

The Protectors

Life's A Movie — What's Your Role?

Freedom From Bullying Program & Curriculum

Teacher Guide

Grades 5-9

THE
PROTECTORS™



Character & Courage in Action

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Welcome

This publication is more than a unique curriculum: it's a compelling program that helps teachers expand upon Paul Coughlin's "*Life's a Movie—What's Your Role?*" freedom-from-bullying presentation, to create lasting freedom from bullying in your classroom and entire school. It will help your entire student body diminish bullying, create a safer campus and improve learning and character development, among many other benefits, such as reducing juvenile delinquency, suicide prevention, drop-out prevention, and promoting Safe & Drug-Free Schools.

Unlike traditional anti-bullying efforts, this one puts a special emphasis on Bystanders, who have the most potential to diminish bullying. In order to help Bystanders to change their role into Alongside Standers, this unique program and curriculum focuses on the creation of *courage*. Most students, as well as adults, *know* that bullying is wrong. They *feel* it is wrong, but what many are unable to do is *act* as if it's wrong. And the reason for such inaction is a lack of purpose-driven courage. So this publication provides specific instruction in how to create courage, and in the process defend human dignity, value and worth through non-violent and pro-active solutions. The result is healthy life skills that can last a lifetime.

Bullying tells children the profound misconception that others don't care. But most do—they just need enough courage to put their compassion into action, and this information shows them how, creating a safer, more creative and happier school in which to learn, work and play.

About Protectors Founder Paul Coughlin

Paul Coughlin is a former newspaper editor, author of more than seven books, and a popular conference speaker. He has appeared on *Good Morning America*, *Nightline*, *C-SPAN*, *The LA Times*, *The New York Times*, and *Newsweek* among other media outlets.

But most importantly, he is a passionate advocate for children who experience ongoing campaigns of cruelty called bullying. His anti-bullying program, presentation and curriculum are used by more than 100 organizations throughout the world, including Uganda, Australia, and South Africa. He is a varsity soccer coach, where he was voted Coach of the Year, and where he is also a member of the Board of Trustees. He is also a board member of SMART: Start Making A Reader Today, which helps children K-through 3rd grade improve much needed literacy skills. He and his wife Sandy have three teenagers and live in southern Oregon.

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School-Changing Insights Into the “Theater of Bullying”

Four “characters” comprise the “Theater of Bullying.” They are the Bully, Target, Bystander, and Authority. But just as important is the environment that allows bullying to continue and thrive. We call this environment a “Theater” because serial bullying depends heavily upon *context*: circumstances and settings that favor the Bully and harm the Target. We give this context the word “Theater” because just like a play or musical, bullying is a kind of drama that requires that people play certain roles and not abandon them. If they abandon their roles, the drama is ruined, and the curtain falls.

And that’s our goal: to bring the curtain down on the Theater of Bullying by dismantling the setting, by altering the circumstances that allow serial bullying to continue by focusing our attention on the two most powerful “characters” in the theater of bullying: Bystanders and Authority. Approximately 85% of bullying takes place in front of peer Bystanders. This is because most children who bully receive pleasure when their display of dominance over their Target is witnessed by others. Take away the audience (Bystanders), and we dismantle most of the theater. This is important because most anti-bullying efforts that focus primarily upon reforming children who bully have been met with limited success.

Describing the circumstances and settings that surround bullying as a “Theater” also helps us get our minds around this perplexing problem, providing clarity and viable solutions. This theater has a physical presence (primarily your school property and school buses) and an electronic presence (bullying of your students via social media, or what’s called cyber-bullying).

The affects of bullying are greater than many realize. In 2009, due to the increase in child-on-child aggression and its impact upon a child’s physical and psychological well-being, the American Academy of Pediatrics encouraged pediatricians to include signs of bullying in their patient assessments. The AAP stated that Bullies and Targets are more likely to carry weapons and fight seriously enough to result in injury. The AAP also stated that depression and suicidal thoughts may also develop within Targets.

Authority and Bystanders together possess the most power to dismantle the theater of bullying.

Bystanders possess the potential to assert positive peer pressure, which for adolescents matters more to kids than what most adults think. That is one reason why this material focuses primarily on Bystanders more than any other character in this often misunderstood theater.



