



stop bullying before it starts

A Bullying Prevention Project

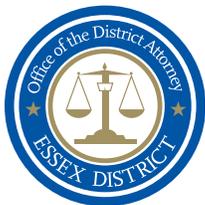
Developed by Jonathan W. Blodgett
Essex District Attorney



stop bullying before it starts

A project that educates students about the serious problem of bullying and engages them in developing and delivering bullying prevention messages.

This project was supported by a grant from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, Safe and Drug-Free Schools Community Act, and developed in consultation with Nancy Mullin, Bullying Prevention Solutions, Raleigh, NC, and Richard W. Cole, Esq. Civil Rights and Safe Schools Consultant, Boston, MA.



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Foreword

Bullying, long thought to be an unavoidable and harmless rite of childhood, is now known to have serious ramifications, not just for the bullied but for those who bully and for the majority of young people who are bystanders. In a general sense, bullying affects the well-being of our schools and our communities.

To address the serious impact of bullying in our schools, the Massachusetts Legislature enacted bullying prevention legislation in May 2010. This law requires schools to develop and implement bullying policies and procedures and mandates reporting acts of bullying. It also recognizes the necessary collaboration and coordination among law enforcement, school officials, and communities to effectively address this most challenging issue.

There is a fine line between bullying and criminal behavior. Sometimes bullying may constitute a crime such as assault and battery, threats, sexual assault, stalking, identity fraud, and civil rights violations. As we continue to gain a better understanding of bullying, it becomes clear that we can no longer dismiss bullying as a natural and innocuous rite of childhood.

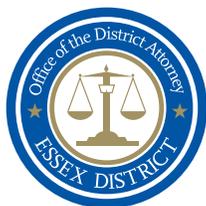
Stop Bullying Before It Starts: A Bullying Prevention Project was developed to raise awareness about bullying. The program is meant to supplement existing school- or community-based programs or to be used as a foundation on which to build a more comprehensive program. I believe this program can be an effective tool for elementary and middle schools in developing a positive and respectful school atmosphere that discourages bullying.

As District Attorney, my priority is always swift and fair prosecution of crime. I strongly believe, however, that any investment in crime prevention, particularly when it comes to young people, is worthwhile.

Bullying prevention requires a commitment from all of us. Our schools and communities will be safe only when bullying is not tolerated. Working together, we can create and maintain an environment of mutual respect and trust for our children.



Jonathan W. Blodgett
Essex District Attorney



Introduction: Current Research and Best Practices

Research shows that the more adults understand best practices in preventing and responding to bullying, the more likely they are to intervene and to create a climate where bullying is not accepted. We hope you will find this section helpful as you work with students in your school to address this important topic.

Students are bullied every day—even when adults and others try to stop it. Students also behave in negative ways (from annoying teasing to conflicts and fighting to criminal actions). It's important that adults and students know how to recognize bullying and how to distinguish bullying from other kinds of negative interactions. By correctly identifying the negative behavior, as well as bullying behavior, responses and consequences are more likely to be effective.

Adults and students also need to understand the roles they play in supporting or discouraging bullying as well as strategies to intervene effectively. Research about the incidence and effects of bullying in American schools, and evaluation of effective intervention strategies, has grown tremendously in the past several years, adding a great deal to our understanding about this serious problem.



What Is Bullying?

“Bullying is intentional negative behavior that is usually repeated over time. It involves a **power imbalance** that makes it difficult for the bullied student to defend himself or herself.”¹

- **Bullying is a form of aggression.** Bullying differs from other forms of aggression in that it usually involves a repeated pattern of harming others. In addition, it typically involves a physical, emotional, or social imbalance of power that can be quite subtle. As a result, bullied students are unlikely to be able to defend themselves, and onlookers often feel intimidated about stepping in to help.
- **Bullying is not a conflict.** Bullying is a form of aggression and peer abuse. Treating it as a conflict is likely to cause further harm to the bullied student, and the unintended message for bystanders and students who bully is that the bullying is not serious or even that it is acceptable.
- **Bullying can take many forms—from overt actions that are easy to observe to more indirect assaults on someone’s emotional well-being or social relationships.** In either case, bullying behavior runs the gamut from **verbal** put-downs, rumors, or gossip to **physical** acts (e.g., shoving, hiding belongings, pranks) to **nonverbal** (e.g., ignoring, gestures or “looks”) or social bullying (e.g., spreading gossip or rumors, shunning, manipulating friendships, cyberbullying).

¹ Olweus, D., Limber, S.P., Flerx, V., Mullin, N., Riese, J., Snyder, M. (2007). Olweus Bullying Prevention Program Schoolwide Guide. Center City, MN: Hazelden Publishing.

- **Cyberbullying is different from traditional bullying in some key ways.**² Cyberbullying can occur through e-mail, instant messages, Web site or blog postings, chat room exchanges, and text messages or photo images sent on a cell phone. When someone is cyberbullied, a single event can reach many individuals instantly, and the effect is magnified because the offending material can be revisited and redistributed; so, one incident may meet the threshold of repeated behavior. Individuals who cyberbully have more power simply because they have instant access to multiple individuals. Often, students who cyberbully feel more anonymous and less accountable for their actions. However, cyberbullying leaves evidence that can be saved and printed, which is helpful for intervention.
- **Bullying can occur anywhere.** Much of it happens at school and places where young people tend to gather, usually at times when adult supervision is limited. In addition, teachers are often surprised to learn that bullying frequently occurs in their classrooms while they are present. Bullying outside school (on buses, sports teams, in afterschool programs, or on the Internet) often affects students' behavior and relationships at school.

What Are the Effects of Bullying?

- **All forms of bullying are harmful to students.** Experts agree that bullying has both serious short- and long-term consequences for the bullied student, for those who bully others, and for the majority of those who are bystanders.
- **For the bullied student:** Short-term consequences include anxiety, loneliness, more frequent illness, and absence from school. Long-term effects include depression, post-traumatic stress symptoms, and even suicide.³
- **For students who bully others:** Most students who bully have friends and are fairly adept socially; many are even popular. However, they tend to show less empathy toward others, are more domineering in relationships, and have more positive views about aggression than their peers do. Long-term outcomes for these students can include a negative pattern of social-emotional behavior that can harm relationships and may lead to violent or criminal behavior. These findings apply more to boys who bully; results for girls have not been adequately studied.⁴
- **Some students are at a greater risk for poor outcomes.** Some students' behavior can be provocative, and they are as likely to bully others as to be bullied. These students (who are in the minority of students who bully or who are bullied) generally have underlying learning and emotional problems, such as ADHD, poor impulse control, and difficulty reading social cues, or exhibit behavior on the autism spectrum. As a result, these students require counseling and other intervention to help them change their behavior; they typically don't respond as well to classroom intervention or behavior management strategies alone.⁵

² Kowalski, R., Limber, S.L., Agatson, P. (2008). *Cyber Bullying: Bullying in the Digital Age*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

³ Fekkes, M., Pijpers, F.I.M., Verloove-Vanhorick, S.P. (2004). Bullying behavior and associations with psychosomatic complaints and depression in victims. *Journal of Pediatrics*, 144:17-22.

⁴ Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

⁵ Olweus, *ibid*; Juvonen, J., Graham, S., Schuster, M. (2003) Bullying among younger adolescents: The strong, the weak, and the troubled. *Pediatrics*, 112:1231-7.

- **For students who are bystanders:** Short-term effects of bullying include poor attention to learning, anxiety, and health complaints. When students observe that adults don't take action or intervene effectively, they are also more likely to join in bullying. Long-term effects include reduced sense of empathy for peers and potential increased involvement in bullying others.⁶
- **Bullying has a broader impact:** It contributes to a negative school climate where students perceive adults as uninvolved and uncaring. This affects the emotional well-being and academic achievement of all students. As a whole, students' satisfaction with school, achievement, truancy, and reports of psychosomatic illnesses are linked to reported rates of bullying at school.⁷

Bullying and Criminal Behavior

- **Not all negative or aggressive behavior is illegal, but certain acts of bullying may constitute a crime.** A student's undesirable behavior, whether illegal or not, should be considered unacceptable, with appropriate consequences given.
- **Correctly identify the behavior.** Consider teasing and bullying on a continuum with illegal acts and violence. Adults must determine whether a behavior is or is not aggressive, is bullying, or involves a criminal act. Incorrectly identifying an incident of assault or hazing as "bullying," for example, diminishes the seriousness of the incident and may put the school at risk for legal action. On the other hand, mislabeling a prank or less serious act as "a crime" is confusing to students, does not make good use of resources, and can send the wrong message about how to deal effectively with social problems. Sometimes it is difficult to ascertain whether a behavior involves a criminal act. In these circumstances teachers should confer with the appropriate school officials as outlined in the school bullying policy.

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 370 outlines policies and procedures for responding to bullying and criminal behavior on school grounds.

What Works to Stop and Counteract Bullying?

- **Adult involvement is critical in reducing bullying.** To feel safe, students need to know that adults are actively available to provide supervision and support. Adults are key players in helping to change peer attitudes and behavior and to set a tone for bullying prevention. These efforts must continue over time to be effective.⁸

⁶ Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

⁷ Eisenberg, M.E., Neumark-Sztainer, D., Perry, C. (2003). Peer harassment, school connectedness, and academic achievement. *Journal of School Health*, 73:311-16.

