develop his own inner moral voice (personal code). He can begin to engage in self-talk about what his ideals are, what he stands for, and the kind of person he is trying to be. He has practiced taking on another's perspective and feeling empathy toward that person. He will need courage to move to the next step.

2. *Act on what is right, even at personal cost*. "Hey, guys, back off, leave him alone." At this point, the student is choosing doing good over looking good to his friends. He is

willing to take the sneers and jeers of his peers. ("Are you chicken?""Your just like him." "Look at the do-gooder.") Willing good involves both taking a stand and taking an action. It is not enough to feel the other classmate's pain. He must be willing to do something to alleviate it, even at the expense of alienating his friends.

3. *Say openly that you are acting on your understanding of right and wrong.* "I'm not going to be a party to any of this, and I'll do whatever it takes to get this taunting to stop." When a young person chooses to will good, "even when the burden is heavy," he is reminding his peers that he is not ashamed of doing what he has discerned is right, even at great cost to himself. This former bullying youth has come full circle—from bullying a classmate to being a brave-hearted witness for a peer. He will find with practice that this new role suits him fine and serves him well.

Know Thyself

Teaching you students to become assertive, not aggressive, to get their needs met in responsible, constructive ways, and to "be good,""do good," and "will good" takes time and effort on your part. It involves all of the steps above as well as taking stock of the way you, as an educator, get your own needs met, the way you handle minor and major conflicts in your classroom and the way you respond to your students' mistakes, mischief, and mayhem. But the time and effort are well worth it.

Caring Schools, Involved Communities

Since most instances of bullying occur in school-related settings, we as educators need to be sure we are doing all that we can to make sure our students feel safe at school. Over the years, I have looked at many anti-bullying programs. I am as disillusioned with some of them as the researchers who have studied the effectiveness of dropping such programs into schools and considering the problem solved, the mandate met, the legal requirements covered. We need to look at a more comprehensive plan to create conditions in our homes, schools, and communities that will strengthen inhibitions against violence and nurture the bonds that connect us to one another. We can use those bonds to nourish a deep passion to alleviate others' pain and sorrow. That does not mean that we don't use well-developed bullying prevention materials as part of a more comprehensive initiative. Students need to know what bullying is and what it isn't; about the "trap of comradeship"; the difference between teasing and taunting, flirting and sexual bullying; and what it means to be brave-hearted. But these concepts are best taught integrated into the whole of a school's ethos—not as something just dropped in.

Three Ps for a School-led/Community Based Approach

It is vital that a school has the Three P's necessary for a good bully prevention structure. It is the school culture and social environment that these policies, procedures, and programs create as well as reflect.

Anti-bullying Policy

It is one thing to have a policy; it is wholly another to make sure the policy is not just placards on the school wall or an inspirational piece of writing at the beginning of the student handbook. This policy must be clearly articulated, consistently enforced, and broadly communicated. It should include a clear definition of what bullying is; the ways and means of bullying, and the overlays that often increase the cruelty and impact of the bullying.

Included in the policy should be a statement of responsibility of those who witness the bullying to try to stop it by intervening, helping the targeted student escape, and a way to make it "safe to tell"a caring adult.

(Check your federal, provincial, or state laws, and school district rules and guidelines for the policy applicable to your school. Most states and provinces have reconsidered the statement found in earlier laws that mean and cruel events had to be continual and repeated over time to constitute bullying, and now recognize that a one-time significant attack can constitute bullying.

Procedures

A bullying prevention policy that has zero tolerance for bullying is a good thing; but zero tolerance that equals treating any and all bullying with mandatory expulsion is zero thinking. The intent of these policies is laudable, but the singular procedure—one size fits all—is inflexible, harsh, and lacking in common sense. It requires an "all or nothing" approach that gives administrators the message "You have no choice" and has resulted in a reckless and punitive approach that has an overtone of vindictiveness and also has brought increased lawsuits against schools regarding unfairness and inequities. What is needed are procedures to support that policy that provide opportunities for administrators to exercise fairness, common sense, and sound discretion. All bullying should have some sanction. It doesn't mean you apply the maximum sanction for every offense.

It is important to clearly outline the consequences for the bully—and any henchmen or other bystanders who played an active supporting role in the bullying. These procedures should

include disciplinary measures that will be taken to hold the students accountable for their actions. I recommend some form of restorative justice, i.e., restitution, resolution, and if possible, an attempt at reconciliation--at the targeted student's behest. Procedures for restorative justice are tailored to the unique problems in a given situation, and possible solutions to repair the damage done. (See Restorative Practices, page 54-57)

It is helpful to incorporate into the plan the six additional steps helpful to reforming the perpetrator(s). Parents or guardians of the bully are notified of the bullying and asked to take measures at home that will help in the restorative justice process. (See Rewriting the Script, pages 54-61)

Outline what measures will be taken to keep targeted students safe at school, give them the tools to stand up to the perpetrators, and offer support to keep the targeted students from succumbing to the bullying, and tools to deal effectively with any new bullying situation he may face. Identify a person or persons to whom students can safely report any further bullying incidences. Notify parent(s) or guardians of the incident and the school's plan. Give parent(s) a protocol to follow to report any further targeting of their child. (See How to Report, pages 45-47)

Programs

Along with a bullying prevention policy and procedures, schools need programs that back up and reinforce the policy and help to create a safe, caring, and welcoming environment for all students.

