

Community Toolkit - Bullying

This toolkit is meant for use by community members to assist in situations where children are reporting harassment or discrimination (bullying). The resources herein are subject to change according to each individual situation, not all circumstances are “one size fit all”.

What is the definition of Bullying?

REPEATED teasing, threatening, physical violence, leaving someone out on purpose, gossiping, taunting, spreading rumors, hitting, taking or breaking someone’s things, discrimination or harassment based on race, sex, religion, ethnicity; usually involving an imbalance of power.

Bullying is NOT:

- Something that happens **ONE** time.
- A right of passage for teenagers, no one expects or deserves to be harassed and victimized.
- Something that can be changed or “fixed” without adults role modeling appropriate behavior and having expectations of respect and empathy within a family, school, neighborhood, and community.

What can communities do to combat bullying?

Promote school and community connectedness through youth driven activities and experiences (i.e. skate park, drama clubs, sports and art/music programs).

Model appropriate adult behavior and activities (i.e. sportsmanship expectations at events).

Get involved in local youth empowered programs, such as HCTC of Livingston County (Healthy Communities that Care).

How can you respond to a child who reports bullying?

- Ask questions about who is involved, what happened, when is it happening, how often, and what happened before and after the incident?

- Determine if this is a *true* bullying situation?

Yes, follow the lead of the child reporting the bullying and develop a plan together. Talk about what could happen, who can be involved and the time frame needed for the plan. Keep in mind if the victim chooses to not confront the bully, those wishes should be respected, however a safety plan needs to be developed in order to assure the students safety.

No, determine what follow through is appropriate for all parties involved, i.e. conversation with kids/parents about incident, development of safety plan, wait and see, determine who child can access if needed in the future.

Examples of Bullying situations:

- A 7th grade student rides on the bus each morning to school and there are many empty seats available. Some high school students move to the empty spots and don’t let her sit down; this happens every day for a week.
- Kids are walking down the main street in their community and run into another student from school. They begin to follow this student, call them names and yell at them. The next day at school, this same group of students torments this student again.
- The varsity football team makes the youngest players or “rookies” do some rituals (that aren’t pleasant) in the locker room each day after practice.

Community Members SHOULD

Model the behavior they wish to see in their community—speak out for people who need assistance and reject intimidation as an appropriate strategy

Advocate and enforce legal regulations regarding bullying and cyber bullying behaviors

Be prepared to deal with bullying in a variety of contexts, including online

Promote a sense of belonging to the community in children and adolescents

Community Members SHOULD NOT

Write off bullying as typical childhood behavior and assume that nothing can be done

Accept the bullying of people who are markedly different in some way

Speaking in a demeaning way about other groups can create a sense of psychological distance—“those people” aren’t like us and aren’t worthy of respect—that can foster bullying

Consider bullying to be an acceptable demonstration of “masculine” behavior

Consider bullying to be a sign of victim’s weakness

<http://www.alverno.edu/media/alvernocollege/pdfs/BullyingPreventionToolkitOnline.pdf>



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