⁸ Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

- **Don't wait for a pattern to emerge before responding.** Adults may not be aware of bullying until a serious incident occurs—and that usually means the bullying has been going on for some time. Whenever you see behavior that you feel is inappropriate, be sure to respond with appropriate consequences. Be attuned to students' relationships with each other, especially those students who seem to be outsiders or have few friends. Ask questions when you notice changes in behavior or health that might indicate a student is being bullied. When you observe aggression, determine whether there might be a power imbalance by considering factors such as the relationships between the individuals involved, observing their facial expressions and body language, and asking bystanders for information.
- **Implement graduated and age-appropriate disciplinary policies and consequences.** Different consequences should correspond to different types of bullying. Consequences should escalate according to the severity of the behavior and/or whether it continues after intervention. They should allow for flexibility depending on a student's age and developmental capacity. Staff should apply consequences consistently and not arbitrarily. Parents and students should be aware of the consequences of bullying behavior. In addition to negative consequences for bullying behavior, positive encouragement should be offered to students who get involved to help a bullied peer.
- **The most effective methods to reduce bullying include a multifaceted schoolwide effort.**⁹ The most effective bullying prevention efforts go beyond policies and procedures to include staff training, improved supervision, regular classroom discussions with students, individual interventions for bullied students and for those who bully others, and parent and community involvement. Best practices stress the importance of adult involvement and responsibility for stopping bullying as well as involving students (and engaging bystanders in particular) in changing the culture and climate of bullying at school. Improving school climate contributes to improved interpersonal relationships, school safety, learning, and reduced bullying.¹⁰ Bullying prevention efforts have been shown to reduce truancy, vandalism, alcohol- and drug-related offenses as well as other problem behavior in teens.¹¹
- **Use methods designed to stop bullying.** In general, “zero tolerance” policies (designed to curb the use of drugs or weapons), one-time assemblies, individual interventions, conflict resolution, and short-term programs are not effective in reducing bullying. Stopping and preventing bullying requires a layered approach of positive reinforcement of prosocial behavior, negative consequences for bullying, changes in adult behavior, and systemic changes. Creating a positive school climate is an important defense against bullying.
- **Student mentors can play an important role.** There is extensive international research indicating that helping students learn what to do when they see and hear bullying is an important aspect of effective bullying prevention. Bystanders should be taught strategies they can use to intervene, assist, and comfort bullied peers. Because younger students look up to older peers, involving older students as mentors can play a part in a broader bullying prevention program and encourages older students to be good role models.

⁹ *Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention*, www.stopbullying.gov

¹⁰ Cohen, J., McCabe, E., Michelli, N., Pickeral, T. (2009). School climate: Research, policy, practice, and teacher education. *Teachers College Record*, 111:180-213.

¹¹ Fox, J.A., Elliott, D.S., Kerlikowski, R.G., Newman, S.A., Christeson, W. (2003). *Bullying Prevention Is Crime Prevention*, a report by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. www.fightcrime.org

Stop Bullying Before It Starts: A Bullying Prevention Project

Stop Bullying Before It Starts: A Bullying Prevention Project is a resource for teachers. It is intended to be used as part of a broader school initiative and as a catalyst to build awareness of the need for a comprehensive bullying prevention program. Since it was first introduced in 2004, the program has been implemented in many schools. In 2011 some important changes were made to reflect new research and best practices in the field and to offer resources for educators.

The *Stop Bullying Before It Starts: A Bullying Prevention Project* contains tools to help educate students about bullying, including what it is, its effects, roles people play, and possible consequences. The materials help students think about possible actions they can take to create a positive and respectful atmosphere at their school. It also includes tools to help students spread the message throughout the community.



How Does the Program Work?

The *Stop Bullying Before It Starts: A Bullying Prevention Project* uses adult facilitators to inform and engage students to help stop bullying. The program consists of three components involving students directly:

- **PowerPoint Presentation with Guided Discussion**—Provides students with information about the damaging effects bullying has on students and their school. It also provides information about the ways bullying may constitute a crime.
- **Classroom Discussion**—Student-generated feedback guides teacher-facilitated discussions.
- **Action Projects**—These encourage students to participate in a bullying prevention Action Project in their own school or with younger students, parents, or the community. These activities promote understanding about bullying and encourage students to help stop bullying.

Student activities alone, however, are not sufficient to create a school climate where bullying is less likely to happen. In addition to student participation, staff and administration need to use feedback from students to review existing policies and procedures about bullying to determine ways adults can more effectively address and prevent bullying problems.

What Are the Program Goals?

- To supplement a school's bullying prevention program.
- To increase student understanding about what bullying is and its potential personal, social, and legal consequences.
- To provide middle school students with strategies for sharing bullying prevention messages with peers.
- To engage middle school students in developing projects that raise awareness of bullying throughout schools and the community.
- To provide elementary students with developmentally appropriate strategies for responding to bullying situations.

What Key Concepts Does This Project Reinforce?

The following are some of the key concepts that the program addresses for students at each developmental level. You can reinforce these concepts through other bullying prevention efforts at the school and link them to academic curricula.

For middle school students

- Bullying is not cool or funny.
- Bullying is serious and harmful behavior.
- Bullying can have personal, social, and legal consequences.
- Bullying hurts everyone—the bullied student, those who bully, and bystanders.
- Bystanders have a choice to get involved or not.
- Bystanders make a difference in whether bullying continues.
- Bystanders can show courage and support others to take action to help stop bullying.
- Bullied students deserve to be treated with kindness and empathy.
- Students who bully can make a choice to change their behavior.
- All students deserve to be treated with respect.

For elementary school students

- Bullying is hurtful behavior and is not OK.
- Bullying can include words and actions.
- It is not right to hurt other kids or their feelings.
- If you see or know about bullying, always tell an adult first.
- You and your friends can help stop bullying.
- You and your friends can make bullied students feel more welcome.
- If you bully others, there will be consequences.
- If you hurt someone, even if it was an accident, apologize and offer to help make things better.

For parents

- It's important to talk to your child about his or her experiences in school.
- Bullying is not a rite of passage and is not OK anywhere.
- Bullying is harmful for all children, not just those who are bullied.
- It is not up to the bullied child to make the bullying stop—adults should help.
- Fighting back can make bullying escalate.
- Bullying negatively affects learning and school climate.
- Parents of a child bullied at school are encouraged to contact school staff immediately.

For the community

- Everyone plays a role in stopping and preventing bullying.

A Note About the Materials

The *Stop Bullying Before It Starts* program is designed for middle school students. The following materials have been provided to help facilitate the implementation of the program.

- **Presentation Slides**—This PowerPoint presentation consists of slides with video that inform students about bullying and encourage them to reflect on the ways it impacts them and others. The presentation includes notes pages with background information as well as suggested talking points and discussion questions. (Italicized text represents possible answers to questions.) The presentation is designed to be completed in a 45-minute period. While it is recommended that the slideshow be shown in its entirety, the length and content of the presentation can be adjusted by selecting among the discussion questions used. These same talking points can be used to enhance classroom discussions following the presentation.
- **We're Listening! Forms**—*We're Listening!* forms collect feedback from students and are used in three different ways:
 - To identify students in immediate need of adult assistance.
 - To identify common themes for use in classroom discussion.
 - To identify potential concerns that need to be addressed administratively (e.g., by strengthening supervision or revising policies and procedures for responding to bullying).
- **Action Project: It Takes a Community to Stop Bullying Sign-Up Sheets**—Student Action Projects offer a variety of ways for students to apply what they have learned about bullying. These sign-up sheets are used to track student participation.
- **Debriefing Form**—Distribute this form after Action Projects are completed to get a sense of their success. Middle school students should be given an opportunity to critique the process as well as evaluate whether their goals were met. Staff should assess the process so that the program can be adapted in the future. Community partners can be debriefed in a variety of ways (e.g., student interviews, focus group, questionnaires).



Step 1: Setting the Stage

- **Select facilitators.** Choose facilitators who are comfortable with the subject matter and with leading open-ended discussions with students. Because students will be asked to share with facilitators concerns and knowledge about bullying, select adults in whom students feel comfortable confiding. It is recommended that facilitators not be school disciplinarians.
- **Ensure that facilitators understand the serious consequences of bullying and are aware of the types of bullying prevention efforts already being implemented in the school.** In order to collaborate in developing plans based on best practices for reducing bullying, facilitators should reinforce the antibullying message, guide students' activities, and debrief students and staff at the completion of the project to assess its effectiveness.
- **Determine who will address urgent student concerns** after the PowerPoint presentation and how students' ongoing questions and concerns about bullying will be addressed.
- **Define Action Projects** (goals, audience, staff coordinator) and develop *Action Project: It Takes a Community to Stop Bullying* sign-up sheets for students (see page 14).
- **Determine when and how classroom discussions will take place.** Utilize themes highlighted in student responses [from *We're Listening!* forms (see page 13)] as a starting point.
- **Identify and meet with appropriate Action Project partners**—such as elementary school staff, parent-teacher organizations, community groups like cable access, after-school programs, or community recreation—to work out details of students' participation.

Pre-Presentation Checklist

- Discuss the *Stop Bullying Before It Starts* project with all teachers and administrators.
 - Develop Action Projects. Set goals and determine scope of project as well as target audience. Assign a staff coordinator to oversee each project. Prepare student sign-up sheets for *Action Project: It Takes a Community to Stop Bullying* (see page 14).
 - Set up a day, time, and location for the PowerPoint presentation with students.
 - Make copies of the *We're Listening!* form (see page 13), to be given to each student at the beginning of the PowerPoint presentation, and decide how they will be collected and reviewed.
 - Determine which staff members will review *We're Listening!* feedback from students and how this information will be reviewed and disseminated to teachers for classroom discussions and used to improve school policies and procedures about bullying.
 - Determine the process for debriefing students and staff and sharing program successes at the completion of the Action Projects.
-

Presentation Checklist

- Distribute copies of the *We're Listening!* form and a pen or pencil to each student prior to beginning the presentation. Collect completed forms at the end of the presentation, and give them to the designated staff member.
- Facilitate the presentation to students using selected Talking Points and Discussion Questions. Additional Background Information is also provided as support for facilitators.
- Provide instructions regarding signing up for Action Projects on the *Action Project: It Takes a Community to Stop Bullying* sign-up sheets. Give students some examples of the types of projects they might choose from to take action themselves.
- Provide individual support for students who request assistance with bullying problems.

Post-Presentation Checklist: *We're Listening!*

- Review *We're Listening!* forms immediately following the presentation to identify students who need immediate support and attention. Inform staff designated to meet with students.
- Have designated staff and administrators review the *We're Listening!* forms to identify potential themes for classroom discussions. Incorporate information from the presentation materials as guidance for facilitating class discussions, and disseminate information to classroom teachers.
- Have designated staff and administrators review *We're Listening!* feedback from students and determine ways of improving the response to bullying problems as well as determine potential strategies for dealing with student concerns.

Post-Presentation Checklist : *Action Project: It Takes a Community to Stop Bullying*

- Provide *Action Project: It Takes a Community to Stop Bullying* sign-up sheets, and facilitate student selection.
 - Encourage students to sign up to participate in an Action Project.
 - Ensure that staff members schedule a series of meetings with all students to develop and complete their Action Projects.
-

Debriefing Checklist

- Ensure that every Action Project is completed and debriefed with students, staff, and community partners.
- Review the success of each project, and discuss feedback to plan for the next year.