Ten years after the Columbine shootings in Littleton, CO, studies reveal that there has been no significant decrease in bullying within that school district—this after a decade of intense anti-bullying training. One reason for this failure is because the efforts did not properly recognize the pivotal role that courage plays in diminishing bullying. We emphasize courage because it’s the missing principle that Bystanders, some in Authority, and Targets need in order to stand against the cruelty of bullying. The fact is that most people *know* that bullying is wrong. They *feel* it’s wrong. But they lack the courage required to *act* as if it’s wrong. For bullying to diminish in your school, courage must become both a noun (a concept that students understand and receive inspiration from) as well as a verb—an action they create that bolsters lasting character development.

The quality of our lives expands or contracts based upon the courage we possess or don’t possess. Emphasizing courage helps your school reduce bullying and supports profound character development. Award-winning author Maya Angelou put it this way: “Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can’t be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest.”

A Simple and Comprehensive Definition of Bullying

Though definitions of bullying can vary, most agree that a simple definition that most children can relate to is *the use of superior strength and power (physical, verbal, social) to inflict repeated and intentional harm upon another for no good reason*. Some experts include the superior use of *audacity* in the definition of bullying. The phrase “for no good reason,” is especially important to remember because most serial bullying is not the result of misunderstanding or mutual conflict, but about the pleasure some receive when dominating, harming, and humiliating another person. Therefore, as Targets often complain, they are attacked for “no good reason.”

Another helpful definition for your students may be this: **Bullying is when a person, or a group of people, repeatedly and on purpose say and do mean things to someone who has a hard time defending himself or herself.**

Bullying always involves:

- Imbalance of Power
- Intention
- A Pattern Over Time



A more comprehensive definition of this powerful and misunderstood word can also include the following components:

The repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a Target that: causes physical or emotional harm or damage to the Target's property; places the Target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property; creates a hostile environment at school for the Target; infringes on the rights of the Target at school; or materially or substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. "Hostile environment" can be defined as a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

A related concept, cyberbullying, can be defined as bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers and the Internet. This includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings.

The Bully's Supporting Cast of Characters

As stated at the beginning of this material, bullying takes place in context to other people—banking on the probability that most will not change their role and intervene. Here is a list of the cast of characters who keep the "Theater of Bullying" alive:

Student Who Bullies. This child starts the bullying and is expecting others to provide support, not resistance.

Henchpeople & Followers. Male or female, these students take an active role in diminishing the Target, but usually do not initiate the attack. Much like in a war, they fortify and support the original offensive.

Supporting Cast. These students do not initiate the bullying, but they provide tacit support through laughter, jeering and amusement, much like people watching a compelling play or movie. Also called Passive Supporters, these students believe that they play no role in the bullying, even though their behavior clearly encourages the bully to continue.

Disengaged Observers. These students do not get directly involved and do not take a stand against bullying. They often say things like, "It's not my problem," and hang around to see what happens, though they do not provide fuel for the Bully nor support for the Target.

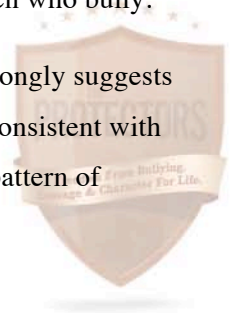


Possible Protector. These students do not like the bullying that they witness. They recognize it is wrong, and they often feel great empathy for the Target, but they fail to act upon what they know and feel is wrong, leaving them internally conflicted and later, disturbed by feelings of remorse and regret. This program and curriculum is especially designed to help this group change their role in the theater of bullying and become Protectors. We call this transformation “positive deviance” because it deviates from the common response of either supporting the bullying or remaining neutral, which is mistaken by some as acceptance of the cruel behavior they witness.

Protectors. These students do more than *know* and *feel* that bullying is wrong—they act upon their tremendous dislike of bullying and courageously intervene on behalf of the Target. Though a minority compared with the other characters in the theater of bullying, this group has the potential to transform the culture of your school into one marked by compassion, empathy, creativity and freedom. Such students, when identified, should be celebrated when appropriate and defended by Authority against possible acts of revenge. The courage that such students exhibit is contagious and should be actively supported by authority whenever possible.

