

Bullying and Bullying Prevention



A Teacher's Guide

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Preface

The thesis you hold in your hands, *Bullying and Bullying Prevention*, is my attempt to give teachers the necessary material to work with when it comes to dealing with the age-old problem of bullying at school. Bullying is a topic that we frequently hear about. There is no question that many people have done research in this area. Despite the popularity of this topic, figures show that bullying is increasingly becoming a bigger problem. What contributes to this problem is society's lack of understanding. Bullying is regularly dismissed as 'just a part of growing up'. Furthermore, bullying is often simply ignored with the hope that it will go away. Bullying is a serious problem and it has devastating lifelong effects on the victims. It is not normal or natural and it really should not be a part of a person's childhood experiences.

Teachers are expected to correctly handle and resolve problems with bullying at school. During various internships as a student teacher I have noticed that many teachers, including myself, do not exactly know what to do when it comes to bullying. I have been asked by class mentors to keep an eye on certain students because they have either bullied or been bullied in the past. At first I thought it would be an easy task, but before long I understood that it was not. I had a lot of difficulty in defining bullying in real life incidents and also in deciding what to do with the situation at hand. When I asked other teachers for advice, I was told to give warnings, give detention or talk to the students involved. This only had a short-term effect and did not stop the bullying, in some cases it just got worse. The teachers I have talked to realize that they need to be more active in bullying prevention, but feel they are left groping in the dark by lack of proper knowledge and the necessary material.

I believe teachers can and should play a more important role in bullying prevention. This thesis is meant as a guide for teachers. With this thesis I provide teachers with not only all the information they need about different aspects of bullying, but also several ready-to-use materials which they can put into practice inside the classroom or outside the classroom.

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Introduction

I shall remember and never forget

Monday: *my money was taken.*

Tuesday: *I was called names.*

Wednesday: *my uniform was torn.*

Thursday: *my body was pouring with blood.*

Friday: *it's ended.*

Saturday: *Freedom at last.*

These are the final diary pages of a thirteen-year-old boy named Vijay Singh. He hanged himself from the banister rail at home, and was found on Sunday.

It is imperative for people to realize just how serious and dangerous bullying is. Bullying is all too often trivialized by adults. Most of the time it is taken lightly, brushed off, or simply ignored. In reality bullying is a vicious circle, and thus a life-and-death issue. Every time we minimize this problem we put children's lives at peril. Every day thousands of children go to school filled with fear and anxiety. Others feign illness or even make themselves sick at home or at school so as to try to avoid being bullied. Children who are bullied spend a lot of time and energy in trying to find ways to avoid being bullied. As a result of this they often do not have enough energy left for learning and their performance at school takes a back seat. Bullied children if not helped can become vengeful and may strike back using violence towards others or themselves, which deeply affects families and communities.

We also have to pay attention to children who are bullies. Many children who bully others continue this behavior into adulthood. They are apt to bully their family members and co-workers. They often enter the criminal path and end up in jail.

Another group we should pay attention to is the onlookers. They are also affected by bullying. They mostly observe the bullying, but they can either choose to walk away, help the bullied child or join the bully.

Every individual should be treated with dignity and respect. No student should feel afraid to go to school for fear of being humiliated and getting hurt, and parents should not have to worry about such things happening to their child. We must do everything we can to break the cycle of violence.

I have been confronted with this problem during my internships as a student teacher. I initially thought it would be easy to recognize bullying, but to my surprise it was not. I also thought for a long time that I knew what bullying is, but looking back at my experiences I have to conclude that I do not really know what it is. What is more, I had a lot of difficulty in handling bullying incidents. Students turned to me and expected me to adequately address the problem. The sense of not knowing what to do and the uncertainty left me feeling guilty and powerless. It is after all my task to create a safe environment for my students. I turned to teachers for help in this matter. The advice that was given to me by experienced teachers did not help a lot to prevent or resolve the bullying. I noticed that teachers are not very much involved in the prevention of bullying because they do not have the time, the knowledge or the material. I believe teachers should play a bigger role in bullying prevention. They can make a big difference if they have the proper information and material. This is what ultimately led me to choose this topic for my thesis.

Problem definition:

In this thesis I give an answer to the following question: ‘What do teachers need in order to be able to play a more significant role in the prevention of bullying inside the classroom and outside the classroom?’

Objective:

The objective of this thesis is to provide teachers with a guide in which they can not only find specific information on bullying, but also ready-to-use materials which they can use immediately.

The importance of this thesis lies in its function. By means of this thesis I can assist teachers by raising their awareness on bullying, so they will be better able to recognize and effectively handle bullying incidents at school. Furthermore, by using the materials that are provided they can also work actively on the prevention of bullying at school.

In order to produce a high-quality thesis which teachers will no doubt find useful and practical, I have done extensive research and review of the literature and publications

available on this topic. I have incorporated the ideas of several experts in my thesis, such as that of Educational Consultant Mrs Barbara Coloroso, Professor of Counselor Education Mr Walter Roberts, Social Worker Mr Gary Plaford, Professor of Psychology and Researcher Mr Dan Olweus, Educator and Human Relations and Training Consultant Mrs Gail Pursell Elliott, Principal Lecturer at the University of Plymouth Mr Chris Lee and last but not least Professor of Social Psychology at the University of South Australia Mr Ken Rigby.

Besides the publications of the above-mentioned experts, I have also used several websites of national and international organizations in order to acquire a variety of information; these can be found in the references section.

The thesis consists of a total of seven chapters; in each chapter I discuss a different aspect of bullying and its prevention. The following is an overview of the chapters:

In the first chapter I elaborate on the definition of bullying and certain popular myths and misconceptions that often contribute to the problem. In addition I also discuss the different kinds of bullying and the reason why people bully others.

In the second chapter I focus solely on the bully. My attention is directed towards how a person becomes a bully and the typical characteristics that identifies one. The kinds of bullies and why they are victims too, are also a part of this chapter.

In the third chapter the emphasis lies on the bullied, this is where I take a closer look at the reason why one becomes a victim and how to recognize him or her.

In the fourth chapter I concentrate on the bystanders and their role in bullying.

In the fifth chapter the family takes a central role. I explain why it is important for parents to be able to distinguish whether their child is a bully or a victim of bullying and what to do next in order to provide the much needed assistance.

The sixth chapter revolves around ways to tackle bullying at school and what teachers can do to prevent and resolve bullying.

The seventh chapter, the last chapter of this thesis, is a collection of several ready-to-use materials which teachers can use, and if necessary adapt to fit their needs in order to start working actively on counteracting bullying.

Chapter 1: A definition of bullying

Many people do not have a clear and accurate idea of what bullying is. Others believe it is simply a part of growing up and therefore choose to just completely ignore it. Because of this millions of children all around the world are left to fend for themselves on a daily basis feeling a lot of trepidation about their future. I believe that the lack of comprehension on this topic contributes to the intensification of the problem. We cannot correct a problem if we are not aware of its existence, magnitude and severity. In order to do a proper research on this topic we must then start with the very basics. The purpose of this chapter is to set the record straight by shedding some light on what bullying is and how it manifests itself.

1.1 What is bullying?

In general everyone has their own idea of what bullying is. Some believe bullying is when one person harasses another person. Yet others believe that bullying is when a group of people harasses another person. In reality both of the above-mentioned ideas are simply a part of bullying, but they do not specifically define what bullying is. If we want teachers to be able to properly handle bullying incidents at school, it is crucial that we get all of them on the same page to start with, especially when it comes to the definition of bullying. There are many different definitions of the term 'bullying'; the following are a couple of them:

Mr. Dan Olweus, a prominent Swedish researcher who spent approximately thirty years doing research in the area of bullying among school children defines bullying as follows: "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students". (Olweus, 2006, p.9)

It is important to further clarify what Dan Olweus means when he refers to 'negative actions'. A negative action is when a person intentionally inflicts, or tries to inflict, any kind of injury or discomfort upon another person. Negative actions can be performed verbally by using words to threaten, taunt and tease, and to call names. They can also be performed physically by hitting, pushing, kicking, pinching and restraining another person. It is also possible to perform a negative action without using words and without the physical contact, for example by making faces, by making dirty gestures, by

deliberately excluding someone from a group or activity, or simply by refusing to abide by someone's personal wishes.

It is also very important to say with emphasis that the term 'bullying' should never be used when two students that have just about the same strength, whether physical or psychological, are fighting or arguing. The term 'bullying' should only be used when there is a clear imbalance in strength. That means that it should be somewhat obvious that the student who is being exposed to negative actions is having a difficult time in defending himself and therefore is helpless against the student who is harassing him.

Here is another definition of bullying: "Bullying involves a desire to hurt + hurtful action + a power imbalance + (typically) repetition + an unjust use of power + evident enjoyment by the aggressor and generally a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim". (Rigby, 2002, p.51)

In this thesis I will follow both definitions because they clearly define what bullying is. The definition by Mr Olweus is short and clear and the definition by Mr Rigby states in detail what bullying consists of.

1.2 The difficulties in defining bullying and what bullying is NOT!

It is extremely important to clarify what bullying is and what bullying is not and what the difficulties are in defining it. There are many difficulties in defining bullying which can make it very hard for us to distinguish whether an action should be considered as bullying or not. Not every incident with acts of aggression can or should be classified as bullying. Bullying is not a part of normal childhood behavior such as sibling rivalry or one-on-one fighting between siblings or peers with the purpose of competition. Children often develop conflicts that can end in pushing, fighting or yelling, yet these are considered to be normal in a child's development. Such conflicts show that children are busy exploring their boundaries. It only becomes problematic when a child consistently engages in acts of aggression and cannot be stopped.

Some examples of what is NOT bullying:

- Impulsive or spontaneous aggression that does not have an intended target which is related to a physical or mental handicap (e.g. autism).
- An act of spontaneous and indiscriminate aggression which is the response to an attack from a child who is being bullied.
- Certain criminal activities such as physical assault, assault with a weapon and vandalism, which are the result of conflicts that have escalated.
- Two students who are laughing and calling each other names on the playground.
- A group of boys who greet each other by nicknames that may seem insulting to an outsider, but no one in the group is upset by the greetings and are not embarrassed by their nicknames.
- A group of boys who regularly hide each other's bicycles and then have fun watching how one of them looks for his bike all around school.

Now, here are some examples of what IS bullying:

- A girl calls a classmate "booger lip baby" every time she sees him because the classmate once came to school with a swollen lip from a bee sting.
- Several girls surround a new girl during lunch time and ask her humiliating questions about her clothes, such as "Do you get your clothes at Kringloop?"
- A group of boys regularly approach a mentally disabled boy whom they know is not capable of disagreeing with them and tell him to ask the same girl over and over for a date.
- A group of boys and girls always yell "earthquake" when they see an overweight classmate walking towards or away from them.
- A group of girls regularly write insulting messages directed to another girl on the bathroom mirror.

Another factor that makes bullying hard to define is the difference between teasing and taunting. Many people believe that teasing and taunting is the same thing, when in fact they are not. Teasing is harmless and is done a lot between friends. Taunting is harmful because it is something done to someone for whom you feel contempt. Remember that

teasing is not bullying, but taunting is. Take a look at the teasing-taunting table below (Figure 1.1) for an account of the differences between teasing and taunting:

Teasing	Taunting
1. The teaser and the person teased can swap roles very easily at any given time.	1. It is based on an imbalance of power and is one-sided.
2. There is never an intention to hurt the person being teased.	2. There is an intention to harm.
3. It preserves the dignity of the person teased.	3. It involves humiliating, cruel and demeaning comments disguised as jokes.
4. It is lighthearted, clever and benign.	4. The laughter is directed at someone, not with someone.
5. It is meant to make everyone involved laugh.	5. It diminishes the sense of self-worth of the person taunted.
6. It is only a small part of the activities shared by a group of people.	6. It leads to fear and possible physical bullying.
7. It is innocent.	7. It is sinister.
8. It is immediately stopped when and if the person teased becomes upset.	8. It continues especially when the person taunted becomes upset.