We're Listening!

We want to stop bullying and make our school safer. What do you think would help?

Do you have concerns about bullying here at school? Please tell us about it:

Do you have suggestions about how adults can help students? Please share your ideas:

What can students do to help each other? We'd like to hear your ideas:

If you would like to speak with an adult privately about bullying problems, please write your name below. We are here and want to help.

Action Project:

It Takes a Community to Stop Bullying

This project is called: _____

What we'll do:

Staff coordinator: _____

Sign up below to **Take Action**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____





Step 2: Get the Facts! A PowerPoint Presentation for Students

This section of the handbook is a guide to delivering the bullying prevention PowerPoint presentation to middle school students.

- The text of the PowerPoint slides and notes is reproduced here. Notes include additional Background Information and Talking Points and Discussion Questions corresponding to each slide. You may use the information on these pages to supplement the slides during the presentation or for small group follow-up or classroom discussions with students.
- You may want to consider inviting your local School Resource Officer, Juvenile Officer, or a representative from your local police department to be available during the presentation to answer any legal questions.

Materials Needed

- Computer with PowerPoint projection capability.
- Screen or other projection surface.
- *We're Listening!* forms and pencils for each student (see page 13).
- *Action Project: It Takes a Community to Stop Bullying* sign-up sheets (see page 14).

Introducing the Presentation to Students

It's important to create a respectful, safe atmosphere for the presentation so that students feel comfortable talking and sharing ideas. The *Stop Bullying Before It Starts: A Bullying Prevention Project* is intended to engage students in a variety of creative ways. Adults set the tone to help students feel motivated to be part of a schoolwide bullying prevention solution and to make school a safer, more welcoming place. Students should understand that adults will be taking the lead on stopping and preventing bullying.

What students need to know before the presentation

1. Bullying is a problem that affects many students, and it's something every school is concerned about.
2. The presentation covers bullying and its effects as well as information about when bullying behavior becomes a crime.
3. During the presentation, students will be asked to share their ideas and observations about bullying. Reiterate ground rules for the discussion so students feel safe sharing their thoughts.

Please remind students that personal and specific stories should be shared on the *We're Listening!* form or by speaking to a designated adult after the presentation.

4. Encourage students to use *We're Listening!* forms to record any of their questions or concerns about bullying. If students need help or an immediate response, encourage them to speak with one of the facilitators after the presentation. They can also write their names on the form, and a designated adult at school will get back to that student quickly.
5. The information gathered from *We're Listening!* forms will be used to address bullying at school, and themes will be incorporated into classroom discussions. Announce how these *We're Listening!* classroom discussions will be scheduled.
6. After the presentation, every student will be encouraged to sign up to participate in a *It Takes a Community to Stop Bullying* Action Project, which gives them an opportunity to apply what they have learned to help enact change. There are several options from which students can choose.

Presentation to Students

Before the presentation, pass out *We're Listening!* forms to each student. Instruct each student to write on these forms any of his or her questions or concerns about bullying. Remind students that they can ask to speak confidentially to a facilitator or designated adult at the school if they feel unsafe or need immediate help. Remind students that an adult will collect the forms.

After the presentation, students will be asked to sign up for a *It Takes a Community to Stop Bullying* Action Project.

Slide 1.

Stop Bullying Before It Starts: A Bullying Prevention Program

Slide 2.

Bullying...

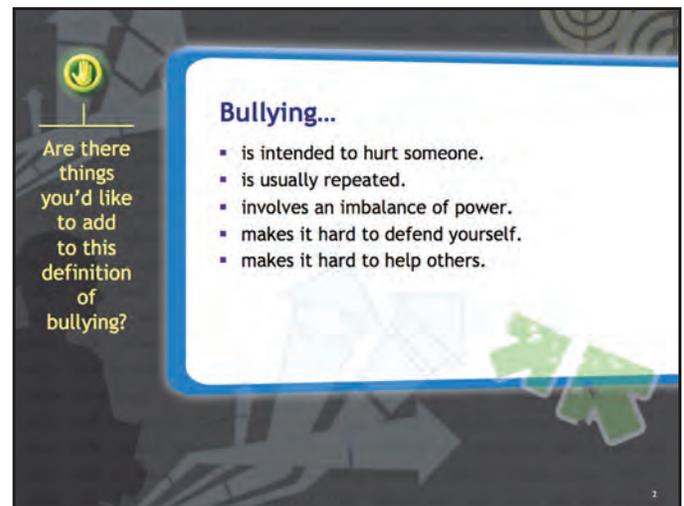
- is intended to hurt someone.
- is usually repeated.
- involves an imbalance of power.
- makes it hard to defend yourself.
- makes it hard to help others.

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. Are there things you'd like to add to this definition of bullying?
2. When you hear someone say, "I didn't mean it" or "I wasn't serious," what do you think?
That's something kids just say to cover themselves.
3. What causes a power imbalance? *When other kids are bigger, older, more popular, better students, outnumber bullied students, are different gender, etc.*
4. Why do you think an imbalance makes it harder for students to step in to help each other?

Background Information

- Bullying generally has three components: It is intentional negative behavior; it is usually repeated; and it involves an imbalance of power that may be subtle.
- One in 17 students is bullied regularly; 1 in 10 bullies others; and a smaller number fall into both categories.
- Bullying interferes with students' ability to learn and get along with peers.
- Bullying is often referred to as "peer abuse" because of the power imbalance involved.
- It is not up to the bullied student to make bullying stop.
- Over one-third of bullied students have been bullied for a year or longer.



Slide 3.

Bullying can be...

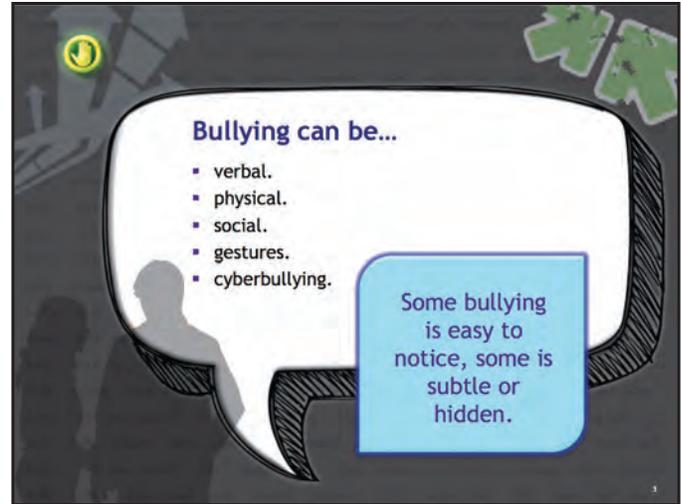
- verbal.
- physical.
- social.
- gestures.
- cyberbullying.

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. Some bullying is easy to notice, some is subtle or hidden, but other people usually know about it.
2. What types of bullying do you feel are most common for youth your age?
3. Do you think the way youth bully now is different from when you were younger?

Background Information

- Bullying may result in physical harm, but most bullying is emotional and social, and its effects may be less obvious.
- Bullying behavior varies according to gender and by age. Boys tend to engage in more physical bullying, girls in social bullying and cyberbullying. As students get older, physical bullying becomes less common, though forms of social and verbal bullying never disappear.



Slide 4.

Verbal bullying includes...

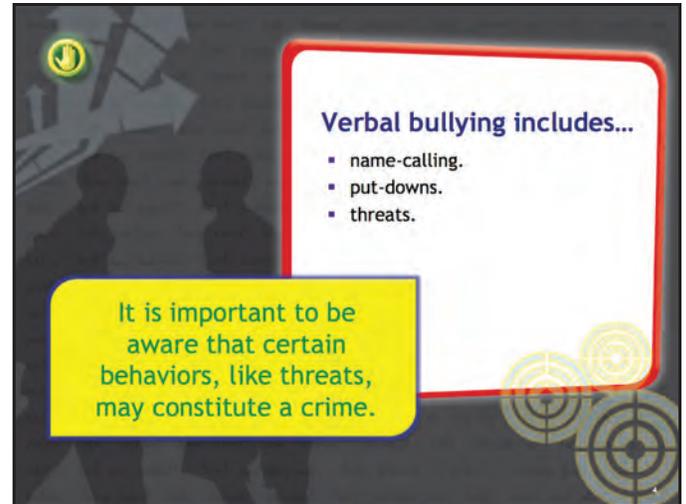
- name-calling.
- put-downs.
- threats.

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. It is important to be aware that certain behaviors, like threats, may constitute a crime.
2. How common do you think this form of bullying is?
3. Do you think it's about the same or different for boys vs. girls your age?
4. Why do you think some put-downs are more hurtful than others?
5. Do you think verbal bullying is more harmful, less harmful, or about the same as physical bullying?

Background Information

- Verbal bullying is the most common form of bullying for both boys and girls of all ages.
- Taunting, name-calling, and put-downs may seem harmless among young people, but the effects of verbal bullying are no less damaging than physical bullying and may even be more long-lasting in terms of emotional injury.
- Sometimes verbal acts can escalate to include physical attacks.



Slide 5.

Social bullying can include...

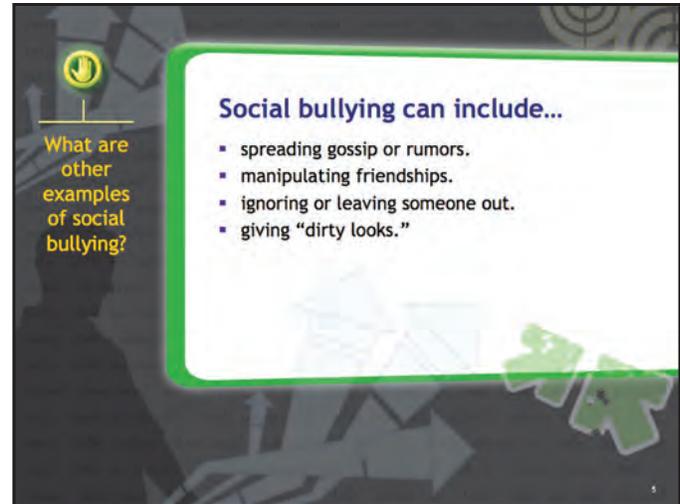
- spreading gossip or rumors.
- manipulating friendships.
- ignoring or leaving someone out.
- giving “dirty looks.”