Facts About Children Who Bully

- Most children who commit serial acts of bullying (beginning even in elementary school) are more cunning, strategic and predatory than some in Authority understand or acknowledge. This is at the core of why many in Authority do not act: they want to see “the best in children,” which is important to education, but we must also recognize another reality if justice, compassion and creativity are to flourish.
- Many Bullies go “shopping” for potential Targets at the beginning of the school year. By the end of October, most have found him or her. Serial Bullies tend to gravitate to classrooms and those in Authority who provide the least resistance. One study from Canada asked five different schools to identify Bullies, Targets and Bystanders in their middle school. Then Bullies, Targets and Bystanders were mixed from the different schools. Within two sessions (two hours), every Bully found and began to dominate every Target, showing the selective nature of children who bully.
- Though some children who bully suffer from low self-esteem, current research strongly suggests that most possess average to excessive self-esteem. Some even display behavior consistent with many of the diagnostic criteria for Narcissistic Personality Disorder: a pervasive pattern of



grandiosity and self-importance, an inordinate need for admiration, lack of empathy and a sense of entitlement. They overestimate their abilities and popularity and inflate their accomplishments, while at the same time underestimating and devaluing the worth and accomplishments of others. They receive pleasure from dominating another person, who in most cases did nothing to provoke such behavior.

- Their primary Target is non-assertive children. The second-most bullied children in school are physically and mentally challenged children.
- Bullying can create pervasive fear throughout a class and school, hindering learning, imagination, creativity and test scores. Not only do Bullies harm education, they deplete other students of some of the building blocks that create courage.
- Many students have the capacity to bully from time to time. But only about 3-7% become ongoing or serial bullies.
- Why bullies bully is the most asked question in the Theater of Bullying. Though studies vary, the following helps to answer this important question:
 - It's what they see at home and in the media. Some bullies have at least one parent who bullies them and/or others, so it's the only tactic they've been shown to get what they want, which in many cases is a prevalent feeling of power, control and dominance.
 - It works. Though bullying causes damage to others, this tactic gives the Bully what he or she wants or thinks he or she needs.
 - They are trying to fit in by making peers laugh, usually at the expense of others.
 - Some possess excessive self-esteem, causing them to think they are better and more important than others.
 - There exists within our population a small group of sociopaths who bully and who lack sympathy for those they harm.
 - Some come from homes lacking in adult supervision, as well as active fatherly involvement and correction.



- Some are hypersensitive to feelings of insult when none was intended. They also tend to be hypersensitive to feelings of envy, jealousy and resentment.

Children who bully can be resistant to conflict resolution programs because they are not interested in resolving what many mislabel as “conflict.” In most cases of serial bullying, there is no legitimate “conflict” to resolve with the Target. Rather, the child who bullies has embarked upon an ongoing campaign of cruelty toward another through the expression of disdain and contempt.

Though trying to understand the motives of the bully is important, a more important question that should be at the forefront of everyone’s mind is, “What do we need to do to stop bullying today?” There will be plenty of time to speculate as to the motives of the Bully and to take appropriate steps to reform, if possible, the Bully.

- Serial bullies are five times more likely to have a major run-in with the law by the age of 24, and they are far more likely to abuse their future spouse and children. So in more extreme cases, it is more accurate to label their behavior as “pre-criminal” than merely bullying.

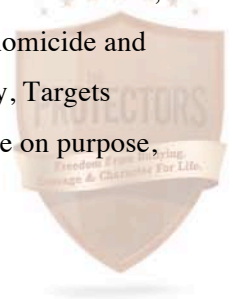
Facts About Bystanders

- Remarkably, many Bystanders face more mental risks than Bullies and Targets (December issue *School Psychology Quarterly*) due to feelings of guilt, as well as worry and fear that they might be next.
- One Oregon study shows that if one Bystander uses non-threatening words on behalf of a Target—even a Bystander who is considered “weak” by his or her peers, the incident of bullying ends 58% of the time within 10 seconds or less.
- Most Bystanders say they want to help the Target (85%), but say they lack the training and strength necessary, and they do not want to be a Target themselves in the future. Only about 10% to 20% of Bystanders intervene on behalf of the Target. About 75% of Bystanders reinforce bullying by passively watching (54%) or encouraging the bullying to continue (21%).

