

# When Harmless Becomes Harmful:

What parents and caregivers need to know about bullying and cyberbullying

Presented by  
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# There is a Difference Between Being Rude, Being Mean, and Being a Bully



# Objectives

- ▶ Define bullying and cyberbullying
- ▶ Recognize a bully and bullying tactics
- ▶ Understand your child's rights in California
- ▶ Prevent further bullying and protect your children

# What is bullying?

- ▶ One person is intentionally hurting or harming another with words or behavior, and the behavior is being done on purpose, and the person being hurt has a hard time making it stop.
- ▶ The behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated.
- ▶ An imbalance of power.



# Legal Definition of Bullying

- ▶ “Bullying” means any severe or persistent physical or verbal act or conduct, including:
  - ▶ communications made in writing or by means of an electronic act
  - ▶ one or more acts committed by a pupil/pupils directed toward a pupil/pupils that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of:
    - ▶ Placing a reasonable pupil or pupils in fear of physical harm.
    - ▶ Causing a pupil to experience a substantially detrimental effect on his or her physical or mental health.
    - ▶ Causing a pupil to experience substantial interference with his or her academic performance.

# Types of Bullying



## VERBAL

Saying or writing mean things including:

- Teasing
- Name-calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm

## PHYSICAL

Involves hurting a person's body or possessions including:

- Hitting/kicking/pinching
- Spitting
- Tripping/pushing
- Taking or breaking someone's things
- Making mean or rude hand gesture

## SOCIAL

Sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships and also:

- Leaving someone out on purpose
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumors about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public

# Where and When Bullying Happens

- ▶ The following percentages of students ages 12-18 had experienced bullying in various places at school:
  - ▶ Hallway or stairwell (43.4%)
  - ▶ Classroom (42.1%)
  - ▶ Cafeteria (26.8%)
  - ▶ Outside on school grounds (21.9%)
  - ▶ Online or text (15.3%)
  - ▶ Bathroom or locker room (12.1%)
  - ▶ Somewhere else in the school building (2.1%)



# The Bully or “the child who bullied”



## Signs (what to look for):

- ▶ Academic problems
- ▶ Sudden low grades
- ▶ Change in character
- ▶ Onset of disrespect
- ▶ Gets in fights often
- ▶ Teacher reports

## When a child who bullies does not receive help

- ▶ Increased risk for substance use.
- ▶ Experiencing violence later in adolescence and adulthood.
- ▶ 40% of boys identified as bullies in grades 6 through 9 had three or more arrests by age 30.



# Myth Vs Fact

- ▶ **Myth: Girls don't bully.**  
**Fact: Girls can and do bully, but often in a different way.**
- ▶ **Girls often use verbal and social bullying. Bullying for girls escalates during the middle school years.**

- ▶ **Myth: Words will never hurt you.**  
**Fact: Even though words don't leave bruises or broken bones, they can leave deep emotional scars.**



# How to teach your child to be kind

- ▶ Children exposed to aggressive and unkind interactions in the family often learn to treat others the same way.
  - ▶ When there is yelling, name-calling, putdowns, harsh criticism, or physical anger from a sibling or parent/caregiver, the child may act that out in other settings.
- ▶ Teach your child to treat others with respect and kindness.
  - ▶ get involved in a community group where you and your child can interact with kids who are different.
- ▶ Model how to treat others with kindness and respect.
- ▶ Point out positives in others, rather than negatives. And when conflicts arise in your own life, be open about the frustrations you have and how you cope with your feelings.
- ▶ Take bullying seriously!
  - ▶ bullying is unacceptable!!!
- ▶ Encourage good behavior.
- ▶ Praise and reward the kids who follow rules; establish appropriate consequences that are not physical or hostile

# Advice for Parents of a Child Who Bullies

- ▶ Help the child find healthy ways to stop bullying others
  - ▶ Come up with alternate behaviors or ideas to gain leadership and “social status” that don’t involve excluding others or bullying
- ▶ Have a conversation with the child’s teachers, counselor etc.
- ▶ Learn about your child’s social life.
  - ▶ If bullying at the school
    - ▶ Get your child involved in activities outside of school so that they meet and develop friendships with other kids.
  - ▶ If bullying outside of school
    - ▶ Encourage child to get involved with more school clubs/activities
- ▶ Be a model
  - ▶ Model respectful, kind and empathetic communication
  - ▶ Avoid aggressive, intimidating and abusive behaviors
- ▶ If your family is going through a stressful life event
  - ▶ reach out for help from the school, your community, guidance counselors, pastors/church leaders, therapists, and/or doctor/pediatrician for referral for mental health professional

# The Victim or “the child who was bullied”

## Signs (what to look for):

- ▶ Unexplained bruises, damaged clothes etc.
- ▶ Frequent complaints of headaches and stomachaches, begs to stay home from school.
- ▶ Withdrawn from peer groups, moody, likes to be alone more often, or show a change in appetite.
- ▶ Mention hurtful things said to them and asks your opinion.

