

Indirect bullying may

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The **bully's** primary purpose is to gain power or acclaim. Some targeted students have made the mistake of thinking that use of a weapon or retaliation against the bully will resolve the problem. These choices are not viable because they are rarely effective. Rather than end the problem, retaliatory methods tend to escalate the aggression and hurt or injure unintended victims.

Students who bully should admit to the behavior and acknowledge it as being hurtful. A student who bullies can ask for help just like the targeted student or accept help from an adult whom they trust and begin to explore more respectful methods of expression and for gaining power and prestige at school.

The **bystander** should recognize that he/she must choose to be either a part of the problem or a part of the solution. Hurtful actions can deliberately affect the targeted person, witnesses to the humiliation, and the entire campus climate. **Bystanders** are a powerful majority and can use their social power and personal actions to promote respect for themselves and others. There are ways to prevent bullying from being established in a school. The following suggestions may be helpful:

- Report bullying to a responsible and caring adult.
- Express disapproval by not joining in the laughter, teasing, or gossip.
- Campaign against bullying through school activities (e.g., the school newsletter, the student handbook, school calendar, poster contests, a "student watch" program, plays and productions, or suggestion boxes for safe, anonymous reporting).
- Advocate mediation programs or programs to develop students' problem-solving skills.

Parents are their children's first teachers. Therefore, parents' words and actions at home will be imitated by their children in other settings. The most important opportunity that parents have is to speak and act in a respectful way and to solve problems fairly and peacefully. Being a positive role model means teaching children respect and peaceable behaviors by example. Suggestions for ways to be a positive role model are as follows:

- Talk with children often and listen carefully to what they have to say.
 - Discuss bullying behavior and how hurtful it can be to others.
 - Make behavioral expectations clear and be consistent with discipline when siblings and peers engage in hurtful teasing and bullying.
 - Help children understand the meaning of friendship by modeling friendly behavior and showing how friends act positively toward each other.
 - Discuss the fact that people are individuals and everyone develops characteristics and personalities that make them who they are.
 - Model basic manners and respect for family, friends, and peers.
 - Urge children to tell an adult when they are being bullied.
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- Learn the school rules, expected behavior, and consequences of bullying.
 - Participate at school, on services, and attend school-sponsored activities.
 - Communicate regularly with your child's teacher.
 - Report bullying behavior immediately when you become aware it is happening.
 - Ask for and accept the school's help whether your child is a target, a bully, or a bystander.

No single factor contributes to bullying behavior, but several influences allow it to develop as the norm. For example if family members criticize regularly or use "put-downs," children may assume that this is the way to deal with people generally. Media images of bullying and harassment being portrayed as humorous, peer norms that communicate bullying as acceptable, and a school culture that ignores obvious signs of bullying can all allow bullying to grow.

School bullying is a challenge, and it affects the entire community. Community partners can help schools deal effectively with bullying problems. Law enforcement officers, representatives of juvenile justice, business owners, faith community members, attorneys, and local mental health and social service experts can share expertise, resources, and skills. Community partners can contribute support to combat bullying by taking the following actions:

- Participate in problem-solving groups or antibullying policy committees.
- Share positive cultural perspectives, norms, and expectations as models for youths.
- Offer counseling and other mental health and social services as appropriate.
- Provide legal counsel to clearly define bullying behavior and the law.
- Help identify students at risk of becoming bullies or targets.
- Volunteer to mentor bullies and targets of bullying.
- Provide support for parents whose children are experiencing bullying problems.
- Demonstrate to all students the concern and support of the community by providing resources and supporting positive school projects, sports, and field trips.

Provider or law enforcement.

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