Deconstructing the Culture of Bullying & Cyberbullying: Empathy & Peer Relationships

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OUR MISSION

TO SUPPORT AND INSPIRE ACTIONS TO END BULLYING, CYBERBULLYING, AND SUICIDE.

IS IT BULLYING?

RUDE

When someone says or does something unintentionally hurtful and they do it once

MEAN

When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they do it once

BULLYING

When someone says or does something intentionally hurtful and they keep doing it- even when you tell them to stop or show them that you're upset

BULLYING

IN 2014, THE CDC AND A PANEL OF EXPERTS PUBLISHED AN UPDATED AND UNIFORM DEFINITION OF BULLYING:

o Bullying is any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated.

o Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including "physical, psychological, social, or educational harm."

WHAT DEFINES BULLYING?

o **An Imbalance of Power**: Kids who bully use their power – such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.

o **Repetition**: Bullying behaviors happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

HOW TO IDENTIFY BULLYING?

o A first challenge has to do with identifying—often on the spot—if behavior that occurs in a school's hallways, cafeteria, or on a playground is aggressive or if it is rough play...all in fun.

o A second challenge involves the repetitive nature of bullying. What makes something repetitive? And can a behavior be considered bullying if it occurs only once?

o A third challenge is understanding what counts as a power imbalance among children.

PHYSICAL BULLYING

Involves hurting a person's body or possession and includes:

o Hitting/kicking/pinching

o Spitting

o Tripping/pushing

o Taking or breaking someone's things

o Making mean or rude hand gestures

VERBAL BULLYING

Saying or writing mean things and includes:

o Teasing

o Name-calling

o Inappropriate sexual comments

o Taunting

o Threatening to cause harm

SOCIAL/RELATIONAL BULLYING

Involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships and includes:

o Leaving someone out on purpose

o Telling other kids not to be friends with someone

o Spreading rumors about someone

o Embarrassing someone in public

DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUTH

- o Teach and practice the difference between respectful deliberation and intolerant dialogue around issues of difference.

- o Provide opportunities for students to express their discomfort about witnessing bullying behaviors within the safety of a classroom discussion.

- o Help students realize that they are not alone in their wish for bullying behaviors to stop.

- o Provide an opportunity for students to brainstorm possible solutions to common situations involving bullying behaviors.

CYBERBULLYING

Willful and **repeated** harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices to harass, threaten, and humiliate others.

WHERE DO YOU THINK CYBERBULLYING TAKES PLACE?

OUR EMOTIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

WARNING SIGNS A CHILD IS BEING CYBERBULLIED OR IS CYBERBULLYING

It's important to pay attention when a child exhibits sudden changes in digital and social behavior. Some of the warning signs that a child may be involved in cyberbullying are:

Noticeable, rapid increases or decreases in device use, including texting

Social media accounts are shut down or new ones appear

A child exhibits emotional responses (laughter, anger, upset) to what is happening on their device

A child starts to avoid social situations, even those that were enjoyed in the past

A child hides their screen or device when others are near, and avoids discussion about what they are doing on their device

A child becomes withdrawn or depressed, or loses interest in people and activities

HOW BULLYING IMPACTS THE BRAIN

OF YOUTH WHO EXPERIENCE BULLYING, THEIR BRAINS...

- LOOK LIKE CHILDREN WHO HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY OR SEVERELY PHYSICALLY ABUSED;

- RESPOND TO EVERYDAY STRESS LIKE COMBAT SOLDIERS WITH POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER;

- LIFELONG PROBLEMS WITH CORTISOL AND ADRENALS LEADING TO CHRONIC HEALTH PROBLEMS;

- SHOW SIGNS OF DYSFUNCTIONAL THOUGHT PROCESSING, CHRONIC DEPRESSION, AND ANXIETY INTO ADULTHOOD.

BULLYING

INTERNALIZING PROBLEMS

IN A POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE, STUDENTS...

