

RIGHTS SITES NEWS

PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN THE CLASSROOM

A Publication of The Advocates for Human Rights



Human Rights Education

The Advocates' educational programming is designed to introduce international human rights and responsibilities to K-12 students. It uses the framework of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to help students understand and appreciate common human values, to encourage them to apply international standards to their own lives, and to support positive student action to remedy human rights violations in their own communities.

Bullying and Human Rights

"Everyone has the right to be respected and the responsibility to respect others."

~Eleanor Roosevelt

Being safe at school is a fundamental human right. Every child and youth has the right to be safe and free from the harmful effects of bullying. Children in all three roles with respect to bullying – those who are bullied, those who bully others, and those who know it is going on – can be negatively impacted. Negative effects include a lack of confidence in oneself and in others, an increased risk for depression and psychological disorders, poor academic and vocational achievement, and criminality.

As a society, we must educate children to ensure they develop positive attitudes and behaviors and avoid using their power to bully or harass others. Article 29 of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) specifies that education shall be directed to:

The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.

The responsibility to protect children from all forms of abuse, including bullying, is the responsibility of parents, teachers, and other adults in the community who are in contact with children and youth. Article 19 of the CRC addresses the rights of children who are at the receiving end of bullying and harassment:

Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

Many children endure bullying on a daily basis. This type of abuse is a violation of human rights. All children involved in bullying require support to promote healthy development and positive relationships and to protect their welfare. Finding ways of predicting and preventing the development of these relationship problems is a necessity. Bullying is not simply about threats and intimidation, it is an abuse of a child's human rights.

Through human rights education (HRE), teachers can promote healthy relationships and prevent bullying. HRE supports children and youth in developing important social skills essential to bullying prevention, such as understanding, respect, social responsibility, conflict resolution, and citizenship. These attributes are not only the cornerstones of human rights, they are also the foundation for a cohesive, productive, and peaceful classroom, school, and society. This issue of *Rights Sites News* is dedicated to helping teachers create bully-free classrooms where everyone feels safe, valued, and respected. □

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"DON'T LAUGH AT ME"

Don't laugh at me, don't call me names,
Don't take your pleasure from my pain.

I'm a little boy with glasses
The one they call a geek,
A little girl who never smiles
'Cause I have braces on my teeth
And I know how it feels to cry myself to sleep

I'm that kid on every playground
Who's always chosen last
A single teenage mother
Tryin' to overcome my past
You don't have to be my friend
But is it too much to ask:

Don't laugh at me, Don't call me names
Don't get your pleasure from my pain...

Don't laugh at me I'm fat, I'm thin,
I'm short, I'm tall,
I'm deaf, I'm blind, hey aren't we all.

~ Steve Seskin and Allen Shamblin



Lesson: Everyone Has the Right to be Safe at School

Objectives: To understand the definition of bullying, identify a range of bullying behaviors, recognize the emotional impact these behaviors have on others, and create a class contract to ensure that all students feel safe and respected.

Time Frame: 1-2 class periods **Grades:** 4-7

Materials: • Large sheets of paper and markers • “That Hurts” handout (see page 3)

Appropriate Subject Areas: Social Studies, Language Arts

Procedure:

- 1. Define.** Review the following definition with your students: *Bullying is being mean to others on purpose to hurt them or their feelings.*
Bullying behavior:

 - Is intended to hurt - bullying is not accidental, it is a deliberate act to control, demean, or hurt someone.
 - Is repeated - bullying happens more than once; it can be done by several different people to one person, or can be one person bullying several different people.
 - Involves unequal power and control - the person doing the bullying is perceived to have more power in the situation; forms of power can include size, number, social status, ability, or economic resources.
- 2. Brainstorm.** As a large group, ask students to brainstorm bullying behaviors. **Note:** *if students don't include examples of cyberbullying, prompt such examples as facebook, texting, GChat.* As they brainstorm, write their answers out on chart paper. Try to separate the answers according to the three different types of bullying - physical, verbal, and social/emotional (see reference on page 3 and graphic on page 4). Have students define what they think each type means. Give each small group a blank piece of paper and have them draw three columns with the headings physical, verbal, and social/emotional.
- 3. Divide and Present.** Provide each group with a copy of the handout, “That Hurts.” **Note:** *Switch out scenarios as necessary, to address school specific issues that are relevant to the grade level you teach.* Have students cut out each situation and place it in the column that corresponds to the type of bullying being portrayed. Have each group present one of the situations answering the following questions:

 - In which column did you place the situation?
 - How did you answer the “What do you think?” scenario question?

Tip: For older students, instead of using the scenarios, you can have each group pick a bullying behavior and create a short scenario. The class will identify the type of bullying being demonstrated and whether the situation meets the definition of bullying: a) Is the behavior intended to hurt someone? b) Is it repeated? c) Does it involve unequal power and control?
- 4. Discuss.** As a class discuss the following questions:

 - Which of these types of bullying do you think happens most frequently in our school and in our classroom?
 - What do you think is the most difficult kind of bullying to stop?
 - Which type of bullying do you think hurts the most?
 - How is cyberbullying the same as or different from in-person bullying?
- 5. Explain.** Explain to students that “*Everyone has the right to feel safe.*” Let students know that you are going to talk about how they want to be treated by others at school in order to feel safe and prevent bullying. Then, as a class, they are going to create a contract that focuses on the rights and responsibilities they will be accountable for as a school community, both on and off school grounds. Explain that a contract is a list of behaviors agreed to by everyone - the purpose is to hold ourselves accountable and let us hold others accountable.
- 6. Brainstorm.** As a large group or in small groups ask students to think about and write down ideas about:

 - How they would like to be treated by others.
 - What to do to prevent bullying.
 - What to do if they see bullying happen.