Figure 1.1 The teasing-taunting table of differences (Coloroso, 2005)

1.3 Popular myths and misconceptions of school bullying

There are many myths and misconceptions about bullying going around in our society. These are mostly incomplete or incorrect and they exist due to lack of proper information on the topic. These myths and misconceptions cause a lot of confusion and they often lead people to make wrong decisions. The following is a list of some popular myths about bullying:

- **Bullying is the same thing as conflict:** this idea is wrong, bullying and conflict are two totally different things. When we talk about bullying we refer to aggressive behavior which is characterized by an imbalance of power and happening repeatedly over time. When we talk about a conflict we refer to an antagonism (a feeling of hate or extreme unfriendliness or active opposition) between two or more people. The difference between bullying and conflict is that

bullying only occurs when there is an imbalance of power and a person having a difficult time defending himself or herself, whereas everyone can have a conflict with another person. Conflicts are not characterized by an imbalance of power. It is very important for us as teachers to know this difference because all too often we use strategies that are meant for solving conflicts in bullying incidents. By doing this we send the message to both children that they are partly right and partly wrong, when the message we should be sending is that bullying is a hundred percent wrong.

- **Bullying is mostly physical:** when we think about bullying this is the first thing that comes to our mind, we immediately think about a child who is kicking, shoving or hitting another child. Even though this does happen it is not the only form of bullying and it is not the most common form of bullying. The most common form of bullying is verbal bullying. It is also very common to bully someone by socially isolating them.
- **Bullying is not serious; it is just something kids do:** bullying is extremely dangerous and it has a detrimental effect on the victim's mental and physical well being. Bullying severely affects a victim's self-esteem, and they often have to deal with depression, loneliness, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, headaches, sleeping problems and stomach ailments.
- **Bullying does not happen at my school:** this is something we hear very often and it is wrong. Bullying happens and can happen anywhere there are children present. Just because we do not see it does not mean it does not happen. Bullying at school is more common than what we believe. In order to find out how much bullying is going on at your school it is advisable to do an anonymous survey among students.

- **Bullying is mostly a problem in urban areas and urban schools:** we have to realize that bullying happens everywhere. It happens in all communities whether it is rural, suburban or urban one. Bullying is not tied to income, race or region.
- **Bullying happens mostly out of school than at school:** as said before bullying happens everywhere, but according to surveys it is more likely to happen at school. The most common locations for bullying at school are playgrounds, the classroom, the cafeteria, bathrooms and hallways. Again it is advisable to do an anonymous student survey in order to find out where the hotspots are at your school.
- **Children who are bullied almost always tell an adult what is happening:** adults are often oblivious of bullying and one of the reasons is because children do not let adults know that it is happening. Only a small percentage of bullied children actually talk to an adult about the bullying. Boys and older children are less likely to tell adults about bullying in comparison to girls and younger children. Children often keep silent by fear of making the situation worse. They are afraid of retaliation by the bullies, and they often believe that adults will either not take them seriously or make the situation even worse by mishandling it.
- **Bullies are mostly loners with few social skills:** in reality children who bully generally have enough friends; they often have larger friendship networks compared to other children. What is very important for us to acknowledge is that they usually have a small circle of friends who support and encourage their bullying behavior. When it comes to skills, bullies often have more leadership skills than victims of bullying or the bystanders.
- **Children who are bullied have to learn how to deal with it on their own:** some children succeed in stopping the bullying when it happens, but these are children that have enough confidence and skills to do so. Many children cannot

make the bullying stop and we should not expect of them to deal with it on their own. As adults and teachers we have an important role to play when it comes to stopping the bullying.

- **Bystanders of bullying do not want to get involved:** luckily most children believe that bullying is wrong and that something should be done to stop it. Many times bystanders try to do or say something to stop the bullying. These are the children teachers have to work with because they can also play an important role in putting a stop to the bullying at school.

Stop Bullying Now, www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov (5 May 2008)

1.4 Kinds of bullying

There are many different types of bullying behaviors. Bullying behaviors are ever-changing, that means that with the passing of time we will get to see new types of bullying behaviors making their entrance. In order to truly understand the breadth of bullying and bullying behaviors we must first look at the basic types of bullying, and afterwards the different ways in which bullying manifests itself.

There are three basic types of bullying:

- **Physical bullying:** this type of bullying is more than just punching, kicking and hitting which we consider to be direct (face to face) forms of physical bullying. Physical bullying can also take indirect forms, such as taking someone's possessions, damaging property or school work. They are done with the sole purpose to disempower someone. In this case there is a physical manifestation of the bullying but there is no physical pain. Another form of physical bullying is extortion; the bullied child is threatened with violence with intimidating gestures and body language in order to make him or her give up money or possessions.
- **Verbal bullying:** this is the most common type of bullying. It is very common because it is easy and does not take much effort on the part of the bully. It can also have an immediate impact on the bullied child. Verbal bullying often happens in front of other people. This type of bullying can take direct or indirect

forms. Name-calling and offensive and threatening remarks can be directed towards someone who is vulnerable. It is meant to disempower the victim. All of these forms can also be carried out in an indirect manner through mobile phones and computers. This means that the bully does not even have to be physically present in order to verbally bully his or her victim.

- **Social/Relational bullying:** this type of bullying includes a deliberate exclusion from social groups. It also includes intimidation of the victim within a group. Social bullying can take direct and indirect forms. The direct form is when the victim immediately experiences the exclusion. The indirect form is when the victim does not experience the exclusion because he or she is not aware that it happened. This form of exclusion happens away from the victim and he or she only finds out about it if someone tells him or her about it or when he or she tries to join the group. Social bullying can sometimes be more hurtful than verbal bullying and physical bullying.

Now that I have covered the basic types of bullying I am going to look at how bullying manifests itself in different ways.

- **Racial bullying:** when an act of aggression is directed towards a person that belongs to a different racial group than the bully it is often considered racial bullying. This type of bullying is hard to pinpoint because you have to have enough reasons to be able to say with accuracy that the racial difference between the bully and the bullied is the cause of the bullying. There are many factors that can lead to misunderstandings and misjudgments. Keep in mind that a child of a different race may be bullied because of entirely different reasons which have nothing to do with his or her race. Furthermore, the bully may also have friends that belong to the same racial group as the person he is bullying. One important thing to keep in mind is that racial bullying does not just happen out of nowhere. Children are taught how to be racist before they engage in racial bullying. These children may be exposed to an environment that encourages racism. Teachers have to be aware of this and tackle racism as well as bullying in

this matter. We have to teach children to be tolerant of each other's differences and eliminate stereotypes that lead to intolerance and discrimination.

In order to try to avoid misjudgments take a look at the following definition of racial bullying: "All actions and behaviors that intentionally or otherwise either discriminate against someone or make them feel unwelcome or marginalized because of their racial identity are considered to be racial bullying". We can identify racial identity as a person's race, color, nationality and ethnic/national origin. (Rigby, 2002, p.39)

- **Sexual bullying:** this kind of peer-to-peer bullying is one of the most common kinds of bullying in schools. This kind of bullying is also difficult to pinpoint because it not only involves bullying but also sexist attitudes. Sexual bullying can have very damaging consequences because sexuality is so fundamental to our existence. There is a widespread mentality that mostly girls experience this kind of bullying, but this cannot be further from the truth. Both boys and girls experience this kind of bullying. Sexual bullying is a serious threat to the physical and emotional well-being of the bullied child. Girls who mature early as well as boys who mature late are the ones who have a very high risk of being sexually bullied. Boys or girls with a different sexual orientation are also likely to be sexually bullied. Sexual bullying can be physical, verbal and social/relational.

Verbal sexual bullying: The most common type of sexual bullying is verbal and it often leads towards physical and social/relational types of sexual bullying. Boys and girls experience a different kind of sexual bullying. Boys are often bullied with demeaning terms that suggest they are not a boy (sissy, pussy, bitch) or with homophobic terms (fag, homo, gay). Girls are often bullied with words that objectify their bodies and demean their sexuality (pussy, slut, hooker). The victims of verbal sexual bullying often have to deal with threats of sexual violation. Bullies will almost always try to defend themselves by saying they were only joking or flirting. It is very important to teach children the difference between flirting and sexual bullying. Flirting is playful and it is an invitation for people to get to know each other better. There is no intention to hurt or demean

someone. Sexual bullying is just the opposite, it is one-sided and hurtful. The bullied child is always demeaned and degraded.

Physical sexual bullying: this kind of bullying includes touching and grabbing, pinching, groping, fondling and brushing against someone in a sexual way. It also includes snapping bras, pulling down trousers or pulling up skirts or even sexual assault which is considered a criminal activity.

Social/Relational sexual bullying: this kind of bullying is largely used to systematically diminish a child's sense of self-worth. The most common ways of social bullying is by shunning someone because of their sexual orientation and by consistently spreading rumors or sexual epithets on walls, mirrors etc. (Coloroso, 2005)

- **Bullying due to a disability:** children who are disabled have a bigger chance of being bullied than children who do not have a disability. There is not a lot of theory on this kind of bullying, but the following definition can help us define and recognize it: "Disablement harassment or disablement bullying is the unwelcome bothering, tormenting, troubling, ridiculing or coercing of another person related to his disability". (Rigby, 2002, p.39) Disablement bullying is often verbal and physical. It mostly happens in front of other people.
- **Bullying due to social class:** the socio-economic status of children and their parents can be a reason for bullying. Research conducted in The Netherlands in 1999 by Junger-Tas showed that this kind of bullying is very common in socially disadvantaged and inner-city areas and especially among children whose parents have unskilled manual jobs. These children have a very high risk of becoming bullies or bullied children. Children whose parents have professional jobs are less likely to be bullied. This kind of bullying is mostly expressed with physical aggression.

- **Mobbing:** this kind of bullying is often referred to as ‘group bullying’ and is considered to be a form of terrorism. It is when a group of people gang up on someone. Mobbers literally attack their victim’s dignity, integrity, credibility and even competence. They use different ways to bully their victims such as threats, rumors, cruel jokes, isolation and intimidation. They try to discredit their victim and act as if the victim is guilty instead of them. Mobbers strongly believe their victims deserve everything they do to them. Mobbing has a devastating effect on the victims. It leads to isolation, severe depression, stress, anxiety, physical and mental illness and self-destructive behavior. In ‘School mobbing and emotional abuse’ (Pursell Elliott, 2003, p. 13) I found a passage I would like to share with you. The passage perfectly explains what mobbing is in layman’s terms: “Mobbing is often linked to chicken pecking, a form of barnyard behavior. Chicken pecking is not one large chicken bullying a smaller chicken and beating on it. All the chickens target and isolate one chick and randomly take chances at pecking at it once, maybe twice. Not one of them abuses the chick enough to really do harm, but eventually the chicken dies because of the accumulation of all the pecks”.
- **High-tech bullying:** bullies have found a new way to bully their victims; they have gone high-tech. This means that they can now harass others without having to be in a face-to-face situation. This kind of bullying is known as ‘cyber bullying’ and it allows bullies to harass their victims 24 hours a day. Bullies use different ways to cyber bully their victims. Bullies that are computer savvy create websites on which they post embarrassing slander about their victims. They even post (compromising) pictures and videos, names, phone numbers and address of their victims. Bullies send horrible e-mails and use text messages and phone calls multiple times a day in order to intimidate others. Bullies often get the help of their supporters to join in the bullying. The fact that cyber bullying can be done anonymously makes the situation much more difficult. Victims feel they are constantly under attack and cannot get away from it even at home. This kind of bullying is very vicious because it is less visible to outsiders and difficult to control.

1.5 The process of bullying

It is now time to look at how bullying takes place in our schools. Earlier I mentioned that one of the most important factors for bullying is an imbalance of power between people. Luckily, most people do not choose to demean and hurt another person, let alone someone who is less powerful than him. Unfortunately, there will always be a group of people who are continuously on the lookout for less powerful people they can easily bully and force into submission. Bullying in schools often starts when a child is considered to be weak and vulnerable. There are certain characteristics that can make a child seem weak in the eyes of his or her schoolmates such as being introverted, physically weaker than other children and anxious or isolated. A child who is more powerful sees this and may decide that this child is going to be his or her target for bullying. The bullying often starts with mild acts of aggression such as name-calling and taunting, but it often advances to more severe types of bullying behavior if nothing is done to stop the bully. Figure 1.2 shows how bullying begins.