Facts About Targets



- Nearly 7 million students are bullied in America each school year. An estimated 160,000 children stay home from school each day due to fear of being bullied. This statistic dates back to the middle 1990s, so the number is most likely higher today.
- The leading complaint of most Targets is, “My teacher saw it happen and did nothing about it.” In most cases this complaint is not true. Authority did intervene, but given the predatory and covert nature of serial bullying, most in Authority are unable to be present and protect Targets during incidents of bullying—making Bystander training that much more important.
- Most do not become Targets due to “misunderstanding” or “conflict.” They become Targets as a result of disdain and contempt from a Bully (or bullies) toward them. Disdain and contempt are expressions of supremacy. In most cases most of the time, the Target did nothing to deserve being bullied. Supremacy doesn’t need a viable reason to exist.
- One study revealed that 7 out of 10 adults who were serial targets as children suffered from low self-esteem, lack of assertiveness, anger management problems, an inability to trust others and create and maintain intimate relationships.
- Some Targets have overprotective parents who inadvertently create a non-assertive orientation in their children.
- One study from England showed that badly bullied Targets were five times more likely to be depressed than non-Targets; six out of 10 had suicidal thoughts, and one in five had attempted suicide (From *The Independent*, January 16, 2001).
- The Secret Service interviewed 37 school shooters, all of them male, and asked them why they did it. Nearly 85% said they did so because they had been Targets, some of them for years, and that they sought revenge against both the Target and Authority who they said failed to protect them.
- One study showed that 10% of 9-12th graders have considered bringing a gun to school to defend themselves from bullying.
- Both Targets and Bullies have a significantly higher probability of suffering from self-inflicted, accidental and intentional injuries, making them more likely to die from suicide, homicide and accidents (*International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*). In this study, Targets proved more likely to abuse over-the-counter medications, hurt animals and people on purpose, use weapons and be absent from school.



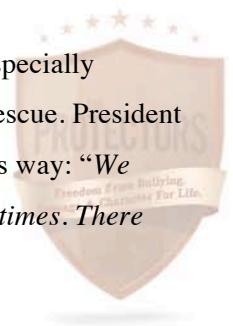
- A study in the *Archives of General Psychiatry* indicates that Targets may be twice as likely to develop psychosis, such as delusions, hallucinations and other psychotic symptoms.
- Telling a Target to “just ignore the Bully” is usually wrong advice given the predatory nature of serial bullies who possess a certain genius for catching Targets in unsupervised settings. This approach also reinforces the Target’s oft-held assumption that he or she is powerless, leading to anxiety, despair, depression and thoughts of revenge.
- Telling a Target that she has options for dealing with bullying creates hope, which leads to courage and a more assertive orientation toward life, which in turn can decrease her chances of being bullied in the future.
- There is a dangerous increase in bullycide due, many experts believe, to the increase in cyberbullying. This medium has allowed Bullies and their accomplices to unleash a campaign of cruelty that extends outside the school campus and into the Target’s home, creating emotional and psychological fatigue that leads to hopelessness and despair. Simply put, such Targets are unable to receive relief, which helps them reclaim strength, courage and hope. It’s essential for parents of such Targets to keep their courage, fighting spirit and hope alive as best they can and to report such instances as soon as possible to the school, police or both.

Facts About & For Authority

- To diminish bullying, Authority needs to establish: a comprehensive **policy** toward bullying, achievable **procedures** that accurately report bullying and hold bullies accountable, and **programs** that encourage everyone in the Theater of Bullying to assertively resist. *Life’s a Movie—What’s Your Role?* is one such program.
- Policies and procedures can vary from state to state, depending on the anti-bullying legislation in that state.
- Successful programs include the following elements:
 - Establishing acceptable and unacceptable behavior.
 - Instruction on what to do when you are the Target of a Bully, and how to move from being a Bystander to an Alongside Stander.



- A comprehensive approach that includes everyone in the school and groups off campus that affect the school as well. This includes but is not limited to the police, a core group of caring parents, and clergy.
- Consequences to bullying that are clear, effective and quick.
- Opportunities where moral courage is honored and exalted as much and if not more than physical courage.
- Since Bullies gravitate toward areas of least resistance, these elements need to be implemented simultaneously.
- Such policies, procedures and programs protect principals and teachers who confront bullying from parents who deny that their child is a Bully and who make a legal claim that their child is being unfairly treated and singled-out. It also helps to protect administrators and teachers from possible legal action from the families of Targets who claim that they failed to provide adequate safety for their children.
- As Authority, it's essential to point out to Bystanders that they are not required to like everyone in their school, including Targets of bullying. But we must honor their humanity and dignity, which includes speaking up for them in their time of need. Simply put, Bystanders don't have to like someone in order to be their advocate. Paul Coughlin uses the following story to illustrate this point: When he was in school, he saw a young man with Down syndrome being bullied in the locker room. Paul wasn't friends with the Target. In fact he didn't even know the Target's name. But he became his advocate by telling the Bully to leave him alone. Your students can do the same.
- Some in Authority, including parents, believe that understanding the motive of the Bully is the most important step in solving the problem of bullying. Unfortunately, these are often the same people who unintentionally allow the bullying to continue while they try to bribe, provide therapy to, educate and appease the Bully.
- As Authority, we're required to use the weight of our authority on behalf of all, especially Targets, who usually lack the strength necessary for meaningful and lasting self-rescue. President Obama during his 2009 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech, framed this fact this way: *"We must acknowledge the hard truth: We will not eradicate violent conflict in our lifetimes. There*



will be times when [people], acting individually or in concert, will find the use of force not only necessary but morally justified...For make no mistake: Evil does exist in the world...To say that force may sometimes be necessary is not a call to cynicism--it is a recognition of history; the imperfections of man and the limits of reason."