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. Did you know that acts of bullying don’t always happen face-to-face?
2. What are other examples of social bullying?
3. Why do youth bully others in this way, and what’s their motivation?

Background Information

- Most bullying at the middle school level is verbal and social—such as spreading lies about someone or manipulating friendships to make others turn against a peer; name-calling (including sexual rumors and put-downs about someone’s perceived sexual orientation); mocking; and spreading rumors intended to insult or hurt a peer.
- Both boys and girls engage in social bullying, though it is more commonly associated with girls. Middle school-aged boys, in particular, focus on perceived sexual orientation to bully other boys, which can be particularly damaging.
- When students feel socially isolated, they are at greater risk for suicidal thoughts and attempting suicide.



Slide 6.

Physical bullying can be...

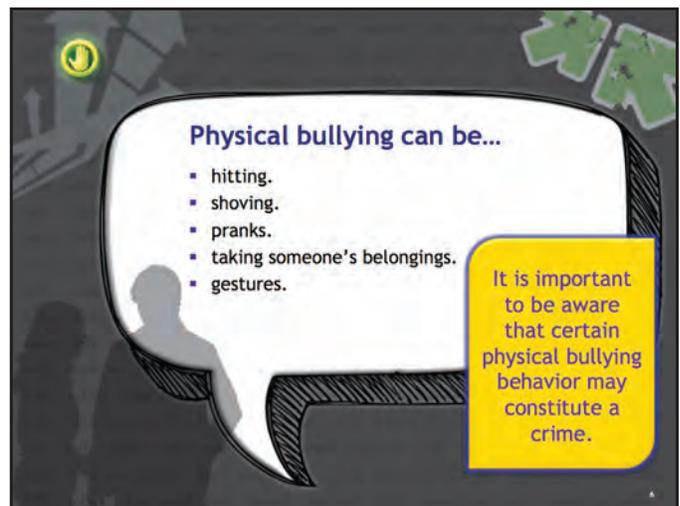
- hitting.
- shoving.
- pranks.
- taking someone’s belongings.
- gestures.

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think this type of bullying becomes less common as students get older?
2. It is important to be aware that certain physical bullying behavior may constitute a crime.

Background Information

- Physical bullying tends to diminish after elementary school.
- In general, boys are more likely to use direct physical strategies and verbal put-downs, whereas girls are more likely to use indirect strategies, such as spreading gossip or rumors.



Slide 7.

Cyberbullying is bullying that happens by...

- e-mail.
- text messages or photos.
- instant messaging.
- social networking sites.
- blogs or Web pages.
- Twitter.

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

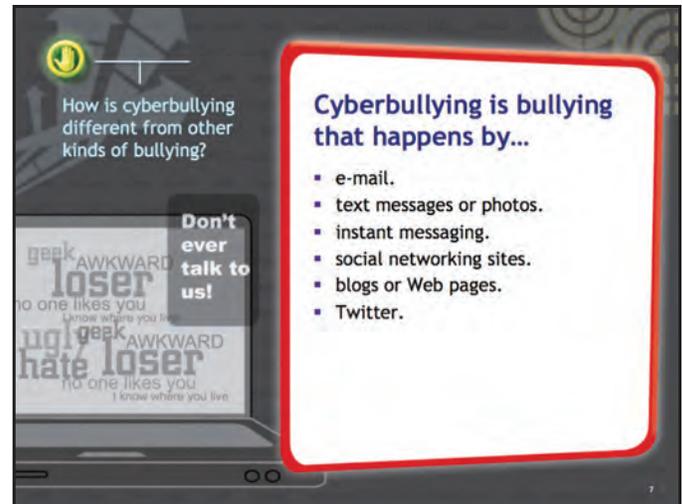
1. Cyberbullying is bullying, too. Technology gives youth a new way to communicate and share information that can be used to bully others.
2. How is cyberbullying different from other kinds of bullying?
 - *Reaches more people.*
 - *Seems more anonymous.*
 - *May be seen or heard over and over again.*
 - *May not know who starts it.*
 - *Can happen anytime or anywhere.*
 - *Easy for groups to bully or to get others to bully.*
 - *Might exist in a written form, which may be used as evidence.*
3. Do you think girls or boys use this type of bullying more? Why do you think so?

Background Information

- Even a single incident of cyberbullying can reach numerous individuals and can be replayed; the power imbalance can come from the fact that the bullied student may be unaware of who is initiating the bullying, and individuals who cyberbully have access to multiple people instantly.
- As technology changes and students use it more, information about this type of bullying is still being gathered.
- Girls and boys both use cyber technology to bully peers, though current research reveals that girls are most likely to use this form of bullying.
- Some acts of cyberbullying may constitute a crime.

Facilitator's Note About the Next Slide (to share with students)

The upcoming video on cyberbullying was developed by a group of students at Tech Boston Academy.



Slide 8.

Video from Tech Boston Academy

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. Does this seem pretty typical to you? What seems the same or different?
2. This video shows just girls, but what are ways that boys use cyberbullying, too?

Background Information

- Students don't differentiate between their online vs. offline interactions—their social world includes both.
- Research shows that middle school girls are somewhat more likely to be involved in frequent cyberbullying than boys, though both boys and girls report being cyberbullied and cyberbullying others.



Slide 9.

What Roles Do Students Play in Bullying?

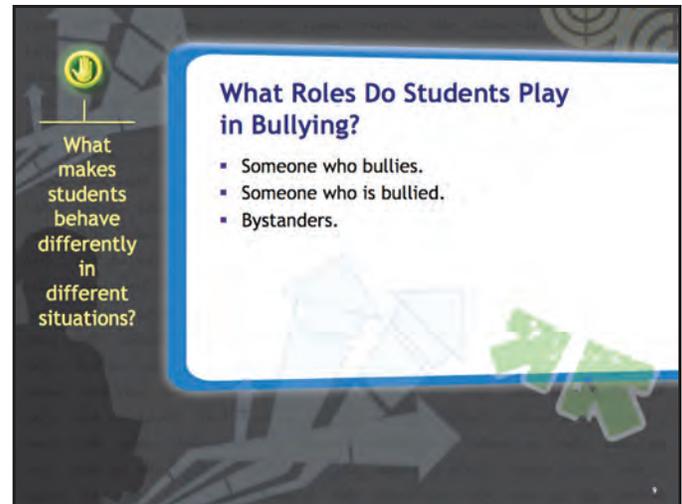
- Someone who bullies.
- Someone who is bullied.
- Bystanders.

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. What makes students behave differently in different situations?
2. Do students always play the same role?
3. What does it mean to be a bystander? *A bystander is any person who witnesses an act of bullying. Bystanders may actively support the bullying, they may be uncomfortable and try to ignore it, or they may try to be defenders.*
4. There are usually several bystanders to bullying, but they often don't act. Why is it difficult for bystanders to stand up for bullied students? Why is it difficult for the bystander to say something afterward?
5. Why might bystanders join in the bullying?
6. Why does it seem that some students are more likely to be bullied?
7. Do you think boys and girls bully to the same degree? In similar or different ways?

Background Information

- Characteristics of students who bully: Like to feel powerful, tend to approve of aggression, and hang out with others who feel the same way. They may be popular but often are bossy and controlling or have to get their own way in their relationships.
- Characteristics of bullied students: Have few friends; may be shy or timid; may seem to goad peers because they don't know how to get along well with them; feel anxious, sad, and depressed; and may even consider suicide.
- Some students are more likely to be bullied than others: Boys who are smaller or not as good at sports, girls who develop earlier than others, students who are obese, and students perceived as being gay. Students who are bullied tend to get sick more often than other youth their age.
- All bystanders are not created equal: Some bystanders try to ignore what is going on, some may try to help (or think they ought to), others may laugh or encourage students who bully or even join in.
- Both boys and girls bully, but they do it differently. While both engage in verbal bullying almost equally, boys are more likely to use direct strategies such as physical acts, where girls are more likely to use indirect strategies, such as manipulating friendships and cyberbullying.
- Boys of all ages tend to bully more often than girls. Boys bully both boys and girls; girls tend to bully only other girls.
- Most repeated bullying is perpetrated by individual students rather than groups of students.



Slide 10.

Bullying Affects Everyone

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

How do you think bullying harms bullied students, bystanders, and students who bully?

Background Information

- All bullying is harmful and has potentially long-term effects on all students.
- Short-term effects include: more illness, not wanting to go to school, withdrawing from friends and activities, difficulty paying attention at school.
- Long-term effects include anxiety, depression, drop in grades, thoughts of suicide.



Slide 11.

Take Bullying Seriously

Bullying...

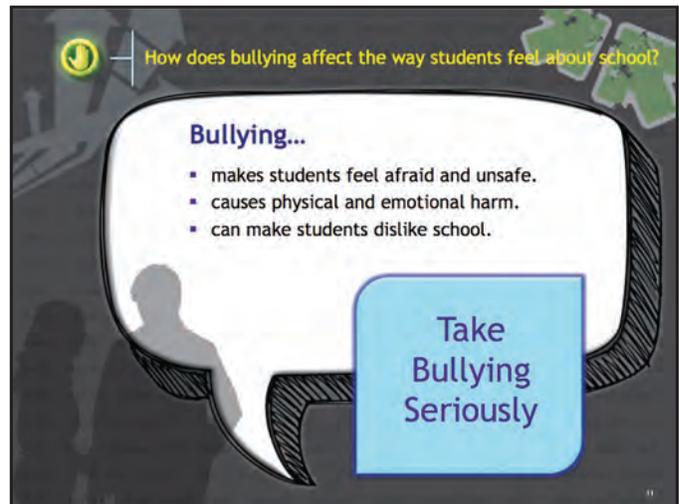
- makes students feel afraid and unsafe.
- causes physical and emotional harm.
- can make students dislike school.

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

How does bullying affect the way students feel about school?

Background Information

- 50% of students at school have felt concerned about bullying. When students are concerned about bullying, they aren't fully focused on learning. Studies show that bullying in school can impair academic achievement.
- Bullying interferes with school climate when students feel afraid or unsafe or when they feel adults aren't responsive. Any of these can lead to a dislike of school and problems such as truancy and school dropouts.
- When bullying creates a pervasive negative climate in school, it interferes with learning and causes students to care less about bullied peers—which makes them more likely to join in.



