



MAKE TIME *to* **LISTEN**
TAKE TIME *to* **TALK**
— *about* **Bullying**

switching
seats in the
classroom

stealing
money

Take Action Against Bullying

spreading
rumors

pushing &
tripping



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Center for Mental Health Services
www.samhsa.gov

Take Action

Did you know that research has found that remarkable things can happen if parents and caregivers spent at least 15 minutes of undivided time a day listening and talking with their children? Research also tells us that children really do look to their parents and caregivers for advice and help about difficult choices and decisions.

The document in your hands right now and other companion materials about bullying are part of 15+ Make Time to Listen... Take Time to Talk, an initiative developed by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, to promote healthy child development and to prevent youth and school-based violence.

Against Bullying

The initiative builds on both the value children place on the advice they get from important adults in their lives and the benefits of those special 15 minutes each day. The listening and talking theme, however, also can be adapted by teachers, counselors, and other adults who are involved in the lives and futures of children.

Whether focused on bullying – as is this module of the initiative – or on general principles of healthy development and behavior, the messages exchanged between children and their parents and caregivers in just these 15 minutes or more a day, can be instrumental in building a healthier and safer future for children as individuals, as family members, and as active and engaged participants in the life of their communities.



MAKE TIME *to* **LISTEN**

TAKE TIME *to* **TALK**

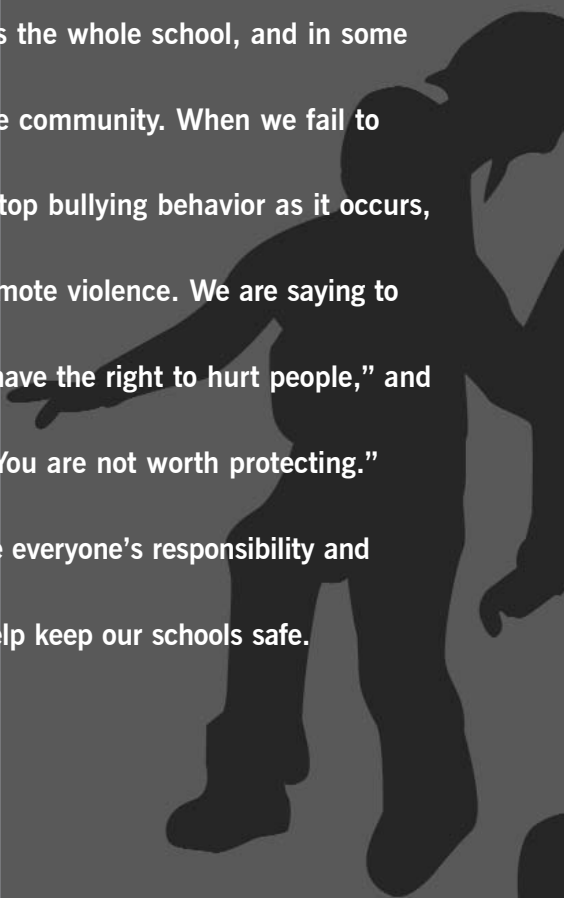
— *about* **Bullying**

EVERY DAY

in our schools and communities, children are teased, threatened, or tormented by bullies.

Bullying is a problem that creates a climate of fear, that affects the whole school, and in some cases, the entire community. When we fail to recognize and stop bullying behavior as it occurs, we actually promote violence. We are saying to the bully, “You have the right to hurt people,” and to the victim, “You are not worth protecting.”

Safe schools are everyone’s responsibility and everyone can help keep our schools safe.



WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying involves repeated acts of physical, emotional, or social behavior that are intentional, controlling, and hurtful. Bullying is a learned behavior, evident as early as two years of age. Bullying can be either direct or indirect. **Direct bullying** usually is seen and felt readily. **Indirect bullying** (deliberate exclusion, name calling, etc.) is much more difficult to identify, often is more difficult to remedy, and should be clearly seen as different from direct bullying. Boys are more typically engaged in direct bullying and girls in indirect bullying, but that is not always the case. Just be alert and consider the following:

- Bullying is defined by a power imbalance between the bully and the target.
- A bully's power can be derived from physical size, strength, verbal skill, popularity, or gender.
- A bully's target feels tormented, helpless, and defenseless.
- Bullying can include hitting, name-calling, threatening, intimidating, kicking, spreading rumors, teasing, pushing, tripping, excluding someone from a group, or destroying someone's things.

WHY STOP BULLYING?

- Bullying interferes with learning in school and may lead to increased absenteeism and dropout rates.
- Students feel less safe and less satisfied in school when there are high levels of bullying in the school.
- Bullying children may become bullying adults and are more likely to become child and spouse abusers.
- The longer bullying lasts, the harder it is to change. Bullies identified by age 8 are six times more likely to have a criminal conviction by age 24.
- Bullying may be linked to other delinquent, criminal and gang activities, such as shoplifting, drug abuse, and vandalism.
- The targets of bullies grow socially insecure and anxious with decreased self-esteem and increased depression rates, even into adulthood.