## The Child Who Was Bullied

- ▶ Are often victims of other types of violence.
- ▶ Often experience extreme stress.
- ▶ Symptoms of physical illness and a diminished ability to learn.
- ▶ One out of every 10 students who drop out of school does so because of repeated incidents of bullying.



# Advice for Parents of a Child Who Was Bullied

- ▶ Talk/listen to your child.
  - ▶ Routine talks with your kids about their day.
  - ▶ Be as nonjudgmental as possible.
  - ▶ Ask open ended questions about their day and listen to answers.
  - ▶ Kids usually won't ask for help, so it is important to know what to look for.
    - ▶ 64% of children who were bullied did not report it.
  - ▶ **Control your own emotions.**
- ▶ Discuss safe and protective ways children can respond to a bully.
  - ▶ Research shows that most bullies stop aggressive behavior within 10 seconds when someone (either a victim or a bystander) tells the perpetrator to stop in a strong and powerful voice.
- ▶ Help them find things that make them happy, point out positive qualities.
- ▶ Make sure they know people care and love them.
- ▶ Build relationships outside of school.
- ▶ Address self-respect, and help kids to appreciate their strengths.
  - ▶ Nurture a child's confidence and independence.
- ▶ **Be supportive!**

<https://www.parents.com/kids/problems/bullying/common-types-of-bullying/>  
<http://www.thebullyproject.com/parents>



# Ways to Help Kids Boost Their Confidence

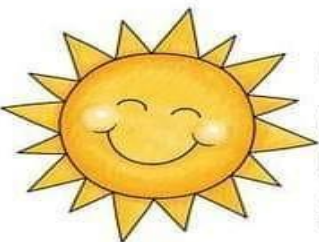
Encourage a growth mindset



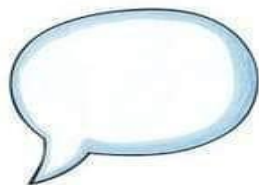
Encourage independence and risk-taking



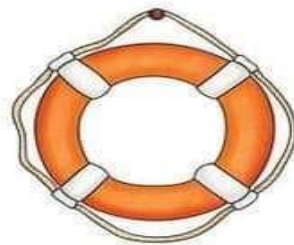
Remind kids of their strengths



Give chances for every kid to shine



Give specific positive feedback



Teach and discuss resilience

Help kids celebrate their accomplishments



Teach positive self-talk



Have kids reflect on growth

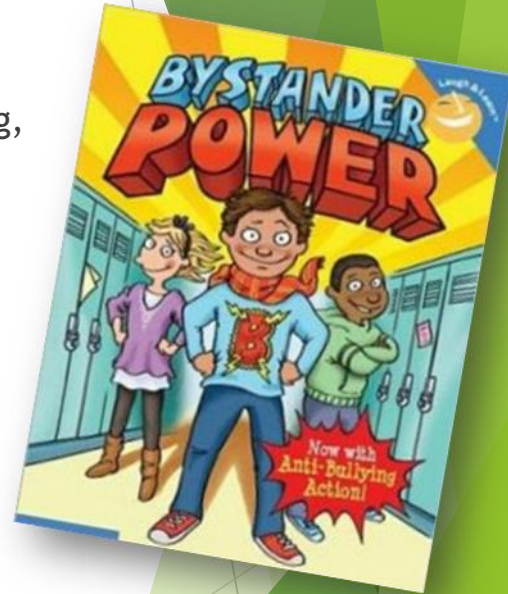


## Bully/Victim or “the child who was both bullied and bullied others”

- ▶ May be at more risk for negative outcomes, such as depression or suicidal ideation.
- ▶ Suffer the most serious consequences and are at greater risk for mental health and behavioral problems.
- ▶ 75% of shooting incidents at schools have been linked to bullying and harassment.

## Bystander

- ▶ Bystander: a witness to bullying, assists in bullying, intervene in bullying
- ▶ When bystanders intervene, bullying stops within 10 seconds 57% of the time.