Note: *be sure to cover examples of cyberbullying during the brainstorm.*
- 7. Create Contract.** Write the guidelines down on chart paper in clear, simple terms, making sure that everyone understands the meaning of each guideline. Writing down ALL ideas and using the student’s exact words provides a greater sense of ownership. You can then work as a class to review and modify the list. For contract statement examples, see: www.peelregion.ca/health/bullying/pdfs/September-J-LPRF.pdf. *Option: You may want to create a parallel list of positive behaviors for any negative behavior suggested. (i.e. “listen and respect the opinions of others to counter “don’t laugh at others.” Also see “Be an Upstander” on page 3).*

8. Review, Sign, and Post. Review what the consequences will be for not following the guidelines - some of these may be covered by school practices, but you may wish to brainstorm ideas as a class for items not covered by school practices. All students and teachers should sign the contract. Post the contract somewhere obvious in the classroom so it can be used to encourage peer accountability when students are not following the guidelines.



Bullying Behaviors

Bullying can be **direct** (face to face) or **indirect** (behind someone's back). Bullying can be **physical**, **verbal**, or **social**.

Physical Bullying <i>Hurting someone's body</i>	Verbal Bullying <i>Hurting someone's feelings</i>	Social/Emotional Bullying <i>Hurting someone in a relational sense</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Punching/Hitting • Biting • Kicking • Pushing • Hair Pulling • Locking a room or locker • Any physical attack • Stealing • Damaging someone's stuff • Attacking people • Using weapons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name-calling • Teasing • Abusive language • Sexual remarks or jokes • Threats • Abusive telephone calls • Rumors • Racial slurs • Rudeness • Bossing people around • Gossip • Insults • Lying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipulating relationships • Ruining friendships • Rude gestures and faces • Excluding • Ignoring • Isolating • Malicious notes or emails • Intimidation • Embarrassing people • Making people feel inferior or helpless • Frightening people • Rumors • Gossip • Humiliating people • Extortion

Note: There is crossover between social/emotional bullying and other categories, so the students may have some difficulty identifying the difference between them. Some examples of bullying may fit in two categories. This opens the door for a good discussion.

Be an Upstander!

Ways you can help others who are being picked on

- Choose not join in when people are picking on or laughing at someone.
- Speak out against unkind words or actions.
- Say something kind or positive to the person who's being picked on or laughed at.
- Let an adult know what's going on.
- Ask people who are teasing how it would feel if they were the ones being teased.
- Ask the person who's being left out or picked on to join you in an activity.

That Hurts!

Manual was new to the school and everybody seemed to like the way he could make them laugh. Usually he did funny things like making weird faces or standing on his head. Lately, however, Manuel has been teasing the younger kids at school by saying that he is going to "beat them up" if they didn't do what he says. He thinks this is very funny.

What do you think?

Every June, the school had a talent show. Some of the kids would sing, some would play the piano, some would do a skit. It was lots of fun. Mrs. Brown, the grade five teacher, knew that Colin was taking ballet and was very good at it. She suggested that he demonstrate his talent at the show. He agreed, but when he danced the whole class started to whisper and giggle. Now kids tease him about his dancing. Colin thinks that maybe he should just quit ballet, even though he enjoys it and knows he is very good at it.

What do you think?

Jeremy has a speech problem. He stutters very badly, particularly when he feels nervous. The kids love to ask him questions starting with "S" or "D" just so they can hear him stutter. Then they laugh and ask him to say it again. Jeremy's mom says he should just ignore them.

What do you think?

Amanda reported some girls in her class for stealing her pencil case. As soon as she got home, instant messages started popping up on her computer and phone. She was a "tattletale and a liar," they said. Shaken, she typed back, "You stole my stuff!" She was a "stuck-up brat," came the instant response, followed by a series of increasingly ugly insults. She thinks she should tell someone, but she's afraid the insults will only get worse.

What do you think?

For several weeks, Jenna, Brittany and Sabrina had been "best friends." They spent recesses together and had great times. Last weekend all of that changed when Jenna decided that she only wanted to be friends with Brittany. As Sabrina ran to join them at recess on Monday, she was startled to see they were suddenly ignoring her, and they actually ran away. This continued all week and Sabrina felt really left out. Jenna said that they had the right to choose who they wanted to play with.

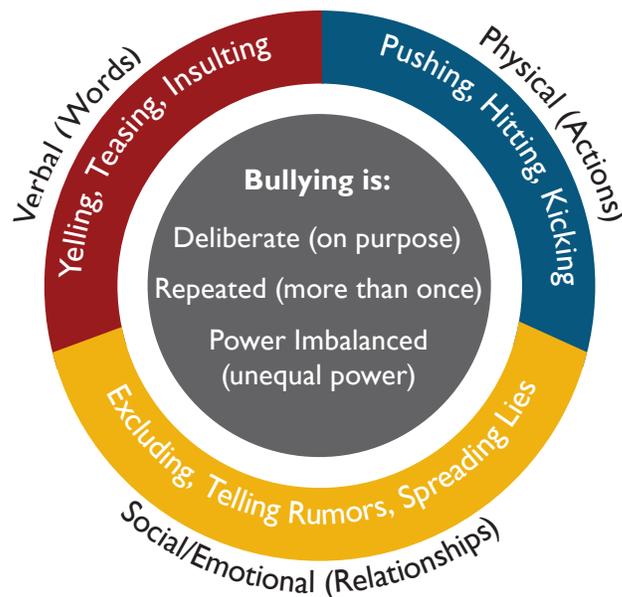
What do you think?