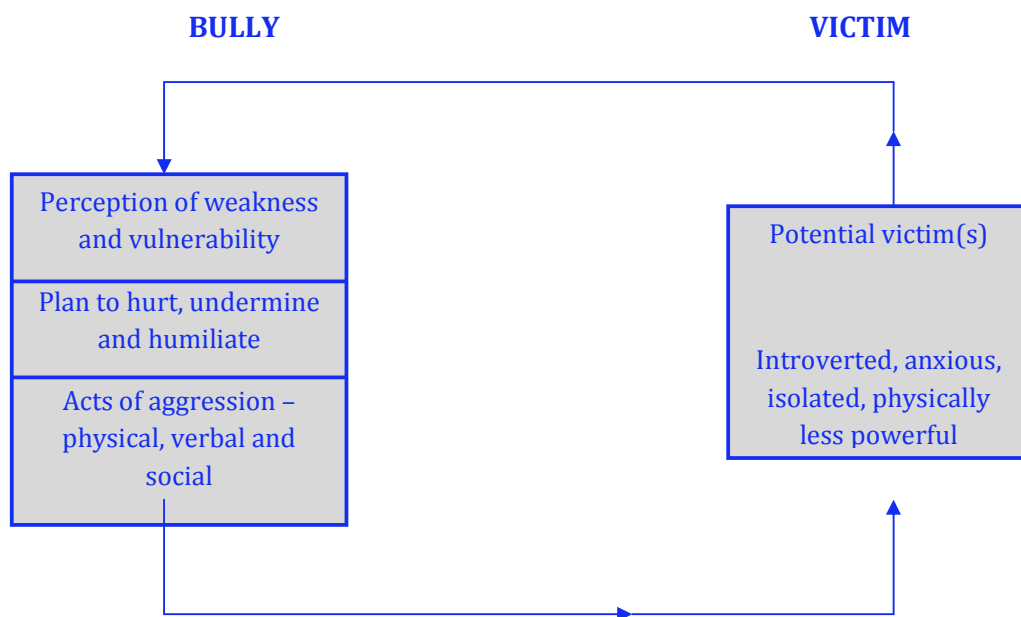


Figure 1.2 How bullying begins

If the victim is passive and does not resist to the bullying it is most likely that the bullying will continue. A passive victim will feel threatened and fearful as a result of the bullying. The bullying is succeeding if the victim shows any signs of being upset.

Remember that bullying is all about disempowering a victim. The bully will now start to really enjoy what he is doing especially if he gets the approval of friends and bystanders. The bully will then quickly lose whatever sense of empathy he has for the victim. Now the bully only thinks about how fun it is to bully his victim and the bullying will slowly become more intense. The bullying unfortunately can last for months or even years, surely a real nightmare for the victim. See figure 1.3 for an illustration of bullying and a passive victim.

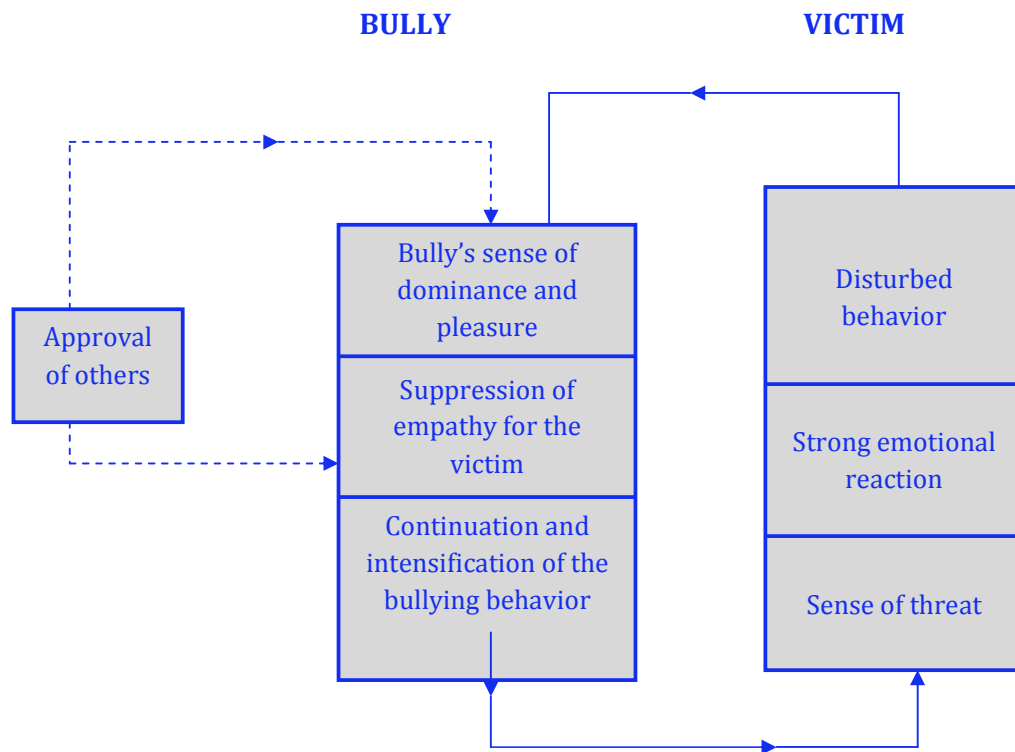


Figure 1.3 Bullying and a passive victim

The victim sometimes chooses to resist to the bullying. He might even try to do something to put a stop to the bullying he is subjected to. The victim seeks ways to escape and avoid the bully. He can try to stay in close proximity of teachers or spend a lot of time in the school library. He can also choose to fight back or act cool with the hope that the bully will get distracted or put off. Sometimes the bully can get discouraged and looks for another victim that is easier to bully, but if the bully chooses to keep on going no matter what and the imbalance of power becomes too great, the

victim will eventually stop resisting the bully. The victim will then try other ways to avoid the bully such as taking another way home from school or even just staying at home as to not risk a confrontation with the bully. See figure 1.4 for an illustration of bullying and a resistant victim.

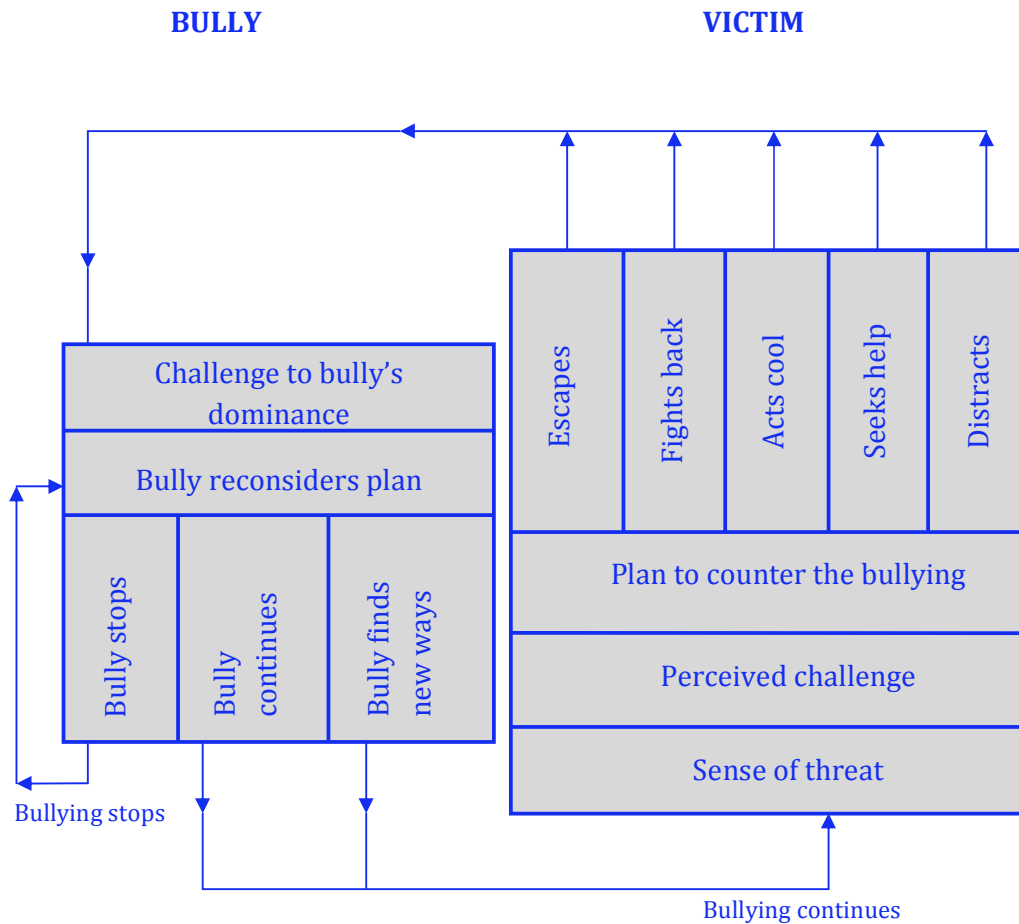


Figure 1.4 Bullying and a resistant victim (Rigby, 2002)

1.6 A model of bullying

Most acts of aggression occur on a continuum. The position of a certain act of aggression along the continuum depends on several components such as intent, hurt, repetition and duration. Bullying starts with an act of aggression or 'bullying action' but it can develop

into a bullying relationship over time. The two terms 'bullying action' and 'bullying relationship' stand at opposite ends on the continuum.

A bullying action is bullying that occasionally takes place, it is not enough to be considered a bullying relationship between two people yet. The bully's intention at this point is to hurt the victim, so surely the victim does experience hurt at the very beginning of the continuum. This is thus the place where the imbalance of power begins. If the bullying behavior is ignored it will happen more and more until it gets to a point where the imbalance of power becomes institutionalized. This means that the bullying behavior will become a regular occurrence where the bully persistently provokes the victim. When this happens we speak of a bullying relationship. See figure 1.5 for an illustration on how a bullying action can progress into a bullying relationship.

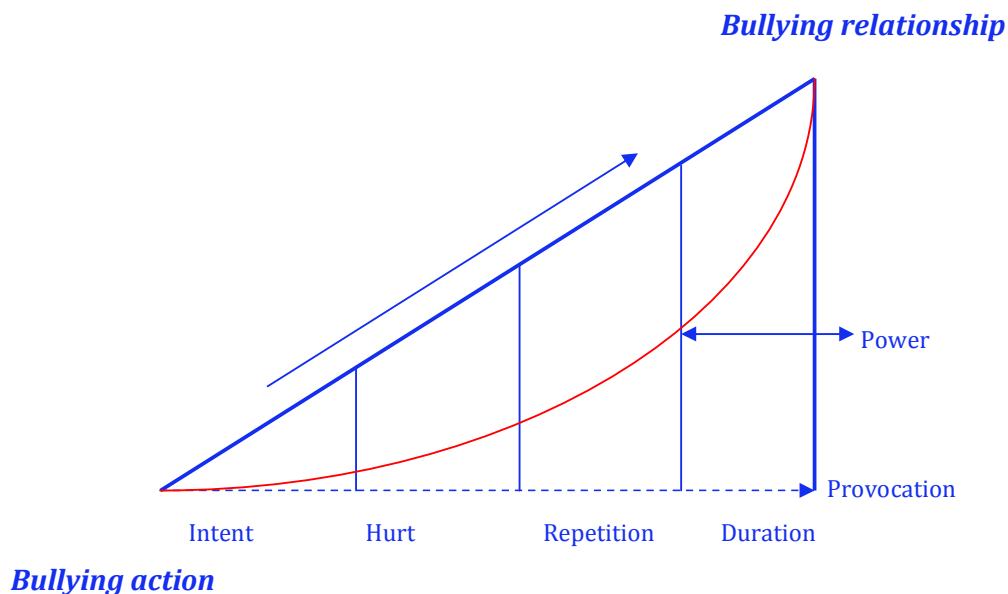


Figure 1.5 from bullying action to a bullying relationship
(Lee, 2004, p.27)

1.7 The Bullying Continuum

In the previous paragraph I talked about the continuum on which bullying actions occur. In this paragraph I will talk about the bullying actions and how they are categorized and positioned along the continuum. There is a long list of different actions and behaviors that are categorized as bullying. Nevertheless, all these actions and behaviors can be

divided into different degrees of severity and frequency. By dividing specific types of behaviors it is possible to determine whether a certain action is in fact an incident of bullying. The degrees of severity can be used to find out whether a child has advanced from less severe types of bullying behaviors to more severe types of bullying behaviors. Bullying behaviors occur on the so-called continuum; which is a line of increasing severity (see figure 1.5). The bullying continuum has three categories: mild, moderate and severe. With each category there is an increase in the imbalance of power, discomfort and pain on the bullied child. The bullying continuum helps us to identify bullying actions and behaviors and to monitor whether they get worse in time. The more severe the bullying action, the farther along it gets positioned on the continuum. Figure 1.6 shows the degrees of severity and frequency and some of the most common bullying behaviors. It also shows how the bullying behaviors intensify if nothing is done to stop the bullying.