Slide 12.

When Does Bullying Constitute a Crime?

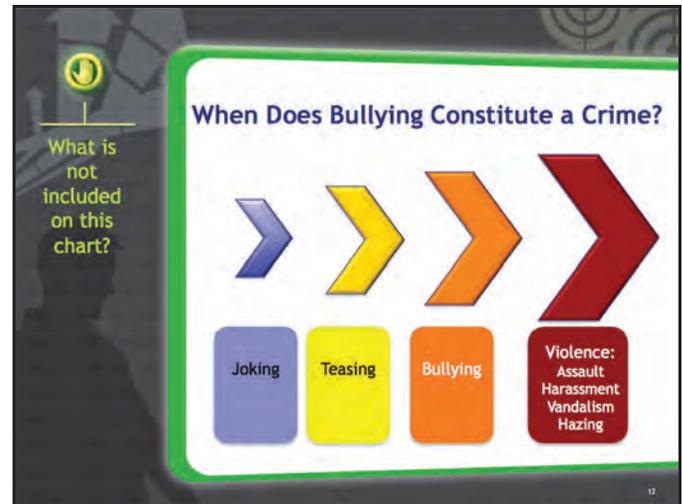
Joking > Teasing > Bullying > Violence
Assault
Harassment
Vandalism
Hazing

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. When does bullying constitute a crime?
What are some examples?
2. What is not included on this chart?
Violence (gangs, murder), Global Violence (war, genocide)

Background Information

- Teasing and bullying exist on a continuum.
- Even very young students can tell when behavior moves from mutual or “fun” teasing to mean-spirited teasing to bullying or beyond.
- Some factors that play a role in how we interpret behavior: relationship to other person; whether it happens in public or private; whether we feel on equal footing with the other person; age, gender, etc.



Slide 13.

Why Take Bullying Seriously?

- *Is School Bullying on the Rise?*
- *Can Bullying Be Stopped?*
- *When Bullying Turns Deadly*
- *Bullying: Suicides Highlight a Schoolyard Problem*

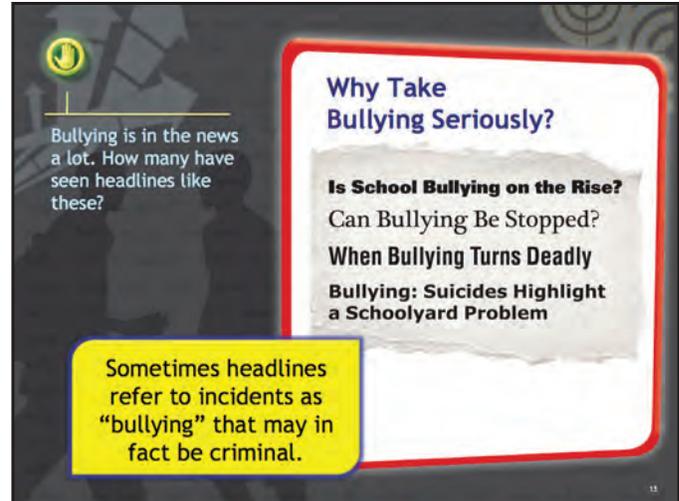
Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. Bullying is in the news a lot. How many have seen headlines like these?
2. Sometimes headlines refer to incidents as “bullying” that may in fact be criminal.
3. Can you tell by reading a headline whether the article is about bullying or something else? Why?

Background Information

- The first national survey on this subject shows that 30% of U.S. students in grades six through 10 are involved in moderate or frequent bullying—as bullies, as victims, or as both.¹²
- Several studies show as many as 77% of students are bullied.
- Some students are afraid to go to school because of bullying.
- Students who are gay or perceived to be gay are much more likely to be bullied and harassed than their peers.

¹² Nansel, T., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R.S., Ruan, W.J., Simmons-Morton, B., Schmidt, P. (2001). Bullying behaviors among US youth. *Journal of American Medical Association*, 285, 2094-2100.



Slide 14.

What Do You Think?

Do movies, TV, video games, and cartoons make bullying seem cool or OK?

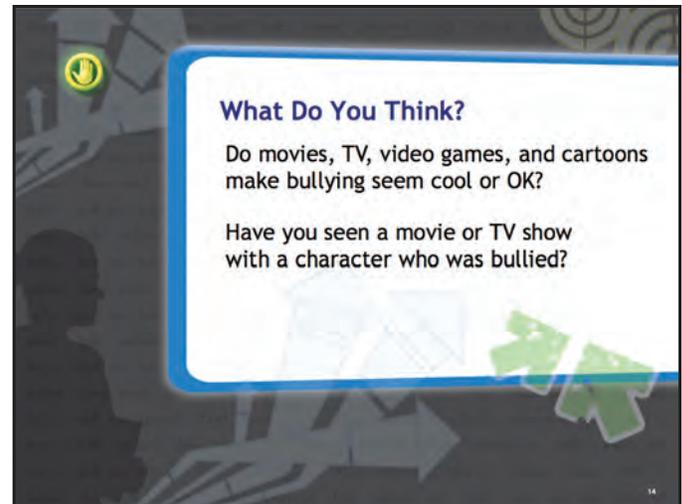
Have you seen a movie or TV show with a character who was bullied?

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. Did the bullied character suffer any emotional or physical distress?
2. Did the bully face any legal, social, or emotional consequences?
3. Did any other character try to intervene? What happened if they did?
4. Were the consequences for any of the characters realistic?

Background Information

- Experts are increasingly concerned about the effects of violent video games and media content on youth behavior—particularly ways that it reduces their sense of empathy and increases their acceptance of aggressive and violent behavior.
- Students who bully tend to have more accepting attitudes about violence and aggression.
- Media also provides some social cues to students about how they should respond to bullying and whether it is “cool” to bully vs. step in. Educators and parents need to be aware of these messages to help students make better choices.



Slide 15.

Some Actions May Seem Like Bullying, But They May Actually Be Crimes

- Posing as someone else while posting hurtful text messages.
- Sending or posting nude or partially nude photos.
- E-mailing or texting a threat.
- Threatening to fight or harm someone.
- Fighting or injuring someone.
- Causing a person emotional distress through repeated, unwanted contact.



Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. Some behavior might seem like a joke, but is actually much more serious, and may be a crime.
2. Posing as someone else on a social networking page may be considered identity fraud.

Background Information

Here is a list of some behavior that can be considered criminal and the specific laws someone could be charged under:

- Using the personal information of another in order to commit fraud or to harass another person might be considered identity fraud (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 266, Section 37E (b)).
- Taking a nude or seminude photo of yourself or someone else under 18 and sending it to anyone can be considered possession and dissemination of child pornography (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 272, Sections 29C and 29B).
- Threatening to harm someone or his or her property either in person, in writing, electronically or through another person can be a crime (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 275, Section 2).
- Battery is a harmful or unpermitted touching of another person. Assault is either an attempted battery or an immediately threatening battery (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 265, Section 13A).
- Criminal harassment is a series of acts directed at a particular person or pattern of conduct that seriously alarm that person and that “would cause a reasonable person to suffer substantial emotional distress” (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 265, Section 43A).

Slide 16.

Did you know that you may violate other students' civil rights in school when you:

- Use derogatory words about another student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin or ethnic background.
- Make fun of someone's religion or religious traditions.
- Share jokes of a sexual or racial nature with friends, making others around you uncomfortable.
- Use put-downs about someone's actual or perceived sexual orientation.
- Tease others because they have a learning or physical disability, or call them degrading names.

Everyone has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.



Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. What are your civil rights in school?
2. Harassment is a form of discrimination. In what way?
3. What are examples of racial or disability-based harassment?
4. Why do youth use these kinds of "put-downs"?
5. Why do students use language that offend others, such as, "that's so gay" or "retard"?
6. What is "third-party" harassment?

Background Information

- Harassment is a form of unlawful discrimination under federal and state civil rights laws.
- Massachusetts law protects students from discrimination in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study in a public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability or sexual orientation. Severe, persistent or pervasive forms of harassment unlawfully discriminate against students by denying them the "advantages and privileges" of school, when the harassment creates a hostile, humiliating, intimidating or offensive educational environment. (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 5; see also federal civil rights laws: *Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964* (prohibiting race, color, national origin, sex, and religious discrimination); *Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964* (prohibiting race, color, and national origin discrimination, harassment); *Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972* (prohibiting sex discrimination, harassment); *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973* (prohibiting disability-based discrimination, harassment); *Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* (prohibiting disability-based discrimination)).
- The civil rights laws that protect students from harassment in schools are similar to the laws that provide teachers the right to work in school without being harassed or discriminated against in the workplace, based on their race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability.
- Some students harass others because of prejudice against their race, ethnic background, national origin, sexual orientation or religion. Others harass because they have stereotypes about other students, for example, about students who have physical, emotional or learning disabilities, or believe that females do not belong in certain traditionally male trades, such as construction, or should not participate in traditionally male sports, such as ice hockey.

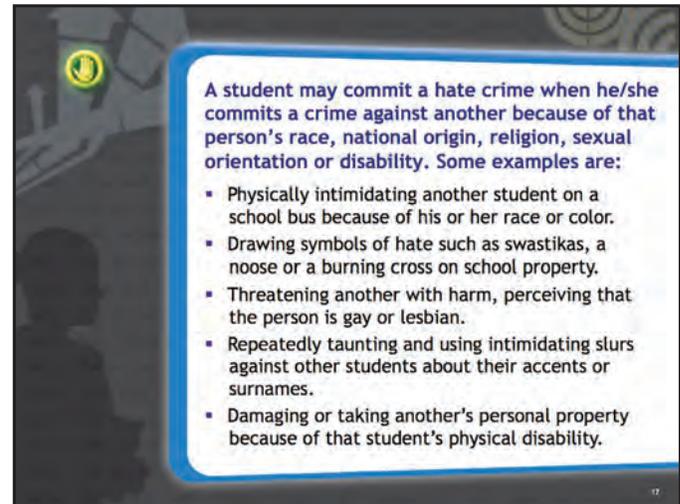
(continued)

- Harassment may occur when stereotypes are used to degrade or put down members of a group, or where code words are used to describe a race, ethnic group or religion, or gay and lesbian students, or students with disabilities.
- Under civil rights laws, students do not need to direct their comments to other students to harass them. This is called third-party harassment, where students may be joking around with friends, but at the same time making a racially or sexually hostile school climate for the others around them, even if it is not intentional. Racial and sexual name-calling and jokes are simply unacceptable in school or school-related activities.