Every recess, all the boys in the class met at the soccer field to play a game - all except Charles. Charles would run there every day, hoping to join the others, but they would tell him that he had to keep score because he wasn't athletic. Charles started to think that maybe they were right.

What do you think?

TIPS TO STOP BULLYING

1. **Try to make friends with other students.** Join clubs or take part in activities where you'll meet other kids. A bully is less likely to mess with you and your friends, especially if you stick up for each other.
2. **Talk to an adult or someone you trust.** Together, you and an adult can come up with a plan to stop the bullying. If the situation gets worse, this adult can intervene.
3. **Avoid situations where bullying can happen.** Stay away from areas where you may be alone with a bully. Try to stay in areas that are supervised or an area where you are with your friends.
4. **If you are being bullied online, don't reply.** This may actually make the bullying worse. Instead, be sure to tell a family member or another adult you trust. If possible, block any more communications from this person. (For example, it might be a good idea only to accept messages from people you know.) Save evidence of the bullying. If you get a nasty e-mail, print it out or save it so that you can show it to an adult.
5. **If it feels safe, try to stand up to the person who is bullying you.** If the person who is bullying you thinks you won't do anything about it, they are more likely to keep picking on you. This doesn't mean you should fight back or bully them back. Instead, tell the person bullying you that you don't like it and that they should stop! If you're afraid to talk to the person who is bullying you by yourself, then you might want to ask someone else to be there with you. Kids who bully are more likely to listen, and less likely to bully you, when you're with someone and not alone. If you're not comfortable standing up to someone who has bullied you, that's definitely OK! Just walk away. But be sure to tell an adult.
6. **Don't blame yourself for the bully's actions.** Most of the time, a bully is a bully because of something that they are uncomfortable about within themselves. If you let a bully get to you, the situation can get worse.



THE FACTS

- 77% of the students say they have been bullied mentally, verbally, or physically. Cyberbullying statistics reveal similar numbers: 14% of those who were bullied say they have experienced severe (bad) reactions to the abuse.
- 8% of urban middle and high school students miss one day of school a month due to fear. Each day, 160,000 students miss school for fear of being bullied.
- Every 7 minutes a child is bullied.
- One in four children who bullies will have a criminal record before the age of 30.
- 1 out of 5 kids admit to being a bully, or doing some "bullying."
- 43% of students fear harassment in the bathroom at school.
- Many children and teens are bullies or victims of bullies, but the largest number of children and teens are bystanders -- witnesses to bullying.
- Girls can be bullies too, although bullying by girls is more likely to show up as spreading rumors, leaving people out of social events, teasing about clothes or boyfriends, or threatening to withdraw friendship.
- LGBT teens are bullied 2 to 3 times as much as straight teens.
- 282,000 students are physically attacked in secondary schools each month. 46% of males and 26% of females reported they had been in physical fights according to school bullying statistics.
- Teenagers say revenge is the strongest motivation for school shootings: 87% said shootings are motivated by a desire to "get back at those who have hurt them." 86% said, "other kids picking on them, making fun of them or bullying them" causes teenagers to turn to lethal violence in the schools.
- Bully victims are between 2 to 9 times more likely to consider suicide than non-victims.
- Over 50% of students have been bullied online, and about the same number have engaged in cyberbullying.
- Although much bullying happens where adults cannot see or hear it, it also happens when adults are present. Often adults do not do anything to stop the bullying.
- Half of all bullying incidents go unreported. Fewer than 1 in 5 cyberbullying incidents are reported to law enforcement.



THE DOS AND DON'TS - BULLYING PREVENTION GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS

Some anti-bullying policies actually do more harm than good. Educators can use the following tips to intervene appropriately.

THE DOS

- **Watch for signs.** A student who is being bullied is often reluctant to tell his/her teachers or parents about it because she/he fears retaliation. As teachers we should be aware of the signs that a child is being bullied such as: fear of walking to and from school, being afraid to get on the bus, skipping school, making excuses not to go to school, and unexplained bruises and torn clothes. A student who is being bullied will often appear angry, aggressive, withdrawn, depressed and anxious.
- **Stop the bullying immediately.** Stand between the bullied student and the bully(ies), blocking eye contact. Don't send any bystanders away. To avoid escalating the tension, wait until later to sort out the facts. Talk to the parties involved separately once they are calm.
- **Establish class rules against bullying and refer to them.** There must be clearly understood consequences for students who are bullies. Speak in a matter-of-fact tone of voice to describe what you heard or saw. Let all students know that bullying is always unacceptable.
- **Support the bullied child.** Do this in a way that allows him/her to maintain their dignity and feel safe from retaliation. Make a point to see the child later in private if he/she is upset. Increase supervision to assure that bullying is not repeated.
- **Offer guidance to bystanders.** Let them know how they might appropriately intervene or get help next time. Tell them you noticed their inaction or that you're pleased with the way they tried to help.
- **Impose immediate consequences.** Wait until all parties have calmed down. Do not require that students apologize or make amends that may be insincere. The consequences should be logical and connected to the offense. A first step could be taking away social privileges e.g., recess or lunch in the cafeteria.
- **Notify colleagues and parents.** Let the bully know he or she is being watched.
- **Follow up and intervene as necessary.** Support the bullied child and the bully, enabling them to vent feelings and recognize their own behavior. The bully may need to learn new methods of using his or her power and influence.
- **Create a positive classroom environment.** Help kids feel safe both physically and emotionally in your classroom. Integrate bullying prevention themes across the curriculum. Teach kindness, respect, and compassion for others. Value students' opinions and ideas, and recognize their strengths. Let them know they can count on you. Set a good example. Many students have reported that teachers and coaches use the power of their position to shame and embarrass students. This is not an appropriate way to manage the situation.