Mild	Moderate	Severe
Dirty looks	Public exclusion (shunning)	Inflicting total isolation from peer group(s)
Name-calling	Demeaning acts (public and private)	Regular and routine intimidating behaviors
Taunting	Graffiti (minor and major)	Regular and routine extortion
Gossiping	Intimidating phone calls	Vandalism and destruction of property (major)
Threats to reveal secrets	Ethnic, racial, or religious slurs	Mobbing on victims
Public embarrassment and humiliation	Regular, intentional petty thefts	Threats with weapons
Graffiti (minor)	Verbal or proximity intimidation	Inflicting bodily harm
Spitting	Threats to harm family or friends	
Pushing and shoving (minor)	Extortion	
	Intentional physical violence	

Figure 1.6 The Bullying Continuum
(Roberts, 2006)

1.8 Bullying among boys and girls

It might be helpful to know a little bit more about the form of bullying that goes on between boys and girls and if there are any significant differences between the genders. This paragraph will give you the most important information you need to know about the bullying that goes on between boys and girls.

Boys are generally speaking more exposed and engaged into bullying than girls. I say this carefully because boys and girls tend to bully in different ways, some which may be very difficult to detect. Boys are often raised to be tough and outwardly expressive of aggression. Therefore they tend to be more physical than girls. They are more likely to kick, push or hit someone, so it is logical that physical bullying is more common between boys than girls. Boys also take part in the bullying more often than girls. Boys are predominantly bullied by members of their own sex, but they are also bullied by girls. They are less likely to say that they have been bullied by a girl if asked and they will almost never report it, especially if they have been physically bullied by a girl.

Girls on the other hand are a lot less physical than boys when it comes to bullying; they rely more on psychological ways of bullying. It is assumed that the reason for this is the way girls are raised, which puts a lot of stress on relating and communicating with others. Girls are often encouraged to suppress their aggression and to express their frustration in more socially acceptable ways. While boys mostly engage in direct forms of bullying, girls engage mostly in indirect forms of bullying. They take part in things like slandering, spreading rumors and misinformation, manipulation of relationships, social isolation and exclusion from groups. Girls are in the greater part bullied by boys, but they are also bullied by girls. Girls will almost always say that they have been bullied by a boy rather than by a girl.

In short, physical bullying is typical for boys, and social/relational bullying is typical for girls. Although boys and girls bully in entirely different ways, there is one type of bullying they both have in common and that is verbal bullying.

1.9 The impact of bullying

Victims of bullying are humiliated, embarrassed, battered and hurt on a daily basis. They usually wear a mask of normality to hide how horrible they actually feel. The sad truth is that bullying can go on for long periods of time; I am referring to months or even years of a bullying relationship. If nothing is done to stop the bullying the victims will eventually buckle under the immense amount of stress they have to live with. They will either implode or explode causing others or themselves a lot of harm. Bullying is extremely detrimental to a person's health.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as: "A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". (Rigby, 2002, p.104)

The four aspects of health that bullying negatively affects:

- Psychological well-being (happiness)
- Social adjustment (relationships with family, friends, colleagues)
- Psychological comfort (no feelings of anxiety or depression)
- Physical wellness (no health risks or complaints)

Bullying has severe consequences on a person's life as well as their academic life. The table below shows some of the most common consequences of bullying:

The consequences of bullying	
High levels of stress and anxiety	Being withdrawn or very quiet
Headaches, migraine	Hypersensitive
Fatigue	Obsessive thinking
Insomnia	Depression
Nightmares	Panic attacks
Illness (infections, flu)	Self-mutilation
Loss of appetite	Suicidal thoughts
Alcohol abuse	Bullycide (a suicide caused by bullying)
Drug abuse	Post traumatic stress

Social isolation/loneliness	Mental instability
Loss of confidence	Criminal behavior/gangs
Low self-esteem	Mistrust
Poor performance at school	Deterioration of relationships
Poor school attendance	Learning difficulties
Truancy	Inability to retain/absorb information
Lack of concentration	Aggressiveness/Extreme violence
Distorted self-image	Extreme suppression of emotion
Self-hatred	Insecurity
High risk - diabetes	High risk – heart failure

Figure 1.7 The consequences of bullying

1.10 Facts and Figures

Bullying cuts right through the core of a victim’s being and causes an immeasurable amount of pain and damage. The feeling of being safe in relationships is considered a fundamental human right. This means that every child has the right to be safe without having to deal with any kind of abuse such as bullying. Bullying is a serious violation of human rights.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (article 29) states that education of the child shall be directed to “The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin.

Rehydration project, http://rehydrate.org/facts/convention_full.htm (8 May 2008)

It is our role as adult members of society to make sure that every child receives the proper education, at school and at home, in order to be able to develop the skills, attitudes and behaviors necessary to become members of a peaceful and tolerant society. By doing this we will teach children that they should treat everyone with dignity and respect and that bullying is not right or acceptable in any way or form.

Furthermore, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child also addresses the specific rights of children who are subjected to abuse such as bullying. Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that “States parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child”.

Rehydration project, http://rehydrate.org/facts/convention_full.htm (8 May 2008)

When children are at home it is the parents’ responsibility to keep them safe, but when children leave their homes to go to school it is a different story. Parents expect their children to be safe when they are at school, so I believe that it is the teachers’ responsibility to protect children from any kind of injustice and abuse at the hand of either adults or peers.

Even though bullying is considered to be a serious violation of human rights it is not punishable by law. Nonetheless, it is important to understand that certain manifestations of bullying are punishable by law, such as:

- Threats
- Sexual assault
- Physical violence
- Defamation of character
- Slander
- Insult
- Discrimination
- Vandalism
- Stalking
- Publishing photos or videos of someone on the web without permission
- Hacking

Some facts and figures about bullying:

- Bullying is the most common form of aggression at school?
- 27% of children attending elementary school admit to being bullied once in a while? That is an average of six to eight children in each class.
- 4% of children attending elementary school admit to being bullied regularly each week? That is an average of one child in each class.
- In general fewer children are bullied at secondary schools in comparison to elementary schools? Still 8% of children attending secondary schools admit to being bullied. That is an average of two children in each class.
- Two out of three schools have an anti-bullying policy? Nonetheless, bullying happens just as much at schools that have an anti-bullying policy as at schools that do not have one?
- 61% of headmasters believe that boys and girls bully just as much, 30% believe that boys bully more than girls, and 9% believe that girls bully more than boys?
- One in five children is bullied by e-mail or text messages?
- About 3% of children admit to bullying others on occasion by e-mail or text messages?

Pest web, www.pestweb.nl (10 May 2008)

Pestweb is a well-known Dutch organization that focuses on the problem of bullying. On a daily basis they receive phone calls and e-mails from children, parents and even teachers who need information, tips and advice and in some instances training on how to deal with bullying. It is also possible to use the forum and chat service on their website. The following is an overview of how many people contacted Pestweb each month in 2007:

Month	Chat	E-mail	Phone calls	Website visitors	Forum
January	x	405	54	14104	135
February	x	447	54	12209	496
March	x	586	72	18365	394
April	x	443	84	20638	297

May*	5	279	60	13218	308
June	57	271	95	10800	299
July	37	117	35	7244	177
August	3	119	29	6278	173
September	47	331	47	11371	281
October	78	315	39	11942	265
November	119	311	160	11772	309
December	63	190	82	7963	174

*Pestweb started its chat service on 31 May 2007

Figure 1.8 Number of people who contacted Pestweb in 2007

Pest web, www.pestweb.nl (10 May 2008)

Additionally, Pestweb released a press report on 14 March 2008 stating that the amount of reports on bullying has increased with 11% in 2007 with respect to 2006. In 2006 Pestweb received 5816 reports on bullying, and in 2007 they received 6467 reports on bullying. According to Pestweb the increase in reports is due to more bullying going on between children, more attention being given to bullying, but also because more people know they can report bullying with Pestweb. Many children who contact Pestweb appear to have been bullied for years on a daily basis by their classmates.

The numbers that Pestweb made public are astounding, yet there is still a large group of children who never report bullying. The problem is bigger than it seems and the numbers show that it is getting worse with each passing year. It is time to face the facts and stop turning our backs to this problem that is causing children a lot of hurt and damage.

Chapter 2: The bully

Whenever we hear the word 'bullying', the perpetrator almost always comes to our minds first. Most people have a very negative opinion on bullies because they are the ones who choose to cause other people a lot of hurt and damage. There are a lot of stereotypes about bullies, many people believe all bullies are loners and not so bright. Even though this may be the case in some instances, in reality there are different kinds of bullies. Bullies come in all shapes and sizes and even though a bully cannot be identified by his looks, he can be identified by his actions. It is extremely important for teachers to be able to recognize bullies and to understand why it is that they behave in a certain way. In this chapter I will be taking a closer look at different aspects concerning the bullies such as the kinds of bullies and their characteristics.

2.1 What makes a bully?

Have you ever wondered what it takes for a child to become a bully? An indubitable fact is that children are not born as bullies; they become bullies somewhere along the line. Children learn their behavior from adults in their environment, such as parents or caregivers. Certain adult behavior can have a very negative effect on children's personalities. Most children that have become bullies have experienced certain negative adult behavior prior to bullying others.

The following is a list of negative adult behavior:

- **Harsh and capricious punishment:** the child is punished unexpectedly, sometimes for no reason at all. The punishment happens almost always in extreme ways, such as physical punishment or the removal of privileges for long periods of time.
- **Physical punishment:** abusive adults believe that the only way to effectively punish a child is to be physical. Physical bullying often involves hitting the child, the most common ways deal with missteps are spanking and slapping.
- **Extreme reaction to minor infractions:** some adults use exaggerated reactions to minor infractions in order to instill fear into the child. By doing this they want to show and teach the child who is the boss. At the same time they are also teaching the child how to use and abuse power.

- **Violent and emotional outbursts:** some adults often combine these two types of outbursts to make sure a child remembers something for the rest of his life. These adults want to inflict emotional pain and a violent memory to go with it in order to maximize the effect of what they want the child to learn or understand.
- **Ignoring the child for long periods of time:** some adults choose to ignore their child for long periods of time and only pay attention to them when they feel like it. Sometimes they ignore the child with the sole purpose of letting him get into situations where he can be punished.
- **Showing no interest in the child's welfare:** these adults only notice and pay attention to their child when he is bad. The child quickly learns that his parents really do not care about his health and well-being.
- **There is no praise, no encouragement and no humor:** humor is only used as a part of the punishment. Most of the times sarcasm is used in order to belittle the child. Praise and encouragement are only used when the child behaves aggressively. The child learns that being aggressive is a desirable behavior.
- **Put-downs, sarcasm and criticism:** these types of negative behavior are used to put and keep a child in his place. Adults who expose their children to these types of negative behavior believe that acknowledging their children's success will only spoil them and stand in the way of the development of the desired traits.
- **Making the child feel insecure and rejected:** when adults react exaggeratedly and on top of that use criticism on a child's misstep they make the child insecure. When this happens regularly the child will start feeling rejection on the part of his parents.
- **Making no effort to use appropriate behavior to counteract aggression:** aggression is considered to be a good thing. These adults actually believe that aggression will make their child strong so they can grow up to become tough people that can take care of themselves. These children are allowed to watch violent and aggressive movies, and to play or participate in violent and aggressive games or activities.
- **Bombarding children with negativism:** this negative behavior is considered to be one of the key ingredients to make a bully. Children will believe that life is difficult and it is all about power over others.

