

## INTERVENTION TIPS FOR PARENTS

*How do you help your child if they are bullied or are bullying others?*

Often, victims as well as perpetrators of bullying either remain quiet and discount or minimize the event. Sometimes, they begin to plan revenge (which then makes them the “bully”). These responses can be unhealthy for your child and do not address the problem. Encourage your child to talk about the bullying with you. You also may want them to work through the incident(s) with a counselor (school or community-based). Find out how long they have experienced bullying and how it has affected them. Share a story where you may have experienced similar events and or feelings.

### **Initial Response**

- *Encourage them to talk about it one on one*
- *Acknowledge and address the feelings first. Listen to them without judgment.*
- *Take action:*
  1. *Contact your school’s principal/school administrator*
  2. *Request the state-wide Bullying Reporting form and complete it*
  3. *Schedule an appointment with the school administrator for additional resources and /or concerns.*
- *Help your child identify healthy responses to the negative interaction.*
- *Role-play different bullying scenarios to help them practice assertive behaviors*
- *Enroll them in an assertiveness training /leadership program.*
- *Encourage participation in activities that emphasize their talents or interests.*
- *Set up social activities (do not let them isolate).*

### **Avoid**

- *Encouraging them to face the bully*
- *Placing blame*
- *Letting them seek revenge*
- *Letting them ignore it*
- *Allow them to make self-degrading comments (i.e. I deserved it) or (if I wasn’t so fat this wouldn’t have happened).*
- *Forcing them to talk about it (seek help from school counselor if they struggle talking about it at home).*
- *Bully them further or allowing siblings to bully them further.*
- *Ignoring the incident*

### **Signs to look for**

- *Self-harming behaviors (such as cutting self, over or under-eating, substance abuse, etc.)*
- *School Avoidance*
- *Complaints of physical illness*
- *Sleep Disturbance including nightmares and/or bedwetting*
- *Mood Instability*
- *Avoiding or dropping out of clubs, sports, extracurricular activities.*
- *Decrease in grades*
- *Sudden change in friendships or avoiding friends from school.*
- *Increase in isolated behaviors*
- *Bullying of siblings, relatives, or children in the neighborhood*

## PREVENTION TIPS FOR PARENTS

Most children who are bullied have a vulnerability or “risk” factor in their personality profile. The primary risk factors are low self-esteem and poor social skills. When bullied they often hold the belief that they somehow deserve it, are not worthy to report it, or that they need any friend they can get even if it is a “bully”. Some children become the “bully” because of similar social skill and self-esteem deficits. One way to give your child the armor they need to prevent them from being bullied or from becoming the bully is to work on the following traits:

**Self-Esteem** – If you ask any adult who struggles with self-esteem issues, they will rarely identify one major event in their life. Rather, they will often cite a mother or a father, or major caretaker who was either hyper-critical of their looks or their behavior or absent from acknowledging any of their strengths. As painful as this realization may be, recognizing your interaction style and making an effort to change behaviors that are “self-esteem killers” can make an enormous difference in the success of your child. Video tape or audio tape your conversations at the dinner table, during homework, and during every daily routine event. This will give you eye-opening information on how you speak to and respond to your child on a daily basis. Although this can be difficult, the information you will gain will help you establish a healthy relationship with your child and know where to make positive changes during interactions. Provide opportunities and activities in which they will be successful whether it is sports, art, theater, etc.

**Assertiveness training** – There are many books about Assertiveness Training however books and videos will only provide the how to and not necessarily the practice. Have your student practice these skills with you and reinforce assertive behavior and language. When your child uses passive language encourage them to try again. Habits are often hard to break. It is important that the rest of the family also learn these techniques so that they can easily identify the difference between passive versus assertive behavior. Encourage your child to take leadership roles in clubs and organizations.

**Social Skills** – More often today than in the past, children’s play is isolated. Children learn social skills through play as well as through activities that allow them independence. Engage your child in opportunities to play with peers whenever possible. If you are physically isolated from same age peers you may want to set up play-dates. Whenever possible observe how your child interacts with others. Does he /she assert her wants and needs appropriately? Do the other children gravitate towards him/her or do they exclude him/her from group play. Start with 1:1 play and slowly add members. Dynamics of play changes as the group increases and with different personalities. This is why it is important to take an active role (eyes and ears) to observe how your child is functioning in a particular group. Use conflicts and disappointments as teachable moments to help give them the language they need to assert themselves.

### TODDLERS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

*Addressing bullying and victimization behaviors early on in development is key to prevention.*

**Discipline for Life - Getting it Right with Children**, By Madeline Swift

**The Explosive Child** by Ross Greene, Ph.D.

**The Parent's Handbook: Systematic Training for Effective Parenting** by Don Dinkmeyer and Gary D. McKay

**Setting Limits with Your Strong-Willed Child : Eliminating Conflict by Establishing Clear, Firm, and Respectful Boundaries** –Dr Robert Mackenzie

*Video*

**"1-2-3 Magic" – Managing Difficult Behaviors in Children 2-12** by Dr. Thomas Phelan *(There is an entire series of 123 Magic books but this is a great starter).*

**"Broken Toy."** 1993. Summerhills Productions, 846-1/2 McIntire Ave., Zanesville, Ohio, 43701.

**The Berenstain Bears and the Bully.** Berenstain, Stan and Jan Berenstain. New York: Random House, 1993.

### OLDER CHILDREN AND PRE-TEENS

**Bullies & Victims: Helping Your Child Through the Schoolyard Battlefield.** Fried, SuEllen and Paula Fried. New York: M. Evans and Company, Inc., 1996.

**Childhood Bullying and Teasing: What School Personnel, Other Professionals, and Parents Can Do.** Ross, Dorothea M. Alexandria, Va.: American Counseling Association, 1996.