THE DON'Ts

- **Do not confuse bullying with conflict.** Bullying is a form of victimization, and addressing it as a "conflict" downplays the negative behavior and the seriousness of the effects. Educators should strive to send the message that "no one deserves to be bullied," and to let the bully know the behavior is wholly inappropriate.
- **Don't Make It Worse.** Don't chastise someone who is bullying in front of the entire class. Devise an excuse to pull the victim out of the line of fire and then approach his assailants individually at a later date.
- **Do not use labels.** Identify the problem as bullying behavior and avoid labeling children and youth as "bullies and victims." These labels limit how they think about themselves and how others think of them." Refer instead to the person "bullying others" or "being bullied."
- **Do not use peer mediation.** It can be very upsetting for a child who has been bullied to face his or her tormentor in mediation. Giving both parties an equal voice can empower the bully and make the bullied student feel worse. In addition, there is no evidence that peer mediation is effective in stopping bullying
- **Do not use group treatment for bullies.** Some schools use therapeutic strategies such as anger management, skill-building, empathy-building, and self-esteem building to reach the bully. In practice, group members can actually reinforce each others' bullying and antisocial behavior. *Although peer mediation has been shown to be successful when all students involved are a party to the conflict - see article on page 9).*
- **Do not tell the student who is being bullied:** to avoid the bully, to fight back, that he/she should not feel angry, or that it is their fault.

ANTI-BULLYING TEACHER RESOURCES

Anti-Defamation League Lessons on Bullying

www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/cyberbullying/
www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/winter_2005/

These two issues of Curriculum Connections provide educators with a background about bullying in U.S. schools. The lesson aim to increase empathy and help students respond constructively to bullying they observe or experience in their communities.

BullyBust: Center for Social and Emotional Education

www.schoolclimate.org/bullybust/

BullyBust is an awareness campaign designed to reduce bullying in schools by teaching students and adults how to stand up to bullying and promote upstander behavior.

Bully B'ware

www.bullybeware.com

Information, stories, and action plans on bullying and strategies for safer schools.

Bully Free Classroom Resources

www.freespirit.com/bullyfree/

Reduce physical fights, witness improved test scores, and create bully-free classrooms at your school with Free Spirit Publishing's practical, easy-to-use resources and curricula.

Exploring the Nature and Prevention of Bullying Training

www2.ed.gov/adms/lead/safety/training/bullying/index.html

This comprehensive, facilitated online training by the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools is designed to enhance educators' understanding of bullying in schools while providing information for participants to refine their school's bullying prevention plan.

Eyes on Bullying - Toolkit

www.eyesonbullying.org/pdfs/toolkit.pdf

This toolkit helps teachers and students better understand and respond to bullying; learn about effective strategies for controlling bullying; create an environment where everyone understands that bullying is unacceptable, harmful, and preventable; and feel empowered to actively intervene to prevent and stop bullying.

Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) for Safe Schools

www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/antibullying/index.html

GSA offers programs and resources to make middle schools and high schools safe for all students, including LGBT youths.

It Gets Better Project

www.itgetsbetterproject.com

This project aims to stop bullying, violence, and hate against lesbian, gay, bi, trans, and other bullied teens. Video messages are posted from around the country, including President Obama, in which people tell LGBT youth that "it gets better."

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights

www.itgetsbetterproject.com

This curriculum promotes thoughtful examination and responsible action among high school students about lesbian gay, bisexual, and transgender issues. Students are asked to take responsibility for the homophobia that causes human rights abuses at school.

No Name-Calling Week

www.nonamecallingweek.org

This campaign is an annual week of educational activities targeted for 5-8 grades aimed at ending name-calling in schools. It includes a resource kit with guides to organizing, a 27-minute video about name-calling, and a teacher resource book.

Pacer National Center for Bullying Prevention

<http://www.pacer.org/bullying/>

The Pacer Center provides programs, resources, and lessons for teens, parents and schools, including information on National Bullying Prevention Month (October), online surveys, and a digital petition. Teens Against Bullying offers engaging activities and strategies for teens to combat bullying.

Safe Schools Coalition

www.safeschoolscoalition.org/safe.html

This public-private partnership aims to reduce bias-based bullying and violence in schools by raising awareness among students, educators, and parents. It also includes content on law and public policy, Spanish-language resources, and classroom materials.

Stop Bullying Now

<http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp>

This U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website offers flash movies, games, and information for both students and adults on bullying and how to prevent it.

Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere

www.safeyouth.gov/Pages/Home.aspx

STRIVE provides resources for students, parents, teachers, healthcare practitioners, and community members on bullying, dating violence, and school violence.

Students Against Violence Everywhere

www.nationalsave.org/main/bully.php

SAVE promotes civility and respect and decreases the potential for violence in schools and communities by promoting meaningful student involvement, education, and service opportunities.

Teaching Tolerance

www.tolerance.org

This site provides classroom activities, teaching kits, and resources for teachers looking to reduce prejudice, improve inter-group dynamics, and support equitable school experiences for children.