A light gray silhouette of a child in a running pose, positioned in the background of the page. The child's arms are outstretched forward, and their legs are in a running stride. The silhouette is centered horizontally and occupies most of the vertical space behind the text.

IS YOUR CHILD BEING BULLIED?

If your child exhibits one or more of these warning signs, he/she may be a victim of bullying. Talk with your child to explore further whether or not he/she is being bullied.

A CHILD BEING BULLIED OFTEN:

- Withdraws socially; has few or no friends.
 - Feels isolated, alone and sad.
 - Feels picked on or persecuted.
 - Feels rejected and not liked.
 - Frequently complains of illness.
 - Doesn't want to go to school; avoids some classes or skips school.
 - Brings home damaged possessions or reports them “lost.”
 - Cries easily; displays mood swings and talks about hopelessness.
 - Has poor social skills.
 - Talks about running away; talks of suicide.
 - Threatens violence to self and others.
 - Changes in eating or sleeping patterns.
 - Takes, or attempts to take, “protection” to school (a stick, knife, gun, etc.).
 - Displays “victim” body language—hangs head, hunches shoulders, avoids eye contact.
-

Children being bullied may show some of these signs, or may show few.

IF YOU SUSPECT YOUR CHILD IS BEING BULLIED

DO:

- Make sure your child knows being bullied is not his or her fault.
- Let your child know that he or she does not have to face being bullied alone.
- Discuss ways of responding to bullies.
- Teach your child to be assertive.
- Tell your child not to react, but to walk away and get help if pursued.
- Tell your child to report bullying immediately to a trusted adult.
- Contact the school/teacher.

DON'T:

- Ask children to solve a bullying problem between themselves—because of the differences in power, the child who has been bullied will suffer further. Bullying problems require adult intervention.
- Advise the bullied child to fight the bully—fighting is in violation of the school conduct code and the child might be seriously injured.
- Try to mediate a bullying situation. Bringing together children who are bullied and those who do the bullying, to “work out” the problems between them, generally is not a good idea. It may further victimize a child who is being bullied and it sends the wrong message to both parties.
- Blame either the victim or the bully. Instead, gather as much information as possible. Look at your own child’s behavior and style of interaction and consider how you might help him/her to handle these types of situations in the future. Contact the school for assistance.

WARNING SIGNS INDICATING A BULLY

A BULLY OFTEN

- Seeks to dominate and/or manipulate others.
- Enjoys feeling powerful and in control (whether real or not).
- Is both a poor winner (boastful and arrogant) and a poor loser.
- Seems to derive satisfaction from other's fears, discomfort, or pain.
- Is good at hiding behaviors or doing them where adults can't notice.
- Is excited by conflicts between others.
- Blames others for his/her problems.
- Displays uncontrolled anger.
- Has a history of discipline problems.
- Displays a pattern of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating, and aggressive behaviors.
- Has a history of violent and aggressive behaviors.
- Displays intolerance and prejudice towards others.
- May use drugs, alcohol or be a member of a gang.
- Lacks empathy towards others.

For more information

www.samhsa.gov

www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov

1-800-789-2647

IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD IS A BULLY

- Be sure that your child knows that bullying is NOT acceptable behavior.
- Tell your child the penalties for bullying and be sure that you enforce them fairly and consistently.
- Help your child learn alternative ways to deal with anger and frustration.
- Teach and reward more appropriate behavior.
- Work out a way for your child to make amends for the bullying.
- Help your child develop an understanding of the impact of their bullying on the target.
- Seek help or counseling if the behavior continues.
- If contacted by the school, STAY CALM–TRY NOT TO BECOME ANGRY AND DEFENSIVE! Make yourself really listen. Remember this is ultimately about the well-being of your child!

BULLYING PREVENTION PROGRAMS

When developing and implementing bullying prevention programs, be sure to include the following steps:

- Increase the awareness of everyone at school (students, staff and parents) toward bullying problems.
- Assess the scope of the problem.
- Identify both the children who are bullying and the children who are being bullied.
- Intervene in a timely manner with clear and consistent consequences for the child who is bullying and with support and protection for the child who is being bullied.
- Encourage by-standers to intervene appropriately to help stop the bullying.
- Reward pro-social behavior of all students.

Bullying...

NO WAY

Prevent your child from becoming a VICTIM:

- Instill self-confidence in your child.
- Help your child establish good social skills.
- Teach your child to speak out for him or herself.
- Teach your child to seek help, if harassed, from you and other caring adults.

Prevent your child from becoming a BULLY:

- Present yourself as a model of non-violent behavior.
- Clearly state that violence is not acceptable.
- Assist your child in finding non-violent strategies for anger management and conflict resolution.
- Seek help from mental health/school counselors to help stop bullying and aggressive behavior.



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LOCAL INFORMATION

1-800-789-2647
www.samhsa.gov
www.modelprograms.samhsa.gov
CMHS-SVP-0056 – “Take Action Against Bullying”

Call for additional 15+ information

CMHS-SVP-0051 – “Bullying Prevention Conversation Cards”
CMHS-SVP-0052 – “Bullying Is Not A Fact of Life”