- Having the child who bullies apologize to her Target is an effective way to diminish bullying in your class and school. But in order for the apology to be sincere, it must include four parts: 1. Acknowledging the offense 2. Offering an explanation 3. Expressing shame and remorse 4. Offering reparation. When apologies fail, it's because at least one of these parts was missing. The most common failing is not acknowledging the offense through counterfeit statements such as, "I'm sorry for whatever I did." "Mistakes were made." "If I upset you, I am sorry." None restore the dignity of the Target, which should be the result of a real apology.
- Forcing a Target to accept a false apology, and to shake hands with someone who provides one, is like trying to cash a counterfeit check. If it's not real, the bank won't take it. Neither should a Target. False apologies are another form of peace-faking, not peace-making. They are a miscarriage of justice and fairness.
- Most importantly, non-chronic bullies stop bullying. Chronic bullies, by contrast, minimize what they do, often through employing charm against Authority and Targets, and justify what they do by falsely blaming others.
- A kindly response to a serial bully may help the bully to become a better person and stop bullying. As Authority we will know if this approach is true based upon their future behavior. At the same time, we must be willing to acknowledge that sometimes our kindly response to their unacceptable behavior can become an invitation to bully Targets, Authority and Bystanders even more. In many cases, such Bullies are not ignorant about social conventions and norms. They understand them but don't want to follow them. Sometimes being forbearing toward a Bully can become an act of cruelty toward others. "Peace," Martin Luther King reminded us, "is not the absence of tension, but the presence of justice."
- When possible, share personal stories about being bullied, a Bystander, an Alongside Stander, or Target. Testimonies inspire everyone, especially children, to stand up for themselves and others.



- Expect some Bullies and those who are held within their domination to denounce your school's anti-bullying efforts as “stupid” and unnecessary. Bullies know that such efforts are a threat to the carefully orchestrated drama they've created, so it is not uncommon for them to increase their pressure upon Bystanders and Targets to 1.) Underestimate the harm they create by dehumanizing their Target and 2.) Accept their false definition of right and wrong.

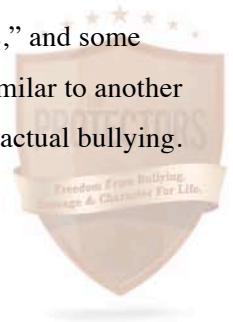
Common Mistakes That Authority Makes When Counseling Targets and Bystanders

- ***Spending too much time trying to understand the Bully's motives.*** With the best of intentions, many parents and other Authorities try to help the Target understand the will and motive of the Bully. This is rarely helpful to Targets, who are often too young to grasp these concepts. Instead, help Targets understand that it is not their fault, you will help them, and they are not without hope.
- ***Encouraging Targets to share how they feel with their Bully.*** Though offered with the best of intentions, this approach may well set the Target up for more pain, not less. Telling a Bully that, “You hurt my feelings when you said that,” may well beg the painful reply, “I'm glad you feel bad.” If someone broke into your home, would you run after the robber and tell him how you feel, hoping he will change his ways?
- ***Advising kids to solve their own problems.*** Though there is some truth to this statement, it is also too simplistic when applied to the entire Theater of Bullying, especially to serial bullying that is so powerful that most targets are incapable of self-rescue. Adults are not expected to solve all of their problems on their own—especially when overpowered—and neither should children.
- ***Advising Targets and Bystanders to stop “tattling” on others and mind their own business.*** If your neighbor's home were being robbed and you called the police, would the dispatcher say, “Stop that! You're just trying to get someone in trouble?” or “You should just mind your own business and leave other people alone!” Stan Davis, founder of www.stopbullyingnow.com writes, “Adults have created the concept of ‘tattling,’ and I believe that it is now our responsibility to get rid of it.” Tattling is motivated by the desire to get someone in trouble, usually for something trivial. Reporting is motivated by the desire to get someone out of trouble for something important.