Slide 17.

A student may commit a hate crime when he/she commits a crime against another because of that person’s race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation or disability. Some examples are:

- Physically intimidating another student on a school bus because of his or her race or color.
- Drawing symbols of hate such as swastikas, a noose or a burning cross on school property.
- Threatening another with harm, perceiving that the person is gay or lesbian.
- Repeatedly taunting and using intimidating slurs against other students about their accents or surnames.
- Damaging or taking another’s personal property because of that student’s physical disability.



Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. What are examples of hate crimes that you have read or heard about in the news?
2. What types of emotional and psychological harm do you think hate crime victims suffer?
3. Do you think there is a difference in being targeted for a crime because of your race, ethnic background, religion, sexual orientation or disability, rather than for other reasons?
4. What is the likely impact of a hate crime on other students in your school who share the same race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation or disability as the victim?

Background Information

- Certain criminal acts are prosecuted as “hate crimes,” or criminal civil rights violations, when the crime is committed against the victim because of his/her actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability. (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 265, Section 37; Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 265, Section 39).
- Hate crimes have a unique emotional and psychological impact on victims. They are generally viewed as “message crimes”: conveying a message that “your kind” is unwelcome here or viewed as less equal than others.
- Hate crimes may also have a devastating impact on a school community because they make students feel unsafe.

Slide 18.

Everyone Has a Right to Feel Safe and Welcome at School!

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. You have a right to equal access to an education. What does that mean?
2. Is feeling safe in school necessary for you to learn?
3. How does racial, sexual or disability-based harassment deny or limit your access to an education?
4. If you were the target of a crime because of your race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability, would it deny or limit your right to equal access to an education? In what way?



Background Information

- Massachusetts law ensures students equal access to an education. For example, the law protects students from discrimination in obtaining the advantages, privileges and courses of study in a public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability or sexual orientation (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 5; see also federal civil rights laws in Slide 16).
- Schools have a compelling educational interest in ensuring the safety of students by promoting a safe and healthy school climate. “[A]n adequate public education includes the duty to provide a safe and secure environment in which all children can learn.” *Doe v. Superintendent of Schools of Worcester*, 421 Mass. 117, 131 (1995). It is difficult for students to learn and make academic progress in schools that do not have a safe learning environment.

Slide 19.

What Can You Do About Bullying?

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. Students often feel that they can't do anything when they see or hear bullying. Why do you think students don't intervene?
2. What are some of your options if you witness bullying?
Speak up about the bullying; refuse to join in; ask friends for help; don't be part of an audience for bullying; invite the bullied student to leave with you, tell a trusted adult at school and home.
3. What could you do after the bullying is over? *Check in with the bullied student later to see if he or she is OK; show kindness to the bullied student, tell a trusted adult at school and home.*



Background Information

- Reinforce the message to students that no single response will be effective in every situation. They need to determine what their options are and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each option.
- Role-play and problem-solving discussions using real-life situations can help students be more effective “in the moment.”
- Reinforce that it takes a community effort involving adults and other peers to stop bullying.
- Both positive reinforcement and negative consequences play important roles in changing negative behavior like bullying.
- Appropriate negative consequences should be used when students make poor behavior choices (such as bullying, joining in, or encouraging bullying). Most effective negative consequences take away social privileges but may also include disciplinary actions (such as detentions). Positive reinforcements (usually in the form of praise, recognition, but including tangible social rewards) should be used liberally when students stand up for or help others.

Slide 20.

What If It Happens to You?

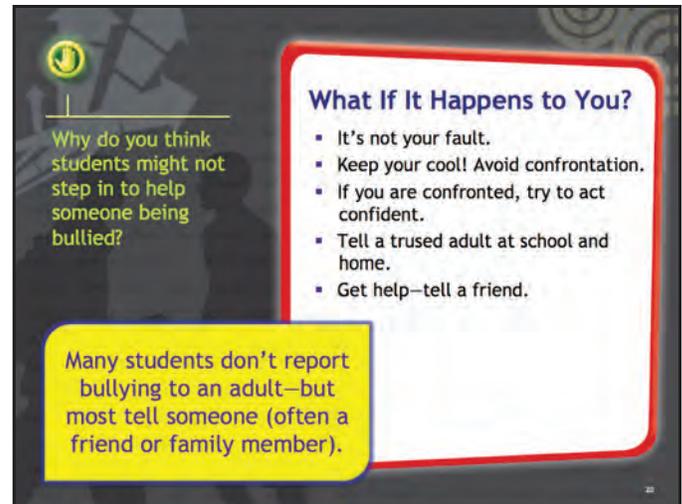
- It's not your fault.
- Keep your cool! Avoid confrontation.
- If you are confronted, try to act confident.
- Tell a trusted adult at school and home.
- Get help—tell a friend.

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. If you are being bullied, what are some of your options in the moment that may keep the bullying from escalating?
Stand tall, breathe deeply, act confident, make a joke, distract or divert the bully's attention.
2. What could you do after the bullying is over?
3. Always be sure to tell a trusted adult at school and at home.
4. What might be some reasons students don't want to tell an adult?

Background Information

- Adults are the first line of support in keeping students safe.
- Many students don't report bullying to an adult—but most tell someone (often a friend or family member). It is important that students report bullying problems, which means that adults have to work to change the social climate that views reporting as “tattling.”
- Not all bullied students are alike. Most have done nothing to provoke the bullying and may not even understand why they are being targeted. These students often internalize their experiences and tend to become withdrawn, depressed, and have psychosomatic symptoms. Other students may seem more provocative and may even bully back. Often, these students have difficulty in social situations or have difficulty reading social cues or controlling their impulses.
- All bullied students need support, understanding, and strategies to stay safe and to make good choices. Adults *must* provide adequate supervision to keep bullied students safe and follow up to make sure individual strategies are working.



Slide 21.

Bullying Is Not Cool or Funny

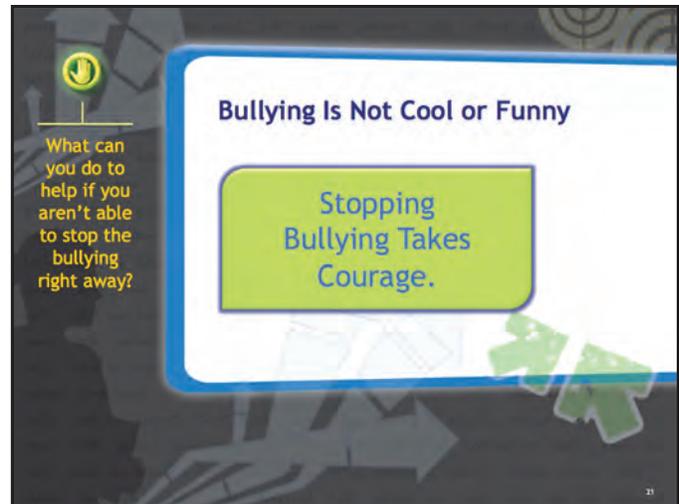
Stopping bullying takes courage.

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. Why does it take courage to step in to help?
2. Why do you think students might not step in to help someone being bullied?
3. Do you think students make different choices if they are alone or with friends? Why?
4. What can you do to help if you aren't able to stop the bullying right away?

Background Information

- Help students identify different types of courage and how our society tends to value some kinds over others, like physical courage vs. “quiet” or peaceful acts of courage.
- It is very important to put a stop to bullying when you see it occur. A bystander who plays an active, positive role can make a critical difference in preventing bullying.



Slide 22.

Bystanders Can Make a Difference

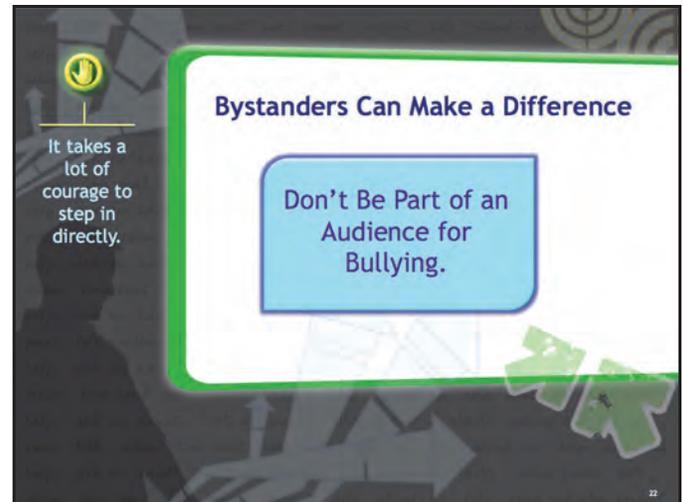
Don't be part of an audience for bullying.

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. It is very important to take some kind of action whenever you see or hear about bullying. Active bystanders can make a difference in stopping and preventing bullying.
2. Remind students that it is our job to make schools safe for all, and remind them to tell a trusted adult about bullying.
3. It takes a lot of courage to step in directly. Why might a student feel confident about intervening?
 - *Other people are willing to step in, too.*
 - *The student is older or stronger than the bully.*
 - *The student knows other students will listen or respect him or her.*
 - *It is cool to step in.*
4. Why might students feel less confident about intervening?
 - *The student is alone or not as popular as the bully.*
 - *The student is outnumbered.*
 - *The bully had bullied the student in the past.*
 - *The bully is older or stronger than the student.*
5. What ways can you safely help stand up against bullying?
 - Directly intervene (when you can do so safely): *Tell the person to stop; do something to distract the bullying student; step in; walk away with the student being bullied.*
 - Indirectly intervene: *Refuse to join in; don't be part of the audience; show disapproval by not laughing or joining in when the bullying is happening; say or do something later to help or show support for the bullied student.*
6. Even if you feel it is unwise to step in and stop the bullying, you can still help. *Offer the bullied student help or say something kind to him or her; try to include that person in your group; approach the bullied student later to see whether he or she is OK; encourage him or her to get help; tell a trusted adult at home and school.*

Background Information

- Adults need to be the first line of support when it comes to bullying—providing adequate supervision, intervening to stop bullying and modeling that behavior for students, and providing support and follow-up for vulnerable students and to prevent retaliation.
- Providing opportunities for classroom discussion about bullying problems and building peer relationships within the classroom are key aspects of effective bullying prevention.
- Bystanders rarely play a completely neutral role, although they may think they do. The bystander has a very powerful role in helping to stop and prevent bullying. Researchers who study the role of the bystander have discovered just how crucial that role can be in creating a safe and healthy environment.