- Do better academically
- Engage in fewer risky behaviors like drinking alcohol or using drugs
- Feel better about themselves
- Attend school more regularly
- Engage less in bullying and other problem behaviors

SCHOOL INTERVENTION
WHEN CAN A SCHOOL STEP IN?

CERTAIN EXPRESSIONS

ARE NOT PROTECTED BY

THE FIRST AMENDMENT

RIGHT AND ALLOW FOR

INTERVENTION AND/OR

DISCIPLINE, INCLUDING

THOSE THAT:

Substantially or materially disrupts learning

Interferes with the educational process or school discipline

Utilizes school-owned technology to harass

Threatens other students or infringes on their civil rights

ACTIVITIES TO TEACH STUDENTS ABOUT BULLYING & CYBERBULLYING

Schools don't always need formal programs to help students learn about bullying prevention.
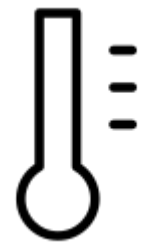
Schools can incorporate the topic of bullying and cyberbullying prevention in lessons and activities.

- Internet or library research, such as looking up types of bullying, and cyberbullying, how to prevent it, and how kids should respond

- Presentations, such as a speech or role-play on stopping bullying and cyberbullying

- Discussions about topics like reporting bullying and cyberbullying

- Creative writing, such as a poem speaking out against bullying or a story or skit teaching bystanders how to help

- Artistic works, such as a collage about respect or the effects of bullying and cyberbullying

- Classroom meetings to talk about peer relations

STRATEGIES

CONSIDER THE SCHOOL CLIMATE
Comprehensive effort to change norms, attitudes, & behaviors

TRAINING
All school staff should be trained appropriately to address these issues

COLLECT DATA
Gather school & community-wide data on bullying to inform prevention efforts

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT
Help educate parents on ways to support children outside of the school environment

UPDATE SCHOOL POLICIES
Ensure all school anti-bullying policies and procedures are up-to-date and expectations are clear for students

STRATEGIES

VALIDATE STUDENTS
Actively engage and listen to students and their needs nonjudgmentally

OFFER SERVICES
Identification of students and families in need of services and obtaining services for them

ADULT INVOLVEMENT
Increase adult supervision in the school with appropriate response

IMPLEMENT PREVENTION PROGRAMS
Education and awareness among students, parents, & educators about warning signs and importance of their involvement is vital

"You should have..."
Least likely to have positive effects

- Told me it wouldn't happen if I acted differently
- Told me to stop tattling (most harmful adult action)

"Connection, support and reframing"
Most helpful

- Listened to me
- Encouraged me
- Checked back with me over time to make sure I was ok

"Direct Intervention"
Effects varied from school to school. It matters we do these!

- Supervision
- Punishment/consequences

ADULT STRATEGIES

PEER STRATEGIES

Confrontation by bystanding peers - Least effective of positive strategies

- Peers told aggressors to stop angrily or calmly

Included me/spent time with me at school- Most helpful actions overall

- Walked or spent time with me at school
- Talk to me at school to encourage me
- Gave me advice (hope)
- Helped me get away; made a distraction
- Helped me tell adults

Encouraged me - Strong positive effects

- Talked to me at school to encourage me
- Called me at home to encourage me

HOW TO VALIDATE FEELINGS

COMMUNICATING
Your intent to listen without judging or blaming and calling yourself out if you stray from this empathetic stance.

BEING SENSITIVE
To acknowledging how difficult and even embarrassing it is to be "different" when he/she wants to be like everyone else.

ACKNOWLEDGING
The problems in his/her life and that they matter.

REFLECTING
About how upsetting it feels when his/her emotions seem to spin out of control.

UNDERSTANDING
Of how deep shame (often non-detectable to frustrated parents) can keep influencing the child to behave in ways that he/she may regret later.

QUESTIONS?

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