



Bullying – Quick Overview and Resources

Resources:

KidsAgainstBullying.org

(A educational website designed for elementary school students to learn about bullying)

TeensAgainstBullying.org

(Created by and for teens)

www.childrensafetynetwork.org/guides/bullying-prevention

(A guide that provides links to organizations, programs, publications, and resources for bullying prevention)

www.pta.org/bullying

(The National PTA website with information about how parents can help create a healthy school/ community climate)

www.thebullyproject.com

(Bully is a documentary movie that explores the epidemic of bullying in American schools)

www.thetrevorproject.org

(A support resource for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or other youth questioning their sexuality who are experiencing bullying)

Bullying is a word used in the school environment that has been part of the vernacular for decades and affects students at every grade level. More than one out of every five students report being bullied, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2016).

As school counselors are more than aware, bullying can take many forms within the school setting. The most common definition for bullying consists of defining two modes; **direct** (bullying that occurs in the presence of a targeted youth) and **indirect** (bullying not directly communicated to a targeted youth, such as spreading rumors). In addition to these two modes, the four types of bullying include the broad categories of physical, verbal, relational (e.g., efforts to harm the reputation or relationships of the targeted youth), and damage to property.

As professional school counselors have been addressing this topic for years within their comprehensive programs, another important aspect to highlight is the need to standardize the terminology and use it consistently. The root of all interventions with our students should be centered on a common language to include topics of:

- Defining bullying
- Teaching the difference between a conflict and bullying
- Identifying roles in bullying: victim, bully and bystander
- Creating interventions for the **individual** (individual meetings with the counselor, small groups), **within the classroom** (classroom guidance session, movies, role play activities), **and at the whole school level** (school led initiatives on this topic, promoting bullying awareness month, bulletin boards, empathy training for all, etc.)
- Focus on the school culture by teaching empathy, kindness, and respect for all

Studies on the effectiveness of various intervention strategies show that there is no single approach that has been proven to eliminate bullying in the school environment. Just as a treatment model is multi-faceted, bullying prevention must focus on all aspects of the school community. Assessing the school community regarding the prevalence of bullying and educating all who interact with children during their school day concerning anti-bullying intervention strategies can be the most successful approach. This list includes secretaries, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, nurses, teachers, administrators, peers, and families.

Finally, these anti-bullying efforts should continue over time. A focus on bullying prevention should be woven into the culture of the school, with constant reassessment and year-to-year goals.

— Kat Coy, M.S.