When all of these different negative adult behavior are combined and used at home on a regular basis they create the perfect bully. In time children will use these same negative behaviors they have been exposed to on others. These children have learned that aggression is accepted, but they are never to express their anger and frustration at home in the presence of adults. The reason for this is because they have also learned that adults have all the power and they have none. The only way they can express their emotions is to let it all out on their peers, and preferably on the ones whom they consider to be weak. (Roberts, 2006)

2.2 The four elements of bullying

Bullying is deliberate and vicious, it is always intended to hurt and instill fear through acts of aggression. Bullying can be easy or difficult to detect, it can be premeditated or spontaneous, it can be obvious or subtle, and it can be done by a person or a group of people. It does not matter which one is the case because bullying always includes the following elements:

- **Imbalance of power:** this is one of the most important elements of bullying. Let it be clear that bullying never occurs between two people who are equally powerful. In order to speak about an imbalance of power the bully can be for example older, bigger and stronger, of a different social class, of a different race or even of a different sex. An imbalance of power can also be created when more than one person join in the bullying.
- **Intention to harm:** an act of aggression directed toward a victim is always intended to harm him. The bully's intention is to cause emotional or physical pain and enjoys witnessing it. When there is a clear intention to cause pain the incident cannot be considered just an accident.
- **Threat of further aggression:** if nothing is done to stop the bully, the bullying will almost always happen again. A bully never intends to bully a victim just once.
- **Terror:** this element is added when the bullying gets out of control. The bullying has then become systematic. It is used to force a victim into submission and to maintain dominance. The bully does not use terror as a means but more as an

end. When the situation gets this far the bully can do anything he wants without expecting retaliation on part of the victim.

There are four central questions that can make it easier to determine whether an act of aggression is abnormal and not considered as a part of how children usually handle conflicts according to their age and development. It is important to state that it is not always possible to answer all four central questions. On the other hand it is also important to state that perpetrators will almost always engage in the kinds of behavior mentioned in all four of the questions and its subparts. If you manage to answer these questions with some degree of accuracy, it can give you an idea whether you should be keeping an eye on the perpetrator and his behavior. (Roberts, 2006)

The four central questions are:

- **What is the nature of the behavior in question?**

Is the behavior age-appropriate?

Towards who is the behavior directed?

Is the behavior specific to one sex or to both sexes?

Is the behavior directed towards peers, or children younger or older in age?

What is the content of the behavior?

- **What is the level of intensity of the behavior in question?**

How severe is the behavior? (The bullying continuum)

Is the behavior verbal, physical or psychological?

Is the behavior done with humor or with anger?

- **At what rate does the behavior occur?**

Does this behavior happen frequently or is it an isolated event?

Are there times when the behavior happens more regularly?

- **How does the victim react to the behavior?**

Is the victim upset or offended by the behavior?

Does the victim react in similar kinds of behavior?

How does the perpetrator react to the victim's attempts at self-defense?

(Roberts, 2006)

2.3 The characteristics of a bully

Children who engage in bullying can be identified by certain general characteristics. We can use these characteristics to identify them:

- Bullies are often physically stronger than their victims.
- Bullies are often of about the same age or a little older than their victims.
- Bullies are often very good at physical activities such as sports and fights.
- Bullies need to subdue their victims in order to be and feel dominant.
- Bullies use power and threats to get whatever they want.
- Bullies often look for victims that are not popular students.
- Bullies often like to brag about their dominance over others.
- Bullies are often hot-tempered and can very easily get angry.
- Bullies can become aggressive towards adults when they get older.
- Bullies often coerce their victims to get money or material things.
- Bullies are impulsive.
- Bullies have low tolerance.
- Bullies have difficulty accepting rules and structure.
- Bullies are often defiant and aggressive.
- Bullies are good at manipulating and know how to talk themselves out of trouble.
- Bullies are considered to be tough.
- Bullies show little to no empathy in respect to their victims.
- Bullies are generally not anxious or insecure.
- Bullies often have a positive view of themselves; better than average self-esteem.
- Bullies take part in antisocial behaviors at an early age (stealing, vandalism, drinking).

- Bullies can be more or less popular than their classmates. When bullies are popular they can easily get other students who want to be popular too to join in the bullying.
- Bullies often have a small group of peers that supports them in bullying.
- Bullies do not always have bad grades, they usually are average students.
- Bullies develop a negative attitude to school over time.

(Coloroso, 2005)

2.4 The kinds of bullies

Nowadays many people still wrongly believe that all bullies are the same due to some popular stereotypes in our society. In reality there are different kinds of bullies. They have their own reasons why they choose to use their abilities and talents to bully others; they also use different tactics to bully their victims.

There are seven different kinds of bullies:

- **The confident bully:** this kind of bully is not afraid of being in the center of attention. He is very confident and has a big ego. He believes he is very important and has a sense of entitlement. He enjoys being violent and does not have empathy for his victims. He feels good about himself and believes he is superior to others. Many people admire him because he is so confident and has a powerful and vibrant personality, but this does not necessarily mean that he has a lot of friends.
- **The social bully:** this kind of bully is usually a female and uses rumors, gossip, verbal taunts and social exclusion to isolate her victims. She has a low sense of self and is very jealous of other people, especially people who have positive qualities. She does her best to hide her insecurities by showing an over the top amount of confidence and charm. She is good at manipulation and acts as if she cares about other people. She does this to hide her true self in order to get what she wants. She can be very popular but others do not trust her very much for fear of becoming one of her victims.
- **The fully armored bully:** this kind of bully shows little emotion and is detached. He is strongly determined to bully his victims. He is very secretive and sneaky

and therefore will look for an opportunity to bully his victims when no one is watching. He can and will bully in front of people who he knows will not stop him. In front of others he may appear charming but in reality he is very vindictive, vicious and deceptive. He has an unfeeling demeanor, this means that he has hidden his own feelings very deeply and has a lot of trouble in finding and defining them.

- **The hyperactive bully:** this kind of bully has some kind of learning disability; he struggles at school and gets poor grades. He also has poorly developed social skills and because of this he often misinterprets other people's usually innocent intentions. He can be easily provoked to which he answers in an aggressive manner. He always blames others instead of himself and he has few friends.
- **The bullied bully:** this kind of bully is considered a perpetrator but also a victim. He is often bullied by others and in turn bullies others to express his own feelings of frustration and powerlessness. He is a vicious bully and is the least popular of all the bullies.
- **The bunch of bullies:** this is basically a group of friends who bully others only when they are in groups. The things they do to their victims they would never do individually.
- **The gang of bullies:** this is not a group of friends. It is a group of people who have come together strategically in pursuit of power, control and domination. They join the group to feel that they are part of a family that consists of people that are just like themselves. They are very devoted to their group and are not afraid to put their lives in danger for the group. They do not care about what they do to their victims and the consequences of their actions. This group has a serious lack of empathy and remorse. (Coloroso, 2005)

2.5 What do bullies have in common?

Even though I have mentioned the different kinds of bullies and the various ways they use to bully their victims, they all have the following traits in common:

- They like to be dominant
- They manipulate people to get what they want
- They cannot place themselves in other people's shoes

- They only care about themselves and about what they want
- They do not have any consideration for other people's rights, needs or feelings
- They abuse other children when no one of authority is watching
- They view peers and siblings who are weaker as prey
- They blame others for everything
- They do not accept responsibility for their actions
- They cannot foresee the consequences of their behavior
- They need attention

(Coloroso, 2005)

2.6 Why do kids bully?

We have talked about the negative adult behavior that teaches children how to bully. Now we are going to look at the reasons for bullying. What is the exact reason why kids bully others? Believe it or not bullying is not entirely about anger and frustration, and much less about conflict. Bullying is about contempt. Contempt is when a person, in this case the bully, has a powerful feeling of dislike towards someone else. The bully considers a person to be worthless, inferior and one who does not deserve any respect. Contempt includes three vital psychological aspects that make it possible for a person to harm another without even feeling empathy, compassion or shame.

The three psychological aspects of contempt are:

- **A sense of entitlement:** bullies believe they have the right to control, dominate and abuse another person.
- **Intolerance:** bullies are very intolerant when it comes to differences, they consider differences as inferiority.
- **Liberty to exclude:** bullies feel they can just exclude or isolate a person whom they believe is not worth any respect.

Just as bullying, contempt also has different degrees of severity. Contempt can start with disregard and move on to scorn and after that even hate. Contempt is caused by bias which children pick up and learn from their environment. Children use bias to justify

their contempt towards others, and contempt is in its turn used to bully another person. (Coloroso, 2005)

2.7 When do kids bully?

Bullying does not just take place out of nowhere; there are certain conditions necessary to make bullying possible. There are certain situations at school that can create the conditions necessary and enhance the possibility of bullying taking place among the students.

The following are some of the situations that can create optimum conditions for bullying among students:

- **Transfer:** the transfer from elementary school to secondary school provides the perfect condition for bullying. A student who transfers to a secondary school ends up in a relatively bigger school where often less attention is paid to individual students. On top of that these students tend to be weaker compared to students who are already attending secondary schools.
- **Status:** new students always fight for their position in the hierarchy at school. This fighting can easily turn into bullying. Boys often fight for physical dominance, and girls often fight for social dominance.
- **Role:** students all have different roles and it is expected of these students to act according to their roles. For example, the leader of a group is expected to give out orders. It is very easy for the leader of a group to abuse his role and start bullying others.
- **Obedience:** students who belong to a group are expected to follow and carry out orders from their leader. Group members experience a lot of pressure and will very often carry out orders for fear of getting thrown out of the group, even though he knows that the order is wrong or unfair to others. Group members feel they have to prove themselves as well as their loyalty to the group.
- **Competition:** certain schools encourage competition to a point where it can easily turn into bullying. At these types of schools a lot of importance is given to people who excel at sports, people who are popular or people who have good looks. Anyone who does not fit into this picture is excluded, for example 'nerds'

or a teacher's favorite student or even people who are considered to be 'goodie two shoes'. It is therefore advisable for a school to put more emphasis on cooperativeness than individual competition. Schools that put more importance on cooperativeness than competition encourage students to become a part of a community.

- **Recess:** bullying often happens during recess, especially the last quarter of recess. The absence of structure combined with the lack of interesting things to do cause children to get bored and start bullying.
- **Bystanders:** when the bully knows that the people who are around him will support and join the bullying the chances are bigger that it will happen. When the bully knows that the people who are around will intervene to stop the bullying the chances for bullying will diminish. (Coloroso, 2005)

2.8 How do bullies react when confronted?

Bullies go out of their way to bully their victims only in front of supporters and far away from anyone who might intervene and stop the bullying. Occasionally bullies get caught in the act and are called to account for their actions. Bullies are masters in talking themselves out of trouble. They usually use one of the following tactics:

- Bullies always deny they have done anything wrong
- Bullies always try to trivialize what happened by saying they were just playing or joking around
- Bullies will imply that the victim is the one who suddenly attacked them
- Bullies will pass as victims by crying or accusing the victim of causing the problem. This attitude will very often provoke the bullied child to strike back
- Bullies will try to make others see the victim as the real bully
- Bullies will count on their supporters to back them up by denying everything the victims says about the bully (Coloroso, 2005)

If the bully manages to get off the hook by using the above-mentioned tactics, the bullying will almost always continue. Chances are it will even get worse.