Action Steps Toward Greater Character and Happier Classrooms

- Make it cool to change roles in the theater of bullying, especially changing from a complicit Bystander to a courageous **Alongside Stander**. Reward the moral courage required wherever you see it. For example, give awards during assemblies that can be presented by local celebrities.
- Create anonymous ways for students to report bullying: email address (ex. bullying@[your school's email address]) or drop box. Look for patterns in the information you receive.
- Monitor bullying hot spots in your school and encourage Targets to avoid these areas if possible. Tip: Put push pins into an aerial-view drawing of your school where bullying is most prevalent, then devise a plan to increase supervision in these areas. Be unpredictable in how these hotspots are monitored so as to better capture bullying behavior.
- Asking the sometimes difficult question, “Who started it?” is essential to getting a handle on bullying. Otherwise bullying will continue under the guise of “conflict” and “misunderstanding.” Be careful with the idea that “there’s enough blame to go around.” Sometimes there is and sometimes there isn’t.
- When it comes to bullying in a classroom, there aren’t many accidents. Bullies *choose* certain kids as targets and look for *certain* moments to strike. Expose Bullies as early as possible. Tell them that you know what they are doing and that you will not tolerate it.
- Encourage Bystanders to use strong but non-violent words to stop Bullies. “Leave him alone.” “Leave her alone.” “That’s wrong, stop it.” Explain to students that there are moments when it’s best not to intervene directly on behalf of a Target, such as when a group of Bullies are using or about to use physical violence, or when a Bully or Bullies possess weapons. Instruct them to get help from someone in Authority right away instead.
- Here’s a tip from a principal in Idaho. When a serial bully is identified and refuses to change, one possible avenue toward reform is to show him or her an example of bullying on Youtube.com. Then ask the Bully, “Is what happened to that person wrong?” Most will say “Yes,” and some will even get angry. Then explain to the Bully, “Well, you are doing something similar to another kid.” This may work for some Bullies who are not aware that they are engaged in actual bullying.



- Some Bullies possess charisma. Tell them that you recognize this quality in them and encourage them to use it to help others instead of harming others. This can be especially helpful when trying to get older kids in your school to stop bullying younger children.
- Create an Anti-Bullying Pledge that students help compose and then sign. Here is a template that can be adopted by any school:

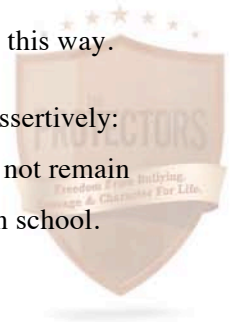
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"We believe everyone is equal, deserves respect and dignity, and that Courageous Bystanders have the power to make [name of school or class] a safe place to learn, grow strong and dream. We commit to stop being silent when witnessing someone being bullied or harassed. Instead, we will show courage by standing up and saying proudly, "Not at Our School." Such courage will make us strong and compassionate. Together, we will make our class and our school a safer, happier, and better place for ourselves and others."

Without courage, wisdom bears no fruit.—Gracian

We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts. --Aristotle

- Have a local police officer present information about potential criminal behavior regarding cyberbullying and social media: Facebook, Myspace, texting, sexting, other.
- Many schools find themselves embroiled in bullying many months into the school year. If this is the case in your school, consider waiting until after your Holiday Break, Spring Break, or Summer Break before fully implementing your anti-bullying program. Ideally, the best time to implement your new approach toward bullying is at the beginning of the school year.
- Trying to get a child with excessive self-esteem and a sense of entitlement to be empathetic toward others can be difficult. Appeal to his or her best interest. Tell them that statistically bullies are headed for trouble later in life and that no one in your school wants him to experience problems later in life. Ask them if they would want someone to treat their siblings this way.
- Non-assertive children are the most likely to be bullied. Help them behave more assertively: Stand taller, make eye contact, speak with greater strength but without yelling, do not remain seated when around Bullies, walk with longer strides, and help them smile more in school.



- Help non-assertive children with verbal comeback lines that do not escalate the conflict, yet at the same time provide an appropriate and assertive response: “Whatever,” “You’re boring me,” “I thought you were funnier than that.”
- Encourage the Target’s parents to help their child forge at least one good friendship since Bullies target children who are alone.
- Place serial Bullies in areas where they are easily visible.
- Help parents understand that children who are less likely to become Targets are competent in at least one skill or activity: music, sports, drama, other.