# Cyberbullying and Internet Safety

- ▶ Cyberbullying is bullying using:
  - ▶ Cell phones, computers, tablets, communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites.
- ▶ Cyberbullying can happen 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and reach children when they are alone
- ▶ Examples of cyberbullying include:
  - ▶ Mean text messages or emails
  - ▶ Rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites
  - ▶ Embarrassing pictures, videos, or websites
  - ▶ Fake social media profiles
- ▶ In a recent study of students in grades 6-8
  - ▶ Girls were about twice as likely as boys to be victims and perpetrators of cyberbullying.
  - ▶ 62% said that they had been cyberbullied by another student at school, and 46% had been cyberbullied by a friend.
  - ▶ 55% didn't know who had cyberbullied them.





# Victims of Cyberbullying

- ▶ Most cyberbullying victims exhibit clear signs that they have been victimized. These signs can include:
  - ▶ Withdrawing from family and friends
  - ▶ Losing interest in activities they were once passionate about
  - ▶ Sleeping more
  - ▶ A lack of appetite
  - ▶ Wanting to harm themselves
  - ▶ Changes in behavior, achievement, contact with friends
  - ▶ Anxious and on edge after being online
  - ▶ More alerts and notifications on the child's device
  - ▶ More irritable and prone to emotional outbursts
  - ▶ Secretive about time online
  - ▶ Hiding device screen



# Social Media Sites and Cyberbullying

- ▶ Facebook Messenger
  - ▶ an app that lets Facebook users text, voice message, send video or photos instantly, or call contacts from their mobile devices. The text-like messages, voice messages, and phone calls (to other Facebook users) are free, even internationally. Users' phones give a sound or light notification when they get a message, and they can see when someone else has viewed the messages they send. **Unless the location notification is turned off, anyone who receives a message can see on a map where the sender is.**
- ▶ YouTube
  - ▶ can pose a challenge because anyone can create them. They pop up out of nowhere, don't follow program schedules, and they're cast out among thousands of other videos. **Parents should turn on the safety mode.** Most kids find out about new videos either from their friends or by clicking on the related videos (which may not always be appropriate).
- ▶ Web Sites
  - ▶ Kids can create Web sites that could humiliate or endanger another kid. They post photos, videos and all kinds of personal information (such as phone numbers, address, etc.) which could endanger the kid who is the victim.
- ▶ Interactive Gaming
  - ▶ Games like X Box Live and Sony Play Station 2 Network allow your kids to communicate by chat and live Internet phone with anyone they find themselves matched with in a game online. Sometimes the kids verbally abuse the other kids, using threats and lewd language. Sometimes they take it further, by locking them out of games, passing false rumors about them or hacking into their accounts.

If you think kids couldn't possibly be this cruel -- think again! It happens all the time. **Some reports of Cyberbullies are as young as 7 or 8 years-old.**

<https://www.stompoutbullying.org/parents-page/tip-sheet-how-understand-and-handle-cyberbullying>

# Tips on Preventing Cyberbullying

- ▶ Learn the Internet.
- ▶ Communicate!!
  - ▶ Let them know that it's okay to come to you.
  - ▶ Tell them you won't be angry about anything. You just want to help them.
  - ▶ Encourage your child to alert adults/parents of other victims.
- ▶ Keep home computer(s), laptops, tablets, etc. out in the open, such as a family room or kitchen.
  - ▶ It's important to monitor your child's computer and phone.
  - ▶ It's important to install parental control filtering software.
  - ▶ **You want to respect your children's privacy, but your child's safety is more important.**
    - ▶ Tell your child that you are not spying on them but you may review their online communications if you think there is reason for concern.

# Questions Parents Can Ask the School

- ▶ What program(s) does our school use to teach social and emotional skills like conflict resolution, showing understanding and empathy for others, and being aware of emotions?
  - ▶ How do we know that this program works?
- ▶ How are students taught to cope with frustration, anger, and other challenging feelings? Who teaches these skills and what are the strategies they teach?
- ▶ Whose job is it to ensure that all students feel safe and secure and treat each other well?
- ▶ **How can students tell teachers when they are feeling upset or in need of support without the rest of the class knowing?**
- ▶ How do teachers and other staff deal with aggressive, mean, or hurtful behavior during recess and lunch?
- ▶ How are they trained in how to stop hurtful behavior when it happens?
  - ▶ How are they trained in how to keep it from happening in the first place?
- ▶ How does our school work with students who repeatedly act in aggressive, hurtful, or disrespectful ways?
- ▶ Beyond punishment, how do school staff help those students learn how to act differently?
  - ▶ If they do not, do they refer those students to outside resources like counselors?
- ▶ How do children know what the expectations are for their behavior toward others both in and out of classrooms? How do school staff ensure that children understand and fulfill these expectations?
- ▶ What role does the school expect aides, bus drivers, and other support staff to play in ensuring that all students are physically and emotionally safe?
- ▶ How can parents provide feedback to school leaders and staff? Who can they go to when there is a problem?