2.9 Bullies are victims too!

Victims normally get a lot of attention because people tend to have empathy and sympathy for those who have been victimized. When it comes to bullies it is relatively easy for us to view them very negatively because of what they do to others. No matter what they do it is important never to forget that bullies are victims too. They are victims of an environment that taught them how to become bullies as well as of the poor choices they make to engage in bullying behavior. The bully is quickly written off as a 'worthless' person and people just do not take the time to find out what is behind the bully's actions. Therefore, bullies are often only punished for what they do to others and regrettably left out of much needed interventions.

Chapter 3: The bullied

In the previous chapter I mentioned that bullies come in different shapes and sizes; this also applies to the victims of bullying. No two victims are alike, some are big, some are small, some are smart, some are not that smart, some are popular, and some are not. Regardless of their differences they all have been victimized by a bully. Like bullies, victims of bullying also have to deal with stereotypes in our society. Our society tends to believe that all victims of bullying deserve what happens to them because they are weak and ask to be bullied. Furthermore, our society believes that bullying is a normal part of childhood and victims of bullying just have to learn to stand up for themselves. These stereotypes teach children to accept bullying and to blame the victims for what happens to them instead of holding the bullies accountable for their actions. Every child has the right to be treated with dignity and respect, no matter how different he is. This chapter describes how victims and possible victims of bullying can be recognized; it also explains what happens when victims strike back.

3.1 Which students are most at risk for being bullied at school?

There are three general categories of students who are most vulnerable and very likely to be victimized by bullies.

The categories are:

- Students who have a different social status
- Students who have special needs
- Students who have a different sexual identity

Students who have a different social status:

The abuse of students who have a different social status is determined by students who have power. They set the standard of what is accepted and who belongs in the group and who does not. Bullying is in this case all about money, clothes and popularity. Social status abuse happens among students who are considered to be the economic elite, but it also happens among students who are not. Social status is symbolized by material things such as shoes, clothes and high-tech gadgets. Social status can also be symbolized

by the so-called in-groups; these groups consist of popular students. A research on the social fabric of the classroom and peer relations in secondary education conducted in 1999 in The Netherlands by sociologist Miranda Lubbers, gives a limpid image of what exactly makes certain students popular in Dutch schools. Based on the answers of twenty-thousand students, Miranda Lubbers concluded that both boys and girls believe that popular students have good looks. Popular students are also considered to be daredevils and trendsetters. Furthermore, girls believe that it is very important to have good social skills and to always speak your mind. Boys believe that it is very important to be smart and to be good at sports. These are the characteristics that can make students popular and consequently can help them to become part of an in-group. Students who fall in the out-groups are subject to bullying no matter how successful they may or may not be at school, they are considered to be not important.

Students who have special needs:

These students are often denigrated at school because of their physical and mental challenges that can be very evident to others. These students regularly have to deal with jokes that mock their impairments. Many students who do not have any special needs do not understand the challenges that come with a disability and they disapprove of the benefits and privileges that these students receive at school. The benefits and privileges are often viewed as unfair advantage and unfair treatment over other students. The misunderstanding and misinformation generates a lack of empathy for people with special needs and this leads to bullying. The situation often escalates in cases where the students with special needs do better at school compared to the 'normal' students.

Students who have a different sexual identity:

Sex is a topic that our society does not deal with very well. Adults are often embarrassed to talk to their kids about sex and therefore children do not receive the proper education. What kids do learn is what media portrays men and women to be. Girls have to be thin and sexy, boys have to be muscular and have lots of girls. This is obviously not the case in the real world and we should never expect this from children. On another note, some members of our society do not react well to people who have a different sexual orientation. They consider homosexuality to be shameful and not acceptable.

With their actions these adults teach children in their environment that it is acceptable to be intolerant of differences. If adults cannot deal with sexuality properly then it is clear why children cannot deal with it either. Children with a different sexual orientation are branded with terms such as homo, faggot, queer, lesbo, dyke and gay. Even children who do not have a different sexual orientation are subject to abuse because they act 'gay' sometimes. Students also spread rumors about someone's possible sexuality and use stereotypes about homosexuality to exclude, isolate and shun others. A 2003 survey and web fact sheet compiled in the United States of America by the National Mental Health Association on attitudes among teens related to nontraditional sexual orientation shows that children who have a different sexual orientation hear derogatory insults about 26 times a day on a normal school day. They are threatened on a regular basis and sometimes they have to skip school because of safety issues. The dropout rate of homosexual students is 28%, almost three times the average for heterosexual students. What is more, 30% or more of students who deal with sexual identity issues may attempt suicide to deal with their pain and isolation, this is almost three times higher than their heterosexual peers. (Roberts, 2006)

The three general categories mentioned above do not apply to all students who are at risk for being bullied. Other students at risk for being bullied are:

- New students at school
- Students who are new to the neighborhood
- Younger students
- Students who have been traumatized by a prior incident and avoid other student and are afraid to ask for help
- Students whose behavior others find annoying
- Students who do not want to fight to resolve conflicts
- Students who are shy
- Students whose race or identity is considered inferior by other students
- Students whose religion is considered inferior by other students
- Students who are very smart
- Students who do not conform to the norm

- Students who are emotional
- Students who are fat or thin
- Students who are short or tall
- Students whose voice others find funny
- Students who wear glasses
- Students who wear braces
- Students who have skin conditions
- Students who try to help others
- Students whose body develops earlier than his or her peers
- Students who are just in the wrong place at the wrong time

(Coloroso, 2005)

3.2 How to recognize students at risk for being bullied?

Now that I have described the students who are most likely to be bullied, I will move on to how students who are at risk for being bullied can be recognized.

The students who are at risk for victimization can be divided into the following six types:

- **Students who are social isolates and outcasts:** these students often get singled out and abused because they have not got a group of peers to support and help them. The fact that they have no group of peers to support them makes them more noticeable to bullies. Bullies will interpret this as “this one is weak” and “no one will help this one”.
- **Students who have a transient school history:** students who change schools a lot do not have a group of peers to support them, mainly because they do not get the chance to make friends. Usually they do not even try to make friends because they either consider it a waste of time because they know they will not be attending the school for long or because they do not want to make friends and then having to experience the pain of leaving them behind. These students try to be as invisible as possible and are somewhat shy. To the bully this is a sign that the student will most likely not defend himself when confronted.
- **Students who exhibit poor social skills:** these students are not good at social skills. Peers may find them awkward because of the way he interacts with peers.

Another group of students who are also considered awkward and not cool are those who can interact better with adults (esp. teachers) than with peers. These students are often victims of social/relational bullying.

- **Students who want to fit in, usually at any cost:** some students are willing to do anything to become a member of the group; this includes accepting abuse from peers. These students often are the “slaves” of the group. They have to run errands and carry out orders from the more dominant group members. The group clearly does not consider them a part of the group, but lets them believe they are so they can use them for their own personal gain. The victim accepts this because he at least gets some kind of recognition instead of being totally invisible.
- **Students who are defenseless:** these students have never learned how to defend themselves, never even try to defend themselves or just cannot defend themselves properly. Students who cannot defend themselves have a great disadvantage in situations of intimidation and confrontation. Bullies will always take advantage of this because it is very easy to bully someone who does not defend himself.
- **Students who are viewed as different by their schoolmates:** students are considered to be different if they are not part of the in-group. The in-group sets certain standards of what is acceptable and what is not. These standards vary per group and school. Please note that what the in-groups find acceptable not always is correct behavior. Students who are not in the in-group are automatically in the out-group. Students who are in the out-group are very often victimized by students in the in-group.

(Roberts, 2006)

3.3 The characteristics of victims

All victims of bullying share certain typical characteristics by which we can identify them.

The following is a list of these characteristics:

- Victims have low self-worth and low self-esteem
- Victims are non-assertive

- Victims have poor social skills
- Victims are introverted
- Victims are physically weaker
- Victims are uncooperative
- Victims are not group oriented
- Victims are not competitive
- Victims are shorter than average
- Victims are less stable than others (very emotional or sensitive)
- Victims lack poise (being relaxed and confident)
- Victims have a bad stammer (speech problems caused by fear and anxiety)
- Victims are lonely or isolated
- Victims have a high level of dependency and need to feel valued by others

(Rigby, 2002)

3.4 The warning signs of a child that is being bullied

Children do not always tell adults that they are being bullied, but there are always signs adults can pick up if they would just keep their eyes and ears open. Children express how they feel in different ways such as, with their body, face, eyes, tone of voice and words.

The following is a list of warning signs that can serve as an alert if a child is being bullied:

- A child that is regularly teased, taunted, intimidated or dominated
- A child whom others make fun of in a way that is unfriendly and hurtful
- A child that gets picked on and cannot properly defend himself
- A child that is involved in confrontations where he is defenseless
- A child whose belongings are taken or scattered around by others
- A child that has bruises or injuries to which he cannot give explanation on how it was sustained
- A child that is often chosen last to participate in games
- A child who always tries to stay close to teachers during recess

- A child who is insecure and has difficulty speaking in front of others
- A child who appears to be depressed or unhappy
- A child who does not even have one good friend in the class
- A child who shows a sudden disinterest in school
- A child who skips school
- A child who takes an unusual way to school
- A child whose schoolwork and grades are falling behind
- A child who does not want to participate in school activities
- A child who uses demeaning language when he talks about peers
- A child whose clothes are torn or disheveled
- A child who has constant headaches and stomachaches
- A child who suffers from panic attacks
- A child who just wants to be left alone

(Coloroso, 2005)

3.5 Why victims do not report bullying

Many times adults ask themselves why it is that children do not tell them or anyone for that matter what is going on at school or outside school. Adults believe that it is only logical to ask for help instead having to live in fear of being bullied everyday. The reality is that children will not just come to adults and tell that they are being bullied; it will not happen that easily.

Children have their own reasons for not telling adults about bullying such as:

- **Shame:** children who are bullied feel ashamed of being bullied. This is exactly what bullies want to accomplish. Boys are less likely than girls to tell adults about the bullying that is going on. Younger children tend to ask for help but older children do not because they do not expect adults to really help or make a difference in their situation. This idea is often based on their own experiences.
- **Retaliation:** children who are bullied are afraid of telling adults about being bullied for fear of retaliation from the bullies. Bullies continuously threat their victims to keep them from telling adults about what is happening.

- **Hopelessness:** children who are bullied feel that no one can help them even if they tell about being bullied. They feel they are alone and that the situation is hopeless because the bullies are too powerful and too smart to be stopped.
- **No help:** children who are bullied believe that no one will ever help them. Many times they are told that they are big babies and should just suck it up or to stay away from the bully.
- **Bullying is a part of growing up:** many children who are bullied actually believe the myth that bullying is a part of growing up.
- **Adults are just big bullies:** children who are bullied do not trust adults because many times adults take part in the bullying too. These same adults might know that some kids are bullies and accept it or simply do nothing about it.
- **Telling on others is bad:** many children believe that telling on others is a bad and childish thing to do even if they are being bullied. They believe that just letting it go is a more mature thing to do, and thus the right thing to do.

(Coloroso, 2005)

3.6 The psychology of victimization

The psychological harm caused by continuous bullying is immeasurable. The nightmare bullied children go through greatly affects them physically and psychologically. If bullied children do not seek help they will eventually develop health complaints. Bullied children will start feeling like they are ill, no matter if it is true or just a figment of their imagination. Especially girls start having more physical complaints than boys.

Children who are bullied live in constant fear about what their future holds for them. Even when they are at home they cannot stop brooding about what happens to them at school and they always blame themselves for everything.

If nothing is done to put a stop to the harassment bullied children go through they will feel more and more isolated and helpless. Children in general do not cope well with isolation and helplessness; they will eventually either implode or explode.

What we should see to avoid at all cost is the development of long-term mental health problems due to bullying. These mental problems can be severe anxiety, depression, self-injuring behaviors and suicidal thoughts or attempts.