Tips for On-the-Spot Intervention at School

http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/HHS_PSA/pdfs/SBN_Tip_4.pdf

This handout offers ways to effectively respond "on the spot" to bullying in school and provides tips on making the situation a "teachable moment" for other students.

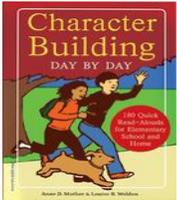
Welcoming Schools

www.welcomingschools.org/

Welcoming Schools, an initiative of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation Family Project, provides administrators, educators, and parents/guardians with the resources necessary to create learning environments in which all learners are welcomed and respected.



BOOKS FOR YOUTH ON BULLYING

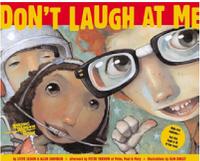


Character Building Day by Day

By Anne D. Mather

www.freespirit.com/catalog/item_detail.cfm?ITEM_ID=400

180 short stories featuring kids making difficult decisions in real-life situations. Great for daily character education for elementary students. Ages 5-12.

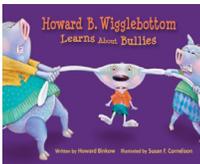


Don't Laugh at Me

By Steve Seskin, Allen Shamblin

www.steveseskin.com/newbooks/

Don't Laugh at Me is a children's book and CD about children who wear braces, are chosen last for teams, beg on street corners, and yet plead for acceptance and understanding. The story gives voice to our human condition: the desire to know that we belong, no matter how small, slow, sick, different, or poor we are. Ages 6-11.

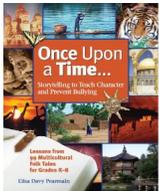


Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns About Bullies

By Howard Binkow

www.wedolisten.com/bullies.html

An exuberant rabbit named Howard is being bullied at school. Refusing to tell his teacher, Howard quickly finds out his other strategies of ignoring, avoiding, and making jokes worsens the situation. Finally, he tells his teacher who takes the appropriate action to end the bullying. Ages 4-8.

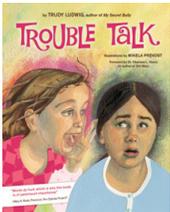


Once Upon a Time... Storytelling to Teach Character and Prevent Bullying

By Elisa Davy Pearmain

www.wisdomtales.com/publications.html

This collection features 99 multicultural folk tales. Winner of the Story Telling World Award, this collection not only teaches children about character-building and bullying prevention, it also helps them develop personal communication and storytelling skills. Ages 12 and up.

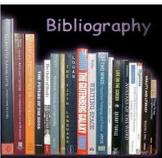


Trouble Talk

By Trudy Ludwig

www.trudyludwig.com/mybook_troubletalk.html

Maya befriends Bailey, the new girl at school. At first, Maya likes Bailey because she loves to talk about everyone and everything. But when Bailey's talk leads to hurtful rumors and bruised feelings, Maya turns to her school counselor for advice. Ages 4-8.



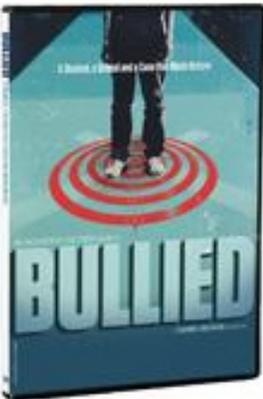
Bibliographies

www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/winter_2005/bibliography.asp?cc_section=biblio

www.pacer.org/bullying/kab/readinglist.asp

Reading stories about bullying and bystander intervention can be a powerful way to discuss bullying interventions. The books in the bibliography lists above incorporate age appropriate story lines on handling bullying situations and allow the opportunity for drawing parallels between the story and situations that have happened at school.

FEATURED FILM: *BULLIED: A STUDENT, A SCHOOL AND A CASE THAT MADE HISTORY*



Bullied is a documentary film that chronicles one student's ordeal at the hands of anti-gay bullies and offers an inspiring message of hope to those fighting harassment today. This NEA-endorsed film is designed to help administrators, teachers, and counselors create a safer environment for middle and high school students. It is also intended to help all students understand the terrible toll bullying can take on its victims, and to encourage students to stand up for their classmates who are being harassed.

Bullied includes a 40-minute documentary film (DVD), with closed captioning and with Spanish subtitles, a two-part viewer's guide with standards-aligned lesson plans and activities for use in staff development, and additional resources and materials online. The complete kit (appropriate for use with grades 6-12) is available for free at www.tolerance.org/bullied. □

"This film is powerful, important and extremely realistic. It provides teachers with a rare opportunity to address bullying in a real and meaningful way."

- Lee Cutler, Secretary/Treasurer,
New York State United Teachers



BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMS

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) is the most researched and best-known bullying prevention program available today. With over thirty-five years of research and successful implementation all over the world, OBPP is a whole school program that has been proven to prevent or reduce bullying throughout a school setting. Studies of the program have shown:



- Reduction in bullying by up to 70%.
- Significant reductions in student reports of general antisocial behavior, such as vandalism, fighting, theft, and truancy.
- Significant improvements in the social climate of the classroom and student satisfaction with school life.

The program clearly asserts that bullying is peer abuse and is a human rights issue. OBPP is used at the school, classroom, and individual levels and includes methods to reach out to parents and the community for involvement and support. School administrators, teachers, and other staff are primarily responsible for introducing and implementing the program. These efforts are designed to improve peer relations and make the school a safer and more positive place for students to learn and develop.