(continued)

- Depending on how bystanders respond, they can either contribute to the problem or the solution.

Facilitator's Note About the Next Slide (to share with students)

The upcoming video, entitled *The Price of Silence* by Shake State Productions, portrays the role of the bystander and how it can impact bullying.

Slide 23.

The Price of Silence Video

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. This video shows how powerful bystander involvement can be. Who had the power at the beginning of the clip?
2. What did you notice about the youth in the crowd? Did they all feel comfortable with the bullying?
3. How did that change?
4. What happens when one person steps up? Why is it easier for other youth to step up, too?
5. What was the price of silence? Why is keeping silent harmful?
6. Are there times when you might need to be silent?
7. What role do you think most students play?



Background Information

- All bystanders are not alike. Bystander behavior can range from supporting bullying to being disengaged to feeling uncomfortable (but uncertain) to taking action. Help students understand how those roles can change in different situations and what they can do.
- Students are more likely to step in if:
 - Adults are also actively involved in ways that stop and prevent bullying.
 - Prosocial behavior is reinforced in ways that are meaningful to them.
 - There is positive support within their peer group.

Slide 24.

We're Listening

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. Now we want your ideas and feedback.
2. Please use the form we passed out at the beginning if you would like to share any information about bullying here at this school.
3. If you don't feel safe or need help with a bullying problem and want to talk with an adult privately, please include your name on the form, or come talk with one of us (facilitators) after the presentation.
4. If you have ideas about how to stop bullying here, please include those on the form as well.
5. Follow-up discussion groups may be scheduled.

Background Information

- Once reviewed, adults will discuss ways to make school safer for students.
- Themes from these forms should be shared with classroom teachers and can be used as topics for classroom discussions.



Slide 25.

We need your help to...

...stop bullying before it starts.

Talking Points and Discussion Questions

1. Stopping bullying takes a whole community—each person who helps can make a difference. We want to make sure that everyone understands what bullying is and how it hurts us, and we want everyone to take action.
2. Who in our community should be involved?
3. Announce *Action Project: It Takes a Community to Stop Bullying* and explain student sign-up procedures.

Background Information

- Students benefit from applying what they know and have learned. Action Projects should include a variety of activities that include working with peers, younger students, and the broader community.
- The underlying theme is to reinforce the message that bullying is not cool and that everyone has a role in stopping bullying.



Slide 26.

Stop Bullying Before It Starts: A Bullying Prevention Project





Step 3: Take Action!

Part 1: *We're Listening!* Adults Take Action

During the presentation, *We're Listening!* forms were distributed. Students were given the opportunity to write questions or concerns they have about bullying problems.

Designated staff and administration should review these forms to identify student concerns and comments. This information can be used in the following ways:

- **To identify and assist students in immediate need of adult support** for bullying problems. Appropriate supportive measures should be taken with students as soon as possible after the presentation, with plans to follow up to make sure the student is safe.
- **To identify common themes about bullying that can be addressed as part of class discussions.** This information, along with guidelines for conducting class discussions and support materials, should be shared with teachers.
- **To identify common bullying problems** that are not being addressed effectively. Administrators and staff are encouraged to use this information to review existing supervision plans, policies, and procedures about bullying.

Part 2: *We're Listening!* Classroom Discussions

Staff reviewing the information gathered from the forms will identify themes that can serve as topics for classroom discussion. Teachers can use questions provided in the presentation materials to spark student discussion and expand their understanding of bullying.

Sample themes include:

- Changing friendships.
- Popularity.
- Dealing with strong emotions.
- Courage.
- Sexual put-downs.
- Cyberbullying, cybersafety, and netiquette.

Tips for Facilitating a Classroom Discussion About Bullying

- The goal of the discussion is to improve student relationships.
- If you are inexperienced with open-ended discussions, partner with another staff member who is more comfortable.
- Set ground rules for the discussion so that all students feel safe sharing their ideas and experiences (e.g., raise hands to speak; everyone has a turn, but it's OK to "pass"; disagree without being disagreeable).
- If possible, have students sit in a circle. This type of setup is more conducive to discussion.
- Holding class discussions at regular predictable times helps reduce time away from learning to deal with problems.
- Let students take the lead as much as possible.

Part 3: *Action Project: It Takes a Community to Stop Bullying*

Action Projects give students the opportunity to share their knowledge about bullying, remind all community members that bullying is not cool or funny, and provide opportunities to prevent it with younger students, peers, parents, and members of the community. Each school should determine which projects best meet the needs of their students and communities (some examples are provided below). Each of these activities is intended to promote understanding about bullying, to encourage students to help stop bullying, and to create a safe school and community. Here are some suggested steps for introducing and explaining projects to students.

1. **Describe projects to students.** Make sure they understand the goals and purpose of each so they can make informed choices. Provide opportunities that allow students to showcase different talents and also to engage and educate different parts of the broader school community (peers, younger students, parents, etc.).
2. **Begin projects.** After students pick their project, the team meets to learn about the project's goals, structure, and timetable. Schedule an appropriate number of sessions for the team to review facts about bullying and to work on their specific project.
3. **Schedule an end date and presentation for each project.** Each project will also be debriefed to evaluate its impact and allow students to process their experiences.

Examples of Action Projects

For Younger Students

- Present a skit or assembly to elementary school students that emphasizes that bullying is not cool and provides some tips.
- Design *Stop Bullying Before It Starts* posters, T-shirts, or certificates.
- Write a song or group poem with a bullying prevention message.
- Develop a buddy or mentor campaign—structure noncompetitive games at recess; start a read-a-book campaign using books students critique to read to younger students.

With Peers

- Design slogans or tips posters on particular topics to be displayed throughout the school.
- Develop a Dear Abby-type column devoted to bullying and friendship problems.
- Write poems, songs, cheers, or raps that promote bullying prevention themes.
- Design T-shirts, buttons, or stickers with anti-bullying messages to wear during class discussions or to use as a fundraiser.
- Develop skits that demonstrate ways to be proactive bystanders.
- Develop webisodes to broadcast on the intercom each morning.
- Review books or movies and critique them for bullying prevention messages.
- Develop topics for class discussion.
- Form a student advisory group for bullying prevention.

With Parents

- Develop a skit or play to be presented at a parent-teacher organization meeting.
- Host a meeting to discuss bullying with parents.

With the Community

- Write an article for the school or local newspaper about some aspect of bullying.
- Develop public service announcements about bullying prevention in media class to air on the local cable access channel.
- Develop a “bag” message campaign with a local supermarket.



Step 4: Debriefing

After the Action Projects are completed, it is recommended that you provide some way for students to report on or showcase what they accomplished. In addition, it is recommended that students, staff, and community partners have an opportunity to assess their experiences and to discuss the impact of this anti-bullying initiative. Information gathered from these debriefings can help with planning next steps to prevent bullying in the school.

Debriefing the Action Projects can be conducted in a variety of ways and should ideally consider both the process and the products. Student debriefings can be incorporated into the Action Projects. For each project, consider:

- Whether goals were met.
- Whether the process went smoothly or needs some tweaking.
- What the benefits were for students, the school, community partners.
- How the project raised awareness.

Some suggestions for and examples of debriefing options appear below. The Debriefing form is provided to record feedback about project outcomes—use one for each Action Project to help plan for next year.

For Students

- **Individual self-reflection** (written assignment): What I learned; Ways in which I contributed; What I think worked best/needs adjusting.
- **Group evaluation** (discussion/report): How did we work together? Did we meet our goals? What was the biggest success/challenge? How did we deal with disagreements? How could we make this project better?

For Staff

- **Individual feedback** (from project leaders): Use the Debriefing form.
- **Group meeting** (all staff): What effect did this project have on students' understanding about bullying? On their behavior? What improvements can we make next time?

For Community Partners

- **Student interview** (students interview community partners to gather feedback about the impact of the Action Project).
- **Focus group** (invite community partners to a short, informal meeting to share insights about their experiences): What went well/was challenging? What were some unexpected problems/successes? What would make this better next time?
- **Questionnaire** (ask community partners to fill out a three-question survey about the process and product of the Action Project): What went well/was challenging? What were some unexpected problems/successes? What would make this better next time?



Debriefing

Name of Action Project: _____

Staff Leader: _____

Goals:

1.

2.

3.

Outcomes:

1. Did the project meet our goals? Describe.

2. What was the impact of this project on the school climate? Give examples.

3. How did the project raise awareness about bullying?

4. How did staff, students, and community partners feel about the project?

5. Planning for the future: What changes will be made for next year?





More Information About Bullying

Web Sites

www.adl.org – The Anti-Defamation League’s *No Place for Hate* curriculum materials and its *A World of Difference*® Institute focus on the harm that an intolerance of diversity, prejudice, and stereotypes causes. There are many free downloadable resources for teachers, fact sheets, and books published by the organization (suitable for teachers and parents).

www.disabilitylawcenter.org – Although this site does not provide specific information about bullying, it gives information about the rights of individuals with disabilities and the responsibilities of schools. There are also state-level law centers in most states.

www.glsen.org – The Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network (GLSEN) Web site features information and resources for GLBTQ students and their straight allies, aimed at making school communities safe and accepting of all students.

www.safeschoolscoalition.org – This respected educational Web site for students, parents, and educators provides online articles, resources, videos, and links related to sexual harassment and bullying at school, including harassment based on sexual identity, antigay bias, and GLBTQ. The site includes some materials in Spanish.

www.safetyzone.org – The National Resource Center for Safe Schools (NRCSS) provides technical assistance and resources on school safety and violence prevention to schools and school districts. The Web site includes information about school safety, promising and effective programs, and topics such as bullying and crisis response, and offers news about funding sources for planning and program implementation.

www.stobullying.gov – This official government website is managed by the Department of Health and Human Services in partnership with the Department of Education and the Department of Justice. It includes excellent tip sheets for adults and interactive materials for students.

www.teachingtolerance.org – *Teaching Tolerance* (a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center) magazine is highly respected in the field of antibias education. The organization also offers online education and resources for parents, teachers, teens, and children aimed at stopping hate and promoting diversity (including the well-known *Mix It Up Day*® campaign for secondary school students). Ten free kits and handbooks are available to schools, along with ideas for classroom activities. Specific topics vary and range from pre-K to 12th grade.