3.7 When victims strike back

When children start feeling helplessness and hopelessness intervention is very important. There are two critical intervention questions that need to be asked to the bullied child:

- What can be done to improve the situation?
- What does the future look like?

The answers that a bullied child gives to these questions can indicate whether the child is experiencing great emotional despair. Such answers are:

- Nothing
- Nothing will make any difference
- Nobody cares
- I do not know
- It does not matter
- I do not see anything out there for me

This is often the beginning of a self-perpetuating downward spiral where the situation gets worse and worse. In this case direct action and intervention by professionals (e.g. school counselor) is necessary.

Bullied children harbor strong feelings of resentment for years toward their tormentors. I mentioned before that bullied children can implode or explode over time. Some victims turn inward and do what they can to deal with their pain and frustration; this can eventually lead to suicide. Other bullied children do not turn inward. These children may eventually decide to take revenge for all the abuse and mistreatment they received from others. This often means explosive and violent actions towards others as well as themselves. They can easily go down the wrong path by starting to do drugs, abuse alcohol, join gangs and engage in criminal activities. In other countries such as the United States of America, Germany, Finland, Australia, Canada and Denmark some children decided to go on killing sprees (school shootings) where their main targets were the people who have done them harm, but they have killed and injured innocent people too. Luckily school shootings are not very common in The Netherlands, but they have

happened before. It is therefore important not to let problems escalate to a point where children want to hurt others and themselves.

The situations mentioned above are the result of a long and dramatic period where hints have been dropped, where red flags should have been seen and where multiple cries for help went unnoticed. (Coloroso, 2005)

It is a teacher's duty to make sure he does everything he can to spare all children the devastation that bullying causes. Teachers have to work consciously and actively on resolving and preventing bullying to keep children from becoming so hopeless and helpless that they inadvertently go down the wrong path, sometimes with tragic results.

Chapter 4: The bystander

In cases of bullying people generally believe it is only about the bully and the bullied. The truth is that there is another group of people who also play an important role in bullying. These people are called bystanders. They are the observers of bullying who may or may not intervene to stop the bullying. It is important to find out why some bystanders choose to participate in bullying when others choose to lend a helping hand to the victim. I believe bystanders can play an important role in the prevention of bullying by supporting the victim and not the bully. This chapter gives an elaborate explanation of who bystanders are, what their motives are for siding with the bully or the victim, and what can be done to get bystanders to join the fight against bullying.

4.1 Who are bystanders?

Although bullying may occur between two people, they are not the only ones involved in the act of bullying. Bystanders too are an important part of bullying. A bystander is a person who is not actively involved in bullying and tends not to take action even if someone needs help. A bystander is a passive observer of bullying; he stays on the sidelines. They are the audience that watches a dramatic spectacle unfold. Even though they are not actively involved, they are indirectly encouraging the bully by being present. The bully will feel driven on by the people watching, especially if they seem to accept what is going on.

There are three important bystanders:

- **Students:** these bystanders witness large numbers of bullying incidents. An average of 50% of students admits having witnessed bullying. These bystanders almost always know why a particular student has been selected to become a victim of bullying, and all too often they do nothing to intervene.
- **School staff (including teachers):** these bystanders are only aware of a small fraction of the bullying that occurs. When they are aware of the bullying they often do nothing because they believe it is only child's play. These bystanders

remain largely unaware of all the bullying that goes on because of the silence and secrecy that bullying encourages.

- **Parents:** these bystanders are not always aware of bullying. In some cases children tell their parents about bullying, but parents do not know what to do or who to contact to ask for help. Very often they choose to do nothing because they believe the child can cope with bullying, and in other instances they respect the child's wishes to do nothing about it.

(Lee, 2004)

In order to make bullying prevention really successful it is necessary to get bystanders actively involved in bullying prevention. In the course of this chapter I will be focusing on bystanders in the form of students.

4.2 Bystanders are not innocent

The notion that bystanders are not involved in bullying and therefore are completely innocent is wrongful. Bystanders stand idly by while bullying is going on, most of the times they look away but they can also encourage the bully or even join in and become a bully. Whatever they choose to do it severely affects the victim and most definitely does not make the situation any better. Students who are exposed to bullying behaviors are more likely to encourage or even join in the bullying if they consider the bully to be a popular role model. Students will then try to elevate their own status at school by joining in the bullying. To join in the bullying students not necessarily have to do the same things as the bully, just watching the injustice that is going on, laughing at the victim and cheering the bully is considered bullying too. Bystanders almost always know why victims have been targeted; there is a so-called collective awareness among students. This collective awareness is very important in bullying relationships. Students who are exposed to a lot of bullying behavior may become desensitized to the cruelty of bullying on the long run, but even worse they can become bullies themselves. It is very dangerous if students become desensitized because bullying can then become institutionalized at school. This means that bullying becomes an accepted and normal part of the culture at school; this obviously reinforces bullying, puts the victims in a

more precarious position and stands in the way of individual responsibility, empathy and compassion.

Research carried out in 1995 by D.J. Pepler and W.M. Craig in Toronto, Ontario to study the roles of bystanders in bullying incidents also shows that bystanders are not very innocent when it comes to bullying. The results of the study are as follows:

- Bystanders are involved in 85% of bullying incidents
- Bystanders reinforce bullying in 81% of bullying incidents
- Bystanders are more respectful and friendly toward the bully than the victim
- Bystanders are active participants in 48% of bullying incidents
- Bystanders intervene in only 13% of bullying incidents at which they are present

(Coloroso, 2005)

4.3 The bullying circle

In order to further clarify the behavior of bystanders in a bullying situation I will use 'The Bullying Circle' developed by researcher Dan Olweus (see Figure 4.1).

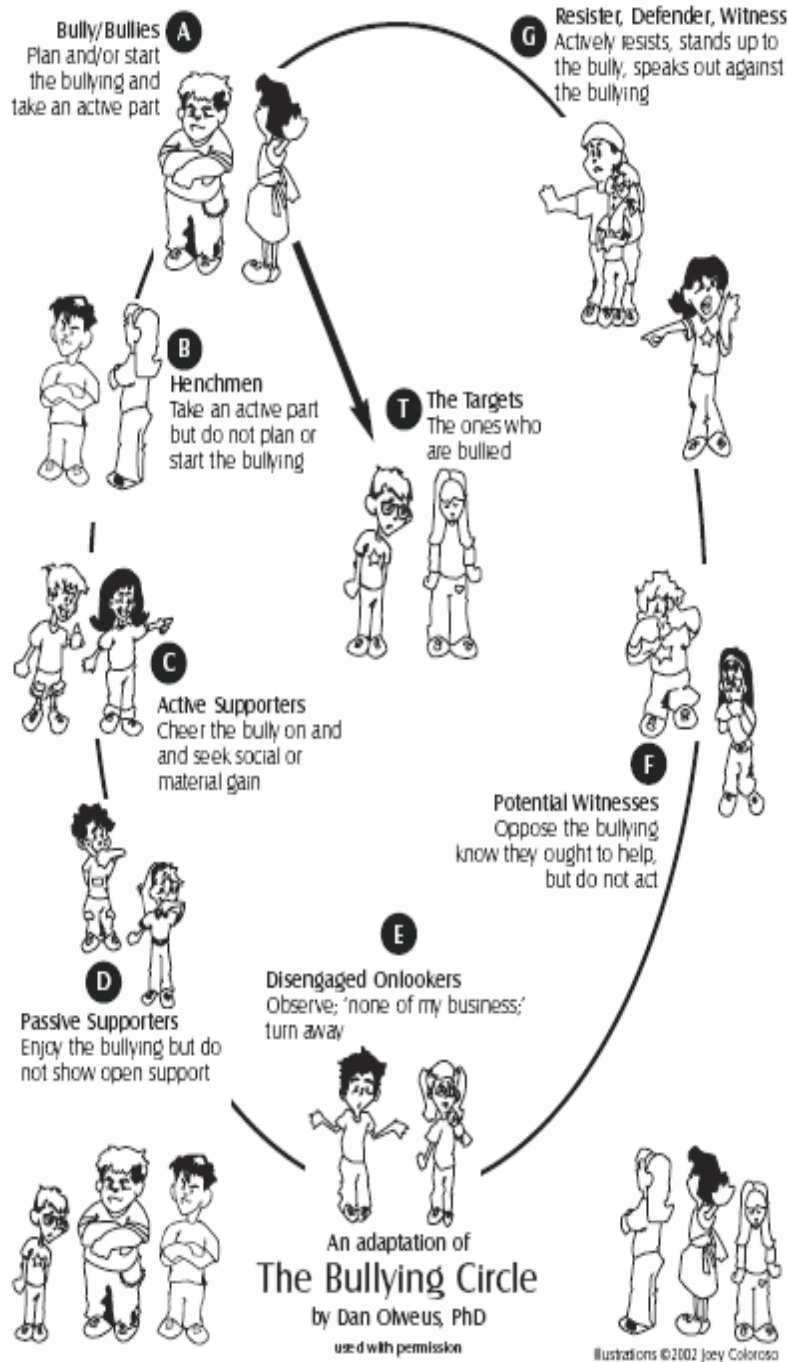


Figure 4.1 The Bullying Circle (Coloroso, 2005, p.74)

The bullying circle represents:

On the left side of 'The Bullying Circle':

A. Bully/Bullies: these students start the bullying and take an active part.

B. Followers: these students do not start the bullying but they take an active part.

C. Supporters: these students are passive bullies; they support bullying but do not take an active part.

D. Passive supporters: these students are possible bullies, they like the bullying but do not show any support.

In the middle of 'The Bullying Circle':

E. Disengaged onlookers: these students observe the bullying but do not take a stand to help the victim.

On the right side of 'The bullying Circle'

F. Possible Defenders: these students do not like the bullying they see, they strongly believe they should do something, but do not do anything in the end.

Students in groups A to F are considered bystanders or bullies. The students in the next group however are neither bystanders nor bullies. The goal to strive for in bullying prevention is to move all students from the left side of the bullying circle all the way to the right side of the bullying circle to position G.

G. Defenders: these students do not like the bullying and do not condone it. They intervene in any way they can to help or at least try to help the victim. They are not passive and do not look away in bullying situations. (Coloroso, 2005)

The kinds of bystanders mentioned above in the bullying circle can be placed in four different categories:

- **Assistants:** these are bystanders A and B. They are students who join in the bullying and assist the bully.

- **Reinforcers:** these are bystanders C and D. They are students who do not actively attack the victim, but they encourage and support the bully by being an audience.
- **Outsiders:** these are bystanders E and F. They are students who do not want to be involved and do not take sides, but they do nothing to stop the bullying.
- **Defenders:** these are bystanders G. They are students who display anti-bullying behavior. They take the victim's side, they try to stop the bullying and they comfort the victim.

Students who are considered to be defenders because they support victims all have the following characteristics in common:

- They show compassion for their fellow classmates
- They are pro-victim
- They intervene in bullying situations mainly because they believe it is expected of them, not by adults but by their group of friends
- They are more likely to intervene in bullying situations if they have successfully intervened in the past

(Coloroso, 2005)

4.4 Reasons for joining in the attack

It is now time to ask a number of important questions. Why would anyone choose to join in a vicious attack on another person? And why would anyone encourage a bully to keep on harassing another person? Bystanders use a number of excuses to justify why they choose to take sides with the bully instead of trying to assist a visibly weaker victim of bullying who desperately needs help.

Excuses for joining in the attack:

- Bystanders will never intervene if they consider the bully to be their friend. They know that what the bully is doing is cruel and unfair; still they do nothing to stop the bullying.
- Bystanders who say that the bullying they witness is not their problem will not intervene to stop it.