OBPP guiding principles of bullying prevention:

1. A school climate characterized by acceptance, positive interest, respect, and involvement with adults is important to promote an environment which supports learning and the development of the whole child.
2. Effective bullying prevention is based on an authoritative, not authoritarian, model for the relationship between adults and children, where teachers are expected to demonstrate responsibility for the students' total environment, not just their learning.
3. Developing simple, clear, and firm rules about bullying can help to ensure that students are aware of adults' expectations that they can refrain from bullying and help students who are bullied. If a student does not meet expectations that have been established, consequences must be applied consistently and appropriately.
4. The collection and use of survey information from students and staff should guide decision making about effectiveness of the program and subsequent plans.

For more information on the **Olweus Bullying Prevention Program**, visit www.hazelden.org/olweus or call 1-800-328-9000. □



Other Bullying Prevention Programs



Operation Respect: Don't Laugh at Me

www.dontlaugh.org

Operation Respect works to assure each child a respectful climate of learning free of bullying, ridicule, and violence through the dissemination of free resources and information. The *Don't Laugh at Me* program, based off a highly regarded conflict resolution curricula, includes music, video, and a curriculum guide available for grades 2-5 and 6-8.



"Steps to Respect" Bullying Prevention Program - Committee for Children

<http://www.cfchildren.org/programs/str/overview/>

This non-profit works globally through education and advocacy to prevent bullying, violence, and child abuse. The research-based, school-wide curriculum, *Steps to Respect: A Bullying Prevention Program*, teaches elementary and middle school students to recognize, refuse, and report bullying, and to be assertive and build friendships.



Stomp Out Bullying

<http://stompoutbullying.org/index.php>

This program focuses on reducing and preventing bullying, cyberbullying, sexting and other digital abuse, educating against homophobia, racism and hatred, decreasing school absenteeism and truancy, and deterring violence in schools, online and in communities across the country. It includes peer mentoring programs in schools, public service announcements by noted celebrities, in-school education, and online and social media campaigns.

BULLYING: A HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL STUDIES ISSUE

By: Ernst Andrew Brewer and Rebecca P. Harlin

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“Bullying and victimization in schools have become major concerns for parents, teachers, and school psychologists” (Leff, Kupersmidt, and Patterson, 1999, p. 505). Elementary and middle school teachers likely have seen students bully each other, so it is important that they notice the characteristics associated with being bullied and

recognize bullying in all its forms: physical, verbal, and psychological (Olweus, 2003). This knowledge will help teachers take action in bullying situations and resolve these conflicts.

The negative outcomes of bullying can be seen in the relationship between bullying behavior and school issues, such as academic achievement, school bonding, and absenteeism (Dake, Price, and Telljohan, 2003). Even just the initial stages of bullying can bring about changes in the victimized students’ actions and demeanor: students may be afraid to walk home or even go to lunch, because they do not feel safe outside of the classroom. Other students may sit at their desks and just stare off into the distance, not paying attention to the teacher or to anything that is going on. Students may develop health problems as a result of bullying (Fekkes, Pijpers, Fredriks, Vogels, and Verloove-Vanhorick, 2006).

Bullying can be addressed in many forums, but some researchers believe that social studies classes are an excellent venue for addressing bullying as a human rights issue (Kirman, 2004). Social studies curricula are designed to familiarize students with the core values and principles of one’s country. Through the social studies, students acquire the requisite knowledge and strategies to become citizens who effectively exercise their constitutional rights and privileges. The social studies also can build students’ understanding of community, justice, and human rights. This article describes the relevance of bullying to each of these areas of social studies understanding.

DEVELOPING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

In the primary grades, social studies curricula initiate children’s understanding of the concept of community. Children learn about community helpers through stories and bulletin board displays featuring letter carriers, firefighters, nurses, doctors, and police officers. Children construct models of their neighborhoods, emulate community helpers through role-playing, and take field trips to see community helpers in action. These activities are enjoyable, but do they really expand students’ understanding of how a community functions? If the social studies unit focuses on the adult community helpers, then children may assume that they themselves bear no real responsibility for their community’s health and security. To counteract this perception, social studies curricula can incorporate activities that enable students to recognize

and function in the communities where they participate most directly—their classroom and school. Therefore, teachers who consistently focus on the classroom and school communities can provide concrete experiences for children to construct accurate perceptions of their individual and collective responsibilities.

Learning the Roles

It is essential that teachers encourage children’s participation in their classroom communities and emphasize the integral role that each individual plays. The classroom community can be designed to ensure that everyone assumes responsibility for others’ well-being and safety, including in bullying situations. Children can learn the ways in which the classroom community includes and respects everyone. For example, when children notice that a peer is excluded in the classroom, the playground, and/or the lunchroom, they should take action to include and welcome that individual. They should come to understand that exclusion is a form of bullying as harmful to the victim as physical bullying. It should be noted that children will recognize whether their teachers take action in exclusion situations as often as they do in physical bullying. In addition, children need models who demonstrate what to do when they are bystanders to bullying situations (Frey et al., 2005). In safe classroom and school communities, bullying is neither ignored nor tolerated.

Making the Rules

Children wonder how rules are developed and enforced. Most teachers recognize the importance of formulating classroom rules with their students, but may overlook the wording of their rules.

There is a difference between enforcing a list of rules beginning with “Don’t” and a list of those that start with “Do.” Children want to know what they should be doing and what the boundaries are in the classroom context. These rules support children’s positive contributions, since they provide clear expectations for everyone’s behavior. Teachers also can identify and use a particular set of life skills (Kovalik and Olsen, 1994). These are such traits as caring, responsibility, respect, and friendship, among others, that can be used to establish and maintain a positive learning environment.