# Prevention

## ▶ SAMHSA's free KnowBullying app:

### ▶ Parents can:

- ▶ Start easy, meaningful conversations with children.
- ▶ Set reminders to talk with your child when the time feels right.
- ▶ Share successful bullying prevention strategies on Facebook, Twitter, email, or text.
- ▶ Recognize if your child is being bullied, is engaging in bullying, or witnessing bullying.
- ▶ Parents should Google your child's name and see if there is anything being said about your child on the Internet. You can also create a [Google Alert](#) with your child's name so that every time something is said about your child you will receive an email.
- ▶ Prevent bullying in the classroom and support children who are being bullied.

## ➤ Set Digital Guidelines

- Teach children about technology at a young age (this should be ongoing)
  - Explain the benefits and risks
- Consider context (what they are watching) when setting limits
- Restricting phone before bedtime
  - Remove at least 30 minutes before bedtime



# What YOU Can Do!

- ▶ **Document EVERYTHING!!!**
- ▶ It is crucial that all electronic evidence be preserved.
  - ▶ DO NOT DELETE EVIDENCE!!
- ▶ Save all emails or conversations.
- ▶ If threatening email:
  - ▶ local police department may be able to help or lead you to a private investigator with computer skills.
- ▶ If the emails are terrorist type threats:
  - ▶ Report this immediately to the police, who will then report it to the F.B.I.
- ▶ **Get the story of the bullying as correct as possible from your child**
- ▶ Ask the child specific questions about his or her friendships. Be aware of signs of bullying, even if the child doesn't call it that. **Children with disabilities do not always realize they are being bullied. They may, for example, believe that they have a new friend although this "friend" is making fun of them**
- ▶ Let your children know there is help, there is hope --- all they need to do is be brave, be smart and be proactive!

# Get to Know California Laws on Bullying

- ▶ Do California anti-bullying laws and regulations:
  - ▶ Include protections for specific groups?
    - ▶ Yes, including immigration status, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, nationality, race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics.
      - ▶ 64 percent of California LGBT students are bullied. A new bill would train teachers to help
      - ▶ <https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article226211595.html>
      - ▶ On January 20, 2021, the President signed an [Executive Order on Preventing and Combating Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation](#) which sets out the Administration's policy that "[a]ll persons should receive equal treatment under the law, no matter their gender identity or sexual orientation."
      - ▶ If bullying is based on a child's disability, it may violate that child's federal legal rights under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
  - ▶ Encourage or require districts to implement bullying prevention programs or strategies?
    - ▶ Yes. The laws also direct the department of education to develop an online training module to assist all school staff, school administrators, parents, pupils, and community members in increasing their knowledge of bullying and cyberbullying.



# Get to Know Cont...

- ▶ **Do California anti-bullying laws and regulations:**
  - ▶ **Encourage or require districts to provide protection or mental health supports for students involved with bullying?**
    - ▶ *Yes. Schools are encouraged to refer students to a school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, child welfare attendance personnel, school nurse, or other school support services personnel for case management, counseling, and participation in a restorative justice program.*
  - ▶ **Involve parents in efforts to address bullying behavior?**
    - ▶ *Yes. California school districts must inform parents or legal guardian when a student is involved in an act of harassment, intimidation, cyber sexual bullying, or bullying, and must make available information on statewide resources.*
- ▶ **Do California anti-bullying laws and regulations cover cyberbullying that occurs off-campus?**



# Be an advocate for your child

- After getting the story of the bullying from your child:

**Do not contact the parents of the bully (or bullies)**

- Think about how you will approach the school.
  - Discuss approach with your child
  - Go through chain of command i.e. teacher, principal, Superintendent ,School Board
- If you need additional assistance beyond the school, contact local law enforcement.

Let your child be the weird kid.  
Let them be the funny kid, the quiet kid,  
the smart kid, the athletic kid,  
the theater kid, the numbers kid,  
the teacher's pet, the chatter box,  
the valedictorian, the middle of the pack,  
the "barely made it" kid.

Just don't let them be the mean kid.

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  - ▶ Sample letter to principal
- ▶ <http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/themes/51e1be8f9670a42080000002/attachments/original/1377636643/5.10QuestionsParentsCanAskElementarySchool.pdf?1377636643>
  - ▶ questions to ask the school