**The Girls** - Amy Koss Koss's suspenseful and realistic portrayal of a popular middle school clique's devolution unfolds through six narrators. "Readers will identify with and remember these characters, and may think twice before sacrificing their individuality for the sake of popularity." Ages 10-14.

**How to Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk** by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish.

**Let's Talk About Living in a World With Violence-An Activity Book for School-Age Children**  
Gabarino, James.

**Liberated Parents, Liberated Children: Your Guide to a Happier Family**- by Adele Faber & Elaine Mazlish.

**Stand Up for Yourself and Your Friends: Dealing with Bullies and Bossiness and Finding a Better Way** by Patti Kelley Criswell and Angela Martini (Mar 1, 2009)

#### *Videos*

**"Dealing with Bullies, Troublemakers and Dangerous Situations"**  
(Part of the PeaceTalks series). The Bureau for At-Risk Youth, 135  
Dupont St., P.O. Box 760, Plainview, N.Y., 118030760.

### TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS

**Bait** by Alex Sanchez (Simon & Schuster) Told from the perspective of the bully, Sanchez charts the course of a 16 year old coming to terms with his abusive past after he is arrested for assaulting a gay teen.

**By the Time You Read This, I'll Be Dead** by Julie Anne Peters A bullied high school student trolls a suicide "completers" website determined to get it "right" after several botched attempts. Then she meets a young man dying of cancer, who is just as determined to make sure she lives. Peters includes information about suicide prevention at the end of the novel.

**Get Out of My Life, but First Could You Drive Me & Cheryl to the Mall: A Parent's Guide to the New Teenager, Revised and Updated** –Anthony Wolf PhD

**Girl Wars: 12 Strategies That Will End Female Bullying** by Cheryl Dellasega and Charisse Nixon (Oct 7, 2003)

**Freak Show** by James St. James (Puffin) Teenage drag queen Billy (or "gender obscurist" as he calls himself) faced down bullies as he seeks to become the homecoming queen at his conservative high school.

**Hello, Cruel World: 101 Alternatives to Suicide for Teens, Freaks and Other Outlaws** by Kate Bornstein ([Seven Stories Press](#)). A book for bullied teens that belongs on any list. The celebrated transgender writer offers up suggestions from the witty to the controversial, but all with one simple message: "Don't be mean."

**Hey, Back Off!: Tips for Stopping Teen Harassment** by Jennie Withers and Phyllis Hendrickson *Hey, Back Off!* by Withers and Hendrickson is the first comprehensive teen guide to harassment prevention. It uses narrative real

life examples and stories that are relatable to teens, while incorporating strategies and coping tips for not only teens, but also parents and educators.

**The Side Door** by Jan Donley (Spinsters Ink) A teen gets bullied after coming out at her high school and tries to uncover the secret behind the suicide of another bullied teen, whose death has been hushed up by the small town.

**Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes-** Chris Cutcher. Such superlatives as "riveting" and "powerful" can only hint at the craftsmanship on display in this transcendent story of love, loyalty and courage. While probing such issues as friendship, free speech and moral values, Crutcher tells a tale whose mordant humor, poignancy and suspense pack a breathtaking wallop. A social outcast in junior high due to his excessive weight, narrator Eric Calhoun found a kindred spirit in Sarah Byrnes, whose face and hands were hideously disfigured in a childhood accident. Ages 12-up.

**Teen Cyberbullying Investigated: Where Do Your Rights End and Consequences Begin?** by Thomas A. Jacobs (Jan 15, 2010)

#### Videos

"Bully." 1973. National Instructional Television Center, Box A, Bloomington, IN 47401.

"Bullying." 1995. South Carolina Educational Television, PO Box I 1000, Columbia, SC 29211.

"Bully Smart." 1995, Street Smart, 105 North Virginia Avenue, Suite 305, Falls Church, VA 22042.

#### ALL DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

**104 Activities That Build: Self-Esteem, Teamwork, Communication, Anger Management, Self-Discovery, Coping Skills** by Alanna Jones (Mar 1, 1998)

**"The Assist Program,"** a series of nine books to promote students' self-esteem and build interpersonal skills. Titles include **Teaching Friendship Skills** (primary and intermediate versions); **Helping Kids Handle Anger; Helping Kids Find Their Strengths; Building Self-Esteem in the Classroom** (primary and intermediate versions); **Teaching Cooperation Skills; Creating a Caring Classroom; Teaching About Sexual Abuse.** Huggins, Pat. Longmont, Colo.: Sopris West.

**Between Parent and Child** by Dr Haim Ginott (Looks at your relationship with your own parents and how it may impact your relationships with your child).

**Building Resilience in Children and Teens: Giving Kids Roots and Wings** by Kenneth R. Ginsburg (Apr 1, 2011)

**Stick Up for Yourself: Every Kid's Guide to Personal Power & Positive Self-Esteem** by Gershen Kaufman, Lev Raphael and Pamela Espeland (Oct 15, 1999)

**The Tough Kid Social Skills Book**, Sheridan, Susan M.

**WEBSITES**

<http://www.stopbullying.gov/parents/index.html>

<http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/high-school-notes/2012/02/15/3-tips-for-parents-to-help-their-bullied-kids>

<http://www.education.com/reference/article/ten-actions-to-eliminate-bullying/>

<http://www.education.com/reference/article/actions-take-child-involved-bullying/>

[http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/11\\_2ta.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/11_2ta.html)

[http://stopbullying.gov/community/tip\\_sheets/bullying\\_children\\_with\\_disabilities.pdf](http://stopbullying.gov/community/tip_sheets/bullying_children_with_disabilities.pdf)

<http://learningdisabilities.about.com/od/instructionalmaterials/tp/tchkdssocskills.htm>