Turning Courage From a Noun Into an Active Verb

One study of the courageous minority who aided Jews during the Nazi occupation revealed three outstanding abilities that they shared:

- An adventurous spirit that was humane, purposeful and life-affirming
- Identification with a morally strong parent or morally strong heroic figure
- An ability to identify with socially marginal people, a large capacity for hospitality, a willingness to break with tradition and to withstand difficulty when pursuing justice

Douglas Huneke, the researcher who compiled these facts about Holocaust rescuers, ended his study with this important observation: “These common traits of the rescuers are skills that can be taught and learned. As people learn and practice them, others who are in distress are more likely to be the recipients of direct, meaningful intervention. These skill-related traits do not develop out of nothing or come to a person accidentally. They must be rehearsed and affirmed in a way that insures their continued refining and practice.” In other words, courage is grown when it’s understood, esteemed, and trained, which is one of the primary purposes of this program and curriculum.

Other ways to grow our capacity for courage include:

- An openness to new experiences and creativity
- The ability to find viable options to problems, which fuels hope, which fuels courage
- Studying the lives of heroic people, especially their ability to withstand and surmount tremendous opposition and defeat



- The formation of groups, even smaller ones, that provide *encouragement*—the provision of both comfort and and urging forward into new acts of courage and meaning
- Attaching one’s life to purposes that are greater than one’s own wants and desires
- Witnessing how courage and sacrifice are esteemed by one’s school culture and our society at large
- Honoring of acts of great empathy, especially toward those in need
- Remembering past episodes where someone displayed courage, which provides confidence for future displays of courage.

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A Quick Quiz For Both School Staff & Students

The following is an informative quiz about some of the most common questions that all four characters in the theater of bullying have about this complicated and sometimes nuanced problem:

1. Bullying is just something kids do at a young age. They outgrow it and it doesn't influence the quality of their lives later in life.

True False

2. The results of bullying upon the Target are short lived. Targets go on to live normal lives.

True False

3. Bullying hits its peak in high school.

True False

4. Bullies suffer from low self-esteem, are insecure and have few if any friends.

True False

5. Bullies have anger management problems and can't keep themselves from lashing out at whomever is near them at the time.

True False

6. Bullies usually attack when no one is watching.

True False

7. Most bullying is verbal, not physical, in nature.

True False

8. Boys tend to be involved in physical bullying as girls tend to be involved in isolating and rejecting other girls—or what's called relational aggression.

True False



9. The most bullied group of children in school are physically and mentally challenged children.

True False

10. An effective way to get a Target to befriend a Bully is to help the Target tell the Bully how he or she feels, and to get the two to shake hands.

True False

11. Studies show that more than half of middle school students bully.

True False

Answers:

1. **False:** Bullies are more likely to abuse drugs and sixty percent of children identified as Bullies in middle school go on to have arrest records. They are more likely to abuse their future spouse and children as well.
2. **False:** Not only are Targets more likely to suffer from physiological illness, they also are more likely to have academic problems now and in the future.
3. **False:** Bullying peaks during the middle-school years, then decreases into the high school years.
4. **False:** Studies show that Bullies have average to above-average levels of self-esteem and self-confidence. They also have friends and followers.
5. **False:** Serial Bullies do not lash out at just anyone. They carefully choose their Targets and when they will strike their Targets.
6. **False:** Bullies usually attack in front of peers but away from Authority.
7. **True:** About 80% of bullying is verbal, not physical.
8. **True:** Though both genders are attracted to different forms of bullying, both genders are also capable of committing all forms of bullying.
9. **True:** Though non-assertiveness is the character trait that is most likely to make a child become a target, the group of children most likely to be bullied is physically



and mentally challenged children. This fact helps to explain how serial bullying in most cases is not about “misunderstanding,” “conflict” or “anger management.” It’s about disdain and contempt for others, which are expressions of supremacy and dominance of others deemed less valuable or important.

10. **False:** As explained previously, encouraging the Target to share emotions and shake hands with a Bully usually gives the Bully more power over the Target.

11. **False:** Only 15-20 percent of students bully, which means that only about 15 to 20 kids out of 100 bully regularly. Only a minority of students bully other students.

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Life's a Movie—What's Your Role? Curriculum

Lesson 1: *What is Bullying, Really?*

(Approximately 25-30 minutes)

1. What is Bullying, Really?

Bullying isn't just any kind of disagreement, argument or fight. It's a specific way that some people use to harm another person, usually with words, but also with physical attacks.

Here's a simple definition of bullying: It's the repeated use of greater power to harm another person on purpose, and where the other person (the Target) didn't do anything to deserve the bad treatment.

Bullying is done *physically* by someone who is stronger than another through punching, kicking, biting, pushing, slapping, hair pulling and other acts of violence. Bullying is done by saying mean words to people, such as, "You're stupid," "You're ugly," and "No one likes you." And it's done *socially* in many ways, such as putting someone down because they come from families that have less money, are from another country, practice a different religion, and so on.