Curriculum Support Materials and Other Resources

Cappello, Dominic and Stein, Nan

Gender Violence/Gender Justice: An Interdisciplinary Teaching Guide for Teachers (Grades 7-12)

Wellesley Centers for Women: 1999

This teaching guide explores the role of gender, power inequities, and violence in relationships, as well as friendship, interventions, justice, and courage. Classroom discussions can be extended into academic curricula.

Davis, Stan

Empowering Bystanders in Bullying Prevention

Research Press: 2007

This book and accompanying DVD focus on a key element in best practices of bullying prevention: engaging bystanders as part of the solution. Based on the work of Dan Olweus, the book offers insights into the motivations and behavior of bystanders, along with practical suggestions for supporting them, encouraging them to show responsibility for peers and take action—an approach that builds empathy and compassion. Bystanders are encouraged to report problems to adults, and it stresses the key role adults play in providing a comprehensive antibullying policy.

Denton, Paula

The Power of Our Words: Teacher Language That Helps Children Learn (Paperback)

Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc.: 2007

This book uses anecdotes and concrete examples to demonstrate ways teachers can use constructive language (as conveyed by both word choices and tone), even in challenging situations, to provide positive encouragement for students. It also provides tips on ways to avoid language that discourages student engagement.

Dillon, Jim

The Peaceful School Bus Program: A Program for Grades K-12

Hazelden: 2008

This book, along with the accompanying DVD and CD-ROM, provides information and techniques to decrease inappropriate behavior on buses while creating a positive climate of respect and cooperation. Teachers, administrators, parents, and students take part in school bus route meetings that promote teamwork, develop mentoring relationships between older and younger students, and build rapport with and respect for the drivers. While not a curriculum per se, it provides teacher-led activities for students.

Foshee, Vangie and Langwick, Stacey

Safe Dates: An Adolescent Dating Abuse Prevention Curriculum

Hazelden: 2009

This revised nine-session research-based curriculum is a SAMHSA Model Program that helps middle and high school students distinguish between healthy, caring, and supportive relationships, and controlling, manipulative, and abusive dating relationships.

Jackson, Tom

Activities That Teach

Red Rock Publishing: 1993

For grades K-12, including Special Education, these fun, easy activities can be used to kick off an open-ended class discussion, promote community building among students, or build interest in content areas. Each activity indicates a topic area, concept, method, required time, materials, and discussion ideas. This resource can help teachers enrich and enhance classroom discussions and student relationships.

Kaufman, Gershen, Raphael, Lev, and Espeland, Pamela

Stick Up for Yourself! Every Kid's Guide to Personal Power and Positive Self-Esteem

Free Spirit Publishing; 2nd revised edition (October 1, 1999)

This revised and updated self-help guide for tweens is meant to be used directly by students, but younger students in particular will benefit from adults preselecting relevant sections and incorporating them into class meetings. Advice and anecdotes are realistic and are presented in a logical noncondescending way that will appeal to this age group. The section on bullying provides sound advice for students, though you may want to emphasize the role of adults in providing help and promoting peer social supports for bullied students.

Limber, Susan P., Kowalski, Robin M., and Agatson, Patricia W.

Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum for Grades 6-12

Hazelden: 2009

This engaging, eight-session curriculum helps students understand cyberbullying and its consequences and what students should do if they are cyberbullied. The program includes a facilitator's guide and a CD-ROM of reproducible handouts, posters, parent materials (in English and Spanish), and information on how to address cyberbullying in a comprehensive schoolwide prevention effort. Also includes short training on cyberbullying for program facilitators.

McLeod Humphrey, Sandra

Hot Issues, Cool Choices: Facing Bullies, Peer Pressure, Popularity, and Put-Downs

Prometheus Books: 2007

This latest iteration of ethical dilemmas can be used to spark role-playing or class discussion. Each dilemma has questions, extensions, and "turnabout" questions to stimulate discussion for extension writing activities. The book provides some bullying statistics and online resources. An afterword includes information about steps bystanders can take to help prevent bullying. Be sure to reinforce that adults have the primary responsibility to stop bullying.

Wiseman, Rosalind

Owning Up Curriculum - Empowering Adolescents to Confront Social Cruelty, Bullying and Injustice

Research Press: 2009

The *Owning Up Curriculum*, written and developed by Rosalind Wiseman, author of The New York Times bestseller *Queen Bees and Wannabees*, provides a structured program for teaching students to own up and take responsibility—as perpetrators, bystanders, and targets—for unethical behavior. The curriculum is designed for adolescent groups in schools and other settings. Interactive sessions cover topics such as: friendships, cliques, popularity, support systems, gossip, reputations, double standards, teasing, anger, bullying, sexual harassment, self-image, media, and culture, cyberbullying

Schoolwide Bullying Prevention Programs

Olweus Bullying Prevention Program www.olweus.org

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is a highly regarded research-based program cited for its effective and comprehensive approach. In addition to information about the Olweus Program, this Web site also offers basic information about bullying for the general public. There are separate information portals for school administration, school staff, and parents that provide articles, bullying prevention funding sources, general information about state laws, and recent media articles about bullying.

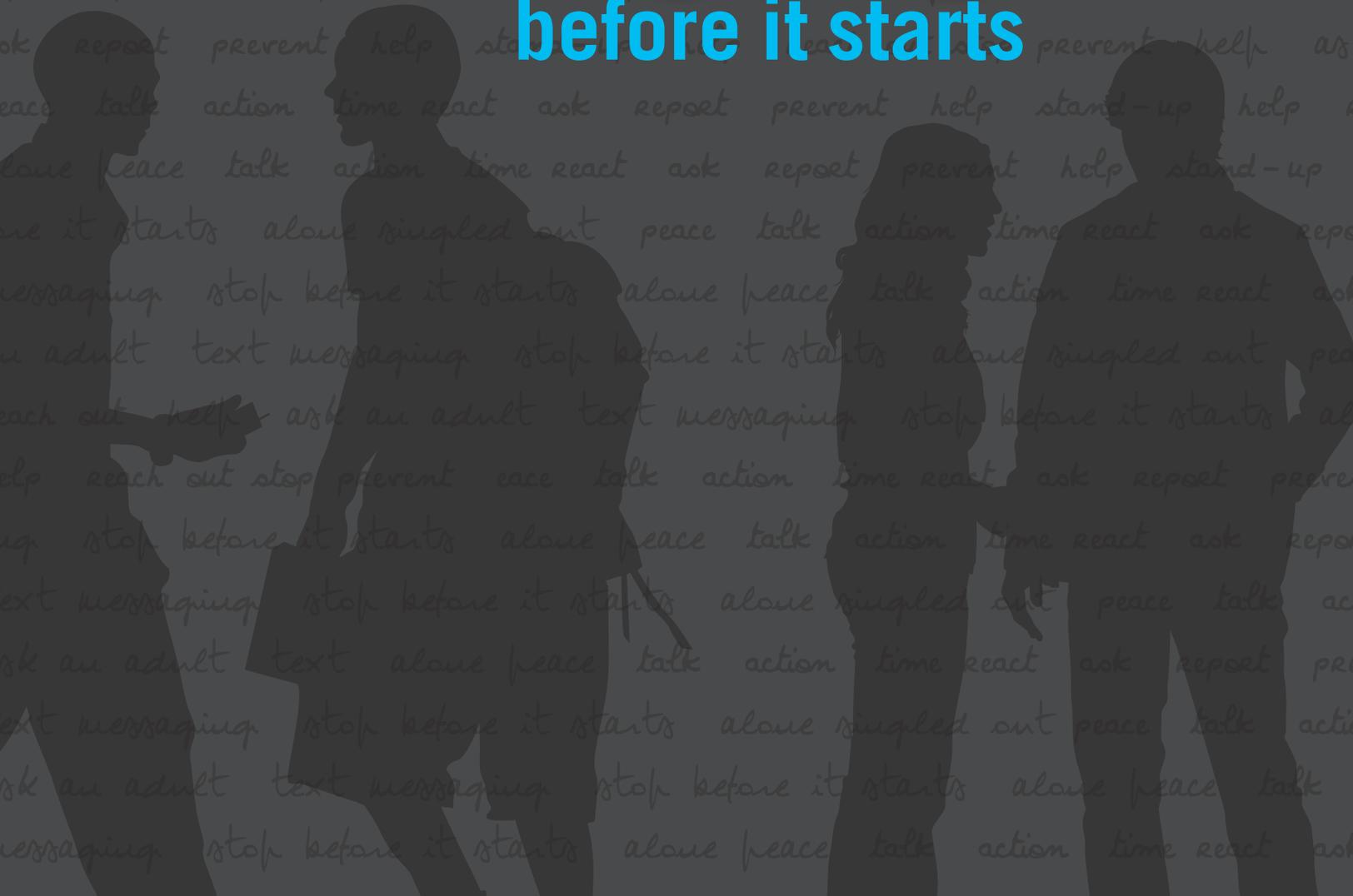
Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program Committee for Children www.cfchildren.org

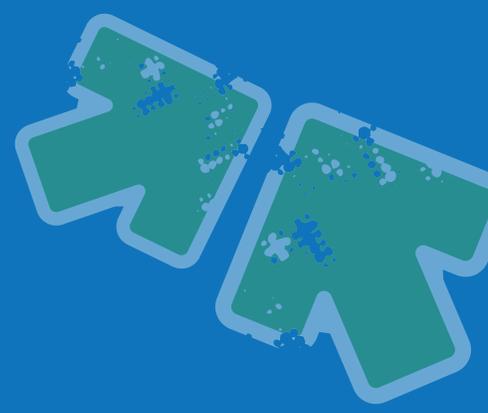
The Committee for Children offers programs that foster social and emotional well-being of children through education and advocacy. Its Web site describes its programs, including this one, which is geared to promote bullying prevention among students in grades 3-6.





stop bullying before it starts





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Developed by
Jonathan W. Blodgett
Essex District Attorney