One project that includes all three—policy, procedures, and program—is the critically acclaimed *Steps to Respect* developed by the Committee for Children (www.cfchildren.org). Steps to Respect is used in elementary schools throughout the world. Developed as an integrative program, it includes bullying prevention as part of the whole of the curriculum. Designed not just to decrease bullying, it also to help students build more supportive relationships with one another. It teaches skills for coping with bullying, including recognizing bullying, using assertive behaviors to refuse bullying, and reporting bullying to adults. It is one of the few programs that addresses the negative roles of not-so-innocent bystanders and helps students to become witnesses, resisters, and defenders.

Steps to Respect recommends, for optimal intervention, the following school wide components:

1. *Gathering information about bullying at school directly from students.*

This would involve first increasing awareness among students, educators, and parents as to the definition of bullying, the four ways and three means of bullying, and the roles students can and do play (see the Bullying Circle on page 17). Second, it entails surveying anonymously students, educators, and parents about the nature and quality of peer relations at the school. Don't be surprised if students report more incidents of bullying than parents or educators suspect. Third, it is necessary to ask students what they need from adults in order to feel safe.

Many students today report that they feel helpless in dealing with cyberbullying because for too long school personnel have said if it didn't happen on school grounds or at a school event, they could not do anything about it. Those students are afraid to tell their parents for fear of the parents removing the tech tools in an attempt to keep their son or daughter safe. Other students, especially teenagers, have said that they don't think adults can do anything to keep them safe, because no adult in elementary or middle school helped when they reported the bullying. Yet other students said they just wanted adults to her them out and believe them when they report bullying. Some students wanted teachers to model the behavior they were asking students to demonstrate, since they felt some of their teachers were bullies too. Some students turned it around and asked what they could do to help their targeted peers; how they could confront those who were bullying, and how they could help create the kind of school they wanted to come to every day.

2. *Establishing clear school wide and classroom rules about bullying*.

Students need to know what the rules are, that they will be enforced, and how they will be enforced. It is important that the constructive consequences require that those partaking in the bullying go through the three Rs: restitution, resolution, and reconciliation. There also needs to be a plan of action if the intervention does not work and the bully does not change his or her behavior. This plan can include removal from a class or school and a referral to another program such as an alternative school, a mental health agency, or the police. Along with the rules, the school needs to create strong social norms against bullying, with programs to prevent, identify, and combat bullying.

3. *Training all adults in the school to respond sensitively and consistently to bullying*.

Bullied youth want to know that they will be supported and protected and that adults will take responsibility for the safety of all students. We as educators need to teach diversity awareness and model positive, respectful, and supportive behaviors. No longer will "kids will be kids,""it's his own fault, he was asking for it," or"they were just teasing"work as excuses by educators for not intervening.

4. *Providing adequate adult supervision, particularly in less structure areas, such as on the playground and in the lunchroom*.

Students want a greater adult presence in all areas of the school as well as on the school bus. One of the most effective strategies to make a school safe is the physical presence of responsible, caring adults. Severe cutbacks in funding in both the United States and Canada have undermined the safety of students. Boards have eliminated supervisory functions teachers used to perform; hall monitors are almost non-existent; there are few, if any, lunchroom monitors left, fewer educational assistants and guidance counselors—all critical elements for the safety and well-being of students.

5. Improving parental awareness of and involvement in working on the problem.

Parents can be helpful allies in breaking the cycle of violence and helping to create more deeply caring school communities. They can model for their own children positive, respectful, and supportive behaviors; help them develop a strong sense of self; teach them how to make friends; and teach them how to become a part of a group and when to get out of a group. They can teach them to relate to others in a positive and respectful way, to be assertive, and to stand up and speak out against injustices. Parents can be invited to volunteer to help create a greater presence of caring adults in the school, and serve as an advocate for their children. They can help to lobby the school board or board of trustees for adequate funding for additional staff needed for supervision, for support services, and for programs that can back up the strong policies and rules and consequences that states and provinces are mandating.

Inform parents about what kind of communication will be forthcoming from the school if their child is bullying, participating as a not-so-innocent bystander, or being bullied—phone, letter, note—and what procedures they can follow if they are concerned about a bullying situation that school personnel may not know about yet. (See Been Bullied—Tips to Give Parents For Reporting, pages 45-47)

Young people can't stop the bullying they experience or witness all by themselves. They need adults at home, in the school, and in community programs committed to breaking this cycle of violence wherever they see it and whenever they hear about it. Planned intervention in our schools can greatly reduce bullying and its subsequent negative impact on individual children, the school community, and the entire community. Bullying can be reduced if educators, students, and parents work together to create a climate in which there is an esprit de corps—the spirit of devotion and enthusiasm among members of a group for one another, their group, and their purpose—and in which all young people believe they have worth, are capable, caring, resilient, and responsible human beings.

For additional information on lectures, books, and media:
Barbara Coloroso
info.kidsareworthit@gmail.com
www.kidsareworthit.com