Just because it has not yet been possible to eradicate bullying (as is the case with sexism or racism), this does not mean bullying should continue. No student should feel unsafe in a school setting; teachers who emphasize positive, caring behaviors in the classroom environment can only help students become secure. In addition, teachers should familiarize their students with the school rules and policies regarding bullying (Eisenberg and Aalsma, 2005).

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Learning the Appropriate Behavior

The social studies provide many opportunities for teachers to set aside time to discuss students' problems with bullying, identify types of bullying behaviors, and develop an understanding of the school's expectations. During these discussions, students learn what they are supposed to do in bullying situations—who to tell, how to act, and what support they can expect from adults. Rowan (2007) states, "Role-playing is useful for acting out bullying scenarios in which students practice conflict resolution. A follow-up class discussion gives students opportunities to elaborate on what has been learned" (p. 183). Younger children often need guidance to differentiate between tattling and telling. To avoid confusion, teachers need to devote time to discuss how these behaviors apply in bullying situations. Teachers can clarify what will happen to the bully, the victim, and the bystander. All students should be able to answer the following: 1) How will victims and bullies be handled? 2) What will the consequences of bullying be? 3) How will the classroom community support victims and enact bully prevention strategies?

Teachers can take preventive measures before bullying occurs. Beyond the obvious measures of teacher awareness, constant presence, and alertness (e.g., stand at the door, observe the tenor of all entering students, note changes in demeanor), a teacher must first ensure that parents and students know that bullying will not be tolerated in the classroom, on school grounds, or during school-sponsored functions, such as field trips. Parents should be able to expect that the teacher will act, and not ignore, bullying at school. It should be evident that whether their child is the bully or the victim, parents can depend upon the teacher to treat their children fairly.

Applying the Rules

Likewise, it should be evident to students that the rules regarding bullying are uniformly applied and enforced by all adults within the school. The National School Boards Association's Council of Urban Boards of Education conducted a nationwide survey of students' feelings on school safety and bullying. Their findings, reported on the ABC News show *Primetime*, showed that older students had less confidence in their school's ability to stop bullying (Croft, 2006). Likewise, a recent National Crime Victimization Survey of 3.7 million teachers revealed that 79 percent of elementary and only 56 percent of secondary teachers enforced school rules (Dinkes, Cataldi, and Lin-Kelly, 2007). When a substantial number of teachers are not accepting responsibility for school safety, nor enforcing equal treatment of rule violators, how can we expect students to take action in bullying situations or believe they will be treated fairly? Therefore, schools and classrooms should exemplify communities in which members receive equal protection, respect, consideration, and treatment.

DEVELOPING A SENSE OF JUSTICE

Social studies curricula devote considerable discussion to the balance of power among the branches of government as well as to a nation's system of justice. Students learn about the court system at each governmental level and the ways that justice has defined citizens' rights and responsibilities throughout history. To assist students' understanding of the court system, social studies teachers may hold mock court trials of famous cases, in which students role play the parties involved. These exercises serve as vicarious experiences with the justice system, but the students have no real say or investment in the outcomes or the fairness of such proceedings.

Promoting Responsibility and Justice

Since the social studies are intended to develop students' understanding of democratic systems of justice, students need real experiences dealing with disputes and making decisions fair to the parties involved as well as to their community. In preparation for this responsibility, schools must provide students with extensive training and opportunities to share and accept power within the school. Peer mediation is one means of developing students' requisite skills and knowledge of justice (Varnham, 2005).

Elementary, middle, and secondary schools have implemented peer mediation systems to involve students in resolving conflicts, thereby empowering students and encouraging their participation in the school community (Kajs, Thomas, Wilson, and Zambon, 2001). While the zero-tolerance policies used in schools in the United States and other countries result in students being expelled or suspended for their behavior, peer mediation provides alternatives that keep students in school and hold them accountable for their behaviors and conduct, including bullying (Nairn and Smith, 2002; Varnham, 2005).

Through peer mediation, students must consider both sides of a bullying dispute, evaluate the information, and develop workable solutions that are fair and agreeable to all parties. Peer mediation promotes each student's stake in the bullying situation and underscores the message that bullying is not the acceptable social norm for the school. It is likely that the students' solutions are more sensible and understandable to their peers than whatever might be achieved by adults invoking the school's disciplinary system. Finally, research has shown that peer mediation increases student interest in the justice and legal system, while promoting citizenship (Kajs et al., 2001).

DEVELOPING AN UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Human rights advocates around the world have denounced bullying. While bullying may have been in existence as long as there have been schools, it is no longer viewed as a rite of passage for children. This changing perception represents an opportunity for social studies curricula to explore the ways this human rights protection is initiated, defined, and enacted by different states within the United States, as well as around the world.

3.7 million teachers revealed that 79% of elementary and only 56% of secondary teachers enforced school rules. When a substantial number of teachers are not accepting responsibility for school safety, nor enforcing equal treatment of rule violators, how can we expect students to take action in bullying situations or believe they will be treated fairly?

Legislative Protection From Bullying

American elementary and middle school students learn about the legislative process during social studies class. Traditionally, this unit of study focuses on the process of how a bill becomes a law—who is involved and what steps are taken along the way, from a bill proposal to enactment. Students may be disinterested in the legislative process because it seems irrelevant to them. This perception may change, however, when teachers incorporate their state's attempts to pass legislation about bullying. Linfer and Small (2003) report, "State laws have a greater potential to influence policies and practices of local school districts and individual schools related to bullying" (p. 446).