Studies show that most students will experience bullying at some point while in school. And studies show that a person who is bullied every once in a while isn't really harmed by it. This doesn't mean that the bullying isn't wrong, and it doesn't mean that it doesn't hurt. It just means that being picked on once or twice during a school year doesn't cause the Target of bullying to have big problems in life.

The problem that we are trying to solve today is called "serial bullying." This is not the same kind of cereal that you eat for breakfast. This kind of serial means that it is bullying that happens a lot, such three times a month or more. This is the kind of bullying that does more than hurt a Target. It harms the Target, which means it does a lot of damage to that person.

2. Bullying, Fighting or Just Disagreeing?

Read each question out loud and discuss whether or not you think each is an example of bullying or fighting.

Question: At lunchtime, three girls in your class decide that they want to sit alone and talk about what they did last weekend. When another girl walks up and asks to join them for lunch, they say "No." Is this a case of bullying?



Answer: No. Remember that bullying is the use of greater power to harm another person on purpose. So in this case, the three girls did not intend to harm the other girl by saying, “No.” What the three girls did wasn’t nice, but it also wasn’t bullying. If they said “No” because they wanted to harm the other girl, then it would be bullying.

Question: A girl with different-looking hair is walking home from school with a friend when a boy who is much larger than her stops her, yells at her and tells her that she’s “stupid” and shouldn’t come to school anymore. The larger boy then punches the girl with different looking hair. Is this bullying?

Answer: Yes. If this situation sounds familiar, it’s because it actually happened in November of 2009 and was captured on a cell phone and later given to the police. The boy who punched the girl with different colored hair was arrested. The girl with the different looking hair was bullied because she looked a little different, which reminds us of an important fact about bullying. Most of the time the Target did nothing to deserve the bullying. The Bully thought he was better than the other girl.

Question: Three girls in the same class get together and decide to write mean things on Facebook about a classmate who has not done anything to harm them. They write things that are intended to embarrass him at school the next day. Is this bullying?

Answer: Yes. In this case, the three girls are using greater social power (what’s called rejection and isolation) to harm another student with information that isn’t true and is intended to make him feel very bad. This is an example of what bullying experts call “social aggression.” Sadly, a boy in 2009 actually took his life when his classmates did this to him. Other kids have done the same thing.

Question: Two boys about the same size and strength shove and punch each other on the playground and say mean things to each other. Is this bullying?

Answer: No. In this case, both boys are the same size and height, so one doesn’t have greater power than the other. This is an example of fighting, not bullying.

3. Why do Bullies Bully?

A lot of people who do not bully don’t know why people do it. In fact, this is one of the most-asked questions kids have about this problem. This section is designed to help everyone understand why Bullies do what they do.



Question: Why do you think kids bully other kids?

Answer: There isn't one reason. Some bully because they have what's called "low self-esteem." This means that they don't feel very good about themselves. As a result, they hurt other people to feel more powerful and better about themselves. They also bully because they think they are more important and more valuable than other kids. Some kids bully because a parent or older brother or sister bullied them, so it is the only way they know how to deal with others.

Question: Are some people more valuable or important than other people?

Answer: No. Though some people may have more talent or abilities than others, we live in a country whose *Declaration of Independence* states that all people are created equal. President Abraham Lincoln relied on the *Declaration of Independence* when making the case that slavery in America was wrong. He said during his famous Gettysburg Address: "Our [Founding] fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all [people] are created equal."

Question: What do you think happens to Bullies after they graduate from high school?

Answer: Bullies are far more likely to commit a serious crime by the age of 24. They are also more likely to abuse their future wife or husband and children and suffer from depression later in life. They are more likely to take drugs, too. It's clear that bullying is not only bad for other kids, but it's bad for the Bully as well.

Question: Okay, what have we learned today?

Answer: The important thing to remember is that bullying is when someone uses greater power to harm someone on purpose, and that most of the time the Bully's Target did nothing to deserve being treated so badly.

We also learned that bullying is not only bad for Targets and others in a school, it's very bad for the Bully as well.

Imagination Time: Read the quote below and write down what it means to you. In our next lesson, we're going to learn more about courage and how important it is in our lives in order to become happy and healthy children and adults.

"Without courage, we cannot practice any other virtue with consistency. We can't be kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest." [A virtue is a good quality, such as honesty and others mentioned in this quote].



--Maya Angelou

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