Thirty-six of the fifty states have passed legislation about bullying (Bully Police USA, 2008). As students focus upon their state's legislative process, they have a firsthand connection not only to how the process relates to their lives, but also to how their human rights are being protected. Students can compare their understanding of bullying with the state's definition. Legislation often contains language pertaining both to bullying and harassment. Examining the purposes and consequences of the law provides further opportunities for students to understand the impact on their individual rights, well-being, and safety. Some states specify the support that both bullies and victims will receive. For information about individual states' anti-bullying laws, visit the Bully Police websites (www.bullypolice.org or www.bullypolice.net). In fact, this study may enable students to more fully appreciate the bullying policies and anti-bullying programs their schools have enacted or should be initiating.

Florida provides an appropriate example of the process involved in initiating and passing such legislation. The Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up for All Students Act passed unanimously in both the Florida House of Representatives and the Florida Senate, and Governor Charlie Crist is expected to sign it into law (Sampson and Gilpatrick, 2008). Enactment of this bill will have taken three years, as legislators debated the definitions of bullying, categories of students who would be protected, and even the need for such a bill (Sampson, 2008). This act prohibits bullying and harassment of any K-12 public school student or employee, including through the use of school computers and networks. Not only are all students afforded equal protection, they may be referred for counseling whether they are the bully or the victim. School districts are required to develop policies on bullying and harassment that specify processes for investigating claims of bullying and harassment, notifying parents, and outlining the consequences of these acts for individuals who commit them (Sampson and Gilpatrick, 2008).

International Protection

Social studies textbooks and curricula generally include a discussion of the role of the UN in promoting world peace, aiding victims of war and natural disasters, and advocating for human rights. Yet, teachers may be unaware of this organization's actions on behalf of children's rights. They must help their students recognize that freedom from bullying and harassment are human rights issues.

State Bullying Information

Most states have laws to address bullying, harassment, and hazing. To view your state's information, go to www.bullypolice.org/. Some states also have a coordinator to direct violence prevention efforts. To find yours, visit: www.olweus.org/public/bullying_laws.page.

In 1989, the United Nations proclaimed that children deserve and need special protection, care, and safeguards under its Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Consequently, the UN convened and adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This document had been in development since 1978, when the United Nations sponsored the International Year of the Child. Among the 54 articles are two that became legally binding and are pertinent to bullying and human rights. Article 19 states that: *States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s), or any other person who has the care of the child* (Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1990).

[Teachers] must help their students recognize that freedom from bullying and harassment are human rights issues addressed by the United Nations member nations.

Likewise, Article 29 pertains to the child's education and outlines several areas related to human rights and bullying: *b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations; . . . d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding,*

peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin (Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1990).

Since teachers and school personnel are entrusted with the care of children throughout the school day, it is imperative that each adult assumes responsibility for the well-being of the students, protecting them from physical and psychological harm. Each child, regardless of ethnicity, gender, culture, and language preference, deserves equal protection and should be able to rely on the adults to act on his/her behalf. Teachers should focus on uses and abuses of power and promote their students' positive attitudes and tolerance of others. Furthermore, the adults at school must model appropriate behaviors toward all children and recognize bullying for what it really is - a violation of children's human rights. □

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HUMAN RIGHTS CALENDAR

RIGHTS SITES NEWS

Volume 6 Issue 4 Fall 2010

NOVEMBER

National American Indian Heritage Month http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/heritage_month/aihm/index.html

- 9 Mix it Up Day - www.tolerance.org/teens/lunch/ljsp
- 9 Veterans Day - <http://www1.va.gov/opa/vetsday/>
- 14-20 American Education Week - <http://www.nea.org/grants/19823.htm>
- 15-21 Geography Awareness Week - www.mywonderfulworld.org/gaw.html
- 16 International Day of Tolerance - <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/tolerance/>
- 20 Universal Children's Day - <http://www.un.org/en/events/childrenday/>
- Transgender Day of Remembrance - www.gender.org
- 21 World Television Day - <http://www.un.org/en/events/televisionday/>
- 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women - <http://www.unifem.org/campaigns/25nov/>

DECEMBER

- 1 World Aids Day - <http://www.worldaidsday.org/>
- 2 International Day for the Abolition of Slavery - <http://www.un.org/en/events/slaveryabolitionday/>
- 3 International Day of Disabled Persons - <http://www.un.org/disabilities/default.asp?id=1540>
- 5 International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development - <http://www.un.org/en/events/volunteerday/>
- 9 International Anti-Corruption Day - <http://www.un.org/en/events/anticorruptionday/>
- 10 **Human Rights Day** - <http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/humanrights/>
- 18 International Migrants Day - <http://www.un.org/en/events/migrantsday/>
- 20 International Human Solidarity Day - <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/intldays/IntSolidarity/index.html>

JANUARY

Poverty Awareness in America Month <http://www.usccb.org/cchd/povertyusa/index.htm>

- 16 U.S. National Day of Religious Freedom - <http://religiousfreedomday.com/>
- 16 World Religion Day - <http://www.worldreligionday.org/>
- 18 Martin Luther King Day - <http://www.mlkday.gov/>
- 27 International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust - http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/ihrd/comment_post.php

Rights Sites News is published quarterly by the The Advocates for Human Rights to promote human rights education in the classroom and support teachers. We welcome suggestions and comments.

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