- Bystanders often claim they do not intervene because they do not know the victims or because the victim is not their friend. Bullies know this for a fact and therefore always target students whom they know have few or no friends.
- Bystanders are afraid to lose their own status at school or in their group. They often believe the victim is a loser and because of that they do not want others to see them associating themselves with victims of bullying.
- Bystanders believe that victims deserve to be bullied if they do not even try to stand up for themselves. They do not see a reason why they should help the victim if the victim does not even try to help himself.
- Bystanders often believe that bullying is a normal part of childhood and that it will toughen up the victims.
- Bystanders live by the unwritten rules at school and outside school. They believe that telling or 'ratting' on someone is wrong and cowardly. They prefer to keep silent than to be called a snitch.
- Bystanders who belong or want to belong to an in-group will never take sides with the victim. If the leader of the in-group targets a student for bullying the rest just goes along. There is no room for protest or reflection in the in-group. Even though they know it is wrong to bully another person, the need to be accepted by the in-group is too strong to act against bullying.
- Bystanders often believe that taking a stand is too much work and too complicated. They also consider the risk they will be taking by helping a victim. They go through an inner struggle when trying to decide what to do. The easiest way for them to brush away the problem is to compare the pros of joining the group and the bully with the enormous cons of helping the victim. In the end they choose to side with the bully, not because they do not care about the victim, but because they care more about their own position in the hierarchy at school.

(Coloroso, 2005)

4.5 Reasons for not intervening

Another important question to ask ourselves is the reason why anyone would intentionally turn their attention away from what is happening and simply allow a bully to abuse someone who is weaker?

Some bystanders do have valid reasons for not intervening, but as you will no doubt notice the above-mentioned excuses are greater in number compared to the following few valid reasons for not intervening.

Reasons for not intervening:

- Bystanders are often afraid of getting hurt themselves especially if the bully is bigger and stronger. The bully's reputation is also a reason for not meddling, it makes bystanders fearful and they believe it might be better to just stay out and away from everything.
- Bystanders see how a victim is being abused and humiliated and are afraid that the exact same thing will be done to them if they intervene. They are afraid of becoming the bully's new targets. Bystanders also fear retaliation by bullies; they believe that even if they manage to stop the bullying, the bully will catch up later with them in order to take revenge.
- Bystanders are afraid of doing things that can possibly make the situation far worse than what it already is. They are not only afraid of getting the bully into a big problem at school but also of making the bullying worse for the victim.
- Bystanders often do not know what it is they can or have to do to stop the bullying they witness because they have never been taught what to do in bullying incidents.(Coloroso, 2005)

A loud and clear message needs to be sent to all bystanders that the above-mentioned excuses and reasons (even if they are valid ones) only contribute to further worsening of the bullying problem. They should never accept the bullying they witness, they should never take part in the bullying and most importantly they should never turn their backs on someone who evidently needs their help. They would surely want someone to help them if they were in such a terrible situation themselves. Bystanders just like everyone else have the individual responsibility to stand up against injustice and abuse toward others.

Chapter 5: The importance of family

As pointed out before families have a lot of influence on a child's behavior. Children quickly and unconsciously adopt positive as well as negative adult behavior they are subjected to. Chances are that almost every family has a connection to bullying; their child might be a bully or a victim of bullying. Teachers are often the first point of contact in cases of bullying at school. Parents expect teachers to effectively resolve bullying problems at school. What is more, parents also solicit advice on how to help their child cope with bullying or on how to get him to stop bullying others. It is therefore essential for teachers to know just how crucial a family is when it comes to the upbringing of a child so they are able to give parents proper advice on how to deal with bullying. In this chapter I will discuss the positive anti-bullying characteristics of a 'backbone' family, and what parents can do when there is a bully or a victim of bullying in the family.

5.1 Is there a bully in the family?

It is very difficult for parents to come to the realization that their child could probably be a bully and that he is senselessly causing others pain and despair. Luckily there are always clues that warn teachers and parents that something requiring their immediate attention is going on. The problem with bullying is the dehumanization of others; this means that the bully is not capable of seeing the humanity in the person he chooses to bully.

In chapter two I mentioned the four elements of bullying, which are: an imbalance of power, intention to harm, threat of further aggression and terror. These elements can be used to evaluate the behavior you are concerned about. If parents recognize these four elements in the behavior of their child, they know that they are dealing with a bully. These four elements are often combined with an attitude of entitlement to control, dominate, subjugate, abuse and intolerance toward differences. Furthermore, bullies also assume they have the liberty to simply exclude someone they do not deem worthy of respect.

It is important that parents not make light of what is happening by justifying, rationalizing or minimizing an act of aggression. By letting a child get away with bullying

behavior parents are saying, whether they realize it or not, that they do not expect much of the child's behavior and that it is acceptable to be cruel or violent toward others.

I want to strongly emphasize that parents should not punish their child for bullying because it negatively affects a child and does not contribute to solving the problem. Punishment resembles bullying. By verbally or physically punishing a child in cases of bullying parents will only be teaching him to be more aggressive and hurtful. Punishing only blames someone for doing something, it does not look for solutions, it drives people apart and it does not deal with the underlying causes of the bullying. To avoid being punished all the time the child will learn to find sneaky ways to bully others and thus become a master in what he does.

Our job as teachers and parents is not to shame children, but to teach and cultivate empathy toward others. Parents have to act immediately the moment they find out that their child is a bully. The first thing they should do is take a good look at their own behavior and ask themselves if it is possible that they are doing something that is encouraging or supporting the bullying? If this is the case they should consider changing their attitude, behavior and habits in order to help their child change his. If this is not the case, there could be other socializing influences such as peer relationships or social environments that give rise to a child's bullying behavior. A child is not born a bully, he becomes a bully. Just as he learned to become disrespectful, malicious and callous, he can learn to become respectful, kind and compassionate instead. (Coloroso, 2005)

There are many things parents can do to help their child change his negative behavior and thinking, such as:

- **Intervene immediately with discipline:** to discipline a child does not mean to be judgmental, arbitrary or coercive. There are four different aspects to discipline. Firstly, it is meant to show the bully what he did wrong without minimizing the act of aggression. Secondly, it is meant to give the bully ownership of the problem without excuses. Thirdly, it means to give the bully a chance to solve the problem and to figure out how to keep it from happening

again. Last but not least, it means leaving the bully's dignity intact even though he has done something despicable.

- **Create opportunities to 'do good':** one of the best ways to cultivate empathy is to give children the opportunity to 'do good'. Parents can help their children brainstorm on different ways to 'do good'. I should clarify that doing good does not mean giving children chores like cleaning out the garage or mowing the lawn, it means letting them help someone with their homework, do charity or something helpful in their community.
- **Nurture empathy:** in order to do this it is important for children to recognize their own feelings. Therefore it is important to ask children 'how did you feel when...?' questions. When he recognizes his own feelings try to put him in other people's shoes and ask "how do you think he/she felt when...?" By doing this the child will see the humanity in others as well as in himself and will start to show more empathy toward others.
- **Teach friendship skills and peaceful ways to relate to others:** children must know that it is impossible to be a friend and a bully at the same time. Therefore it is important to tell children how friendship works. To make friendships work children have to show kindness and respect, give help and advice when needed, be truthful, apologize when they are wrong and accept apologies, keep promises, accept people as they are and always treat others the way they want others to treat them.
- **Closely monitor your child's activities:** parents should monitor their child's TV viewing, video game playing, computer activities and music because they can have a negative influence on a child's socialization. Images or lyrics that are cruel, raunchy or violent prevent the cultivation and nurturing of empathy and respect toward others.
- **Engage in more constructive, entertaining and energizing activities:** by letting children engage in more constructive and energizing activities such as sports or hobbies, they will not need to use antisocial acts to meet their needs and to reach their goals. Eventually they will replace their poor social skills with prosocial habits.

- **Teach your child to will good:** it is vital to teach children the difference between right and wrong and how important it is to always do what is right even at personal cost. This process makes a witness out of a bully.

(Coloroso, 2005)

5.2 Is there a victim of bullying in the family?

As difficult as it is for parents to find out that their child is bullying others, it is heart wrenching when parents have suspicions that their child is being bullied. Children often do not come forward and ask for help. Parents in turn do not understand why their child does not tell them outright what is happening and why they choose to let others make their lives so miserable. This lack of understanding often leads parents to confront their children right away with 'Why didn't you tell me?' instead of reflecting on the reasons why their children decided to keep this information from them.

When it comes to bullying there is a deadly combination that leaves bullied children feeling helpless and hopeless. The deadly combination consists of bullies who always get what they want from their victims, victims who are afraid to tell, bystanders who ignore, only watch or participate in the bullying and adults who view bullying as just a part of growing up. If this is the case there is a big chance that parents are kept in the dark about the despair their children are experiencing at the hands of their perpetrators.

As mentioned earlier, there are many reasons why children do not tell their parents they are being bullied. The following is a list of reasons why children keep the information from adults:

- Children are ashamed of being bullied
- Children are afraid of retaliation
- Children do not believe anyone can help them
- Children do not believe anyone wants to help them
- Children believe bullying is a normal part of childhood
- Children believe adults only make the situation worse
- Children believe telling on a peer is the same as 'ratting' and thus not cool and very childish (Coloroso, 2005)

Even if children do not come to their parents and tell them what is going on, there are always warning signs and clues that point in the direction of bullying. Parents should always remain alert by listening beyond the words and looking beyond the actions.

The following is a list of telltale warning signs and clues:

- A child who shows an abrupt lack of interest in school
- A child who refuses to go to school
- A child who takes an unusual route to school
- A child whose grades drop suddenly
- A child who has become withdrawn and wants to be left alone
- A child who regularly loses his lunch money at school
- A child who asks his parents for money and cannot explain where it went
- A child who immediately goes to the bathroom when he gets home
- A child who is sad, scared or angry after receiving a phone call or e-mail
- A child who does something he normally would not do
- A child who talks very negatively about peers
- A child who comes home with torn or missing clothing
- A child who cannot explain his physical injuries
- A child who has constant stomachaches, headaches, panic attacks, cannot sleep and is exhausted all the time

(Coloroso, 2005)

Parents should always respond to their child's expressed fears or signs of being bullied with love, support and encouragement. Children need to know that nothing is too silly or too serious to talk about with their parents.

There is a right way and a wrong way to respond to the expressed fears and signs of bullying; the following is a couple of Do's and Don'ts:

Do's
1. Ask the child to tell you about what is happening, then be quiet and listen. This will give you an insight into the child's perceptions, his concerns and anxieties.
2. Tell the child that nothing that has happened is his fault.
3. Try to come up with effective ways to deal with the bullying together with the child. Together you can explore different options and eliminate those that can make the situation worse.
4. Report the bullying to school staff. Teachers need to know about the bullying and need all the facts (date, time, place, perpetrators and incidents). Follow up to make sure the school is actively working on resolving the problem.
5. Teach the child the difference between 'telling' and 'tattling/ratting'. Children need to know that it is okay and necessary to tell adults about the bullying.
<p>There is an easy formula to teach kids to discern the difference: Tattling/ratting: if it will only get another child in trouble, do not tell. Telling: if it will get you or another child out of trouble, tell. If it is both: tell.</p>

Figure 5.1 The right way to respond

Don'ts
1. Do not minimize, rationalize, or explain away the bully's behavior. By doing this the child will feel he is truly alone in it and he will conclude that it is best to suffer in silence.
2. Do not rush in to solve the problem of the child; this could make the situation worse. The bully will believe the child is really vulnerable and powerless. Think first about what should be done and always discuss the options with the child.
3. Never tell the child to avoid the bully. This will only teach him to keep running away and keep hiding from the bully. This is not a solution to the problem.
4. Do not tell the child to fight back. Fighting is not the answer. If the child chooses to fight and then loses the fight the bullying will get even worse. He will only be showing the bully that he was right about the weakness of his target.

5. Do not confront the bully or the bully's parents alone. Chances are the bully learned how to bully from his parents, and they will probably defend their child and blame the target for what is happening. Enlist the help of a school counselor to confer with the bully and the bully's parents.

Figure 5.2 The wrong way to respond

(Coloroso, 2005)

5.3 The anti-bullying characteristics of a 'backbone' family

One of the most important tasks of adults is raising children who will become decent, caring and responsible members of society. An essential part in preventing and counteracting bullying, is the development of children's innate ability for caring and the will to do good. In order to help children in their development parents have to provide a lot of support and structure. By doing so families will give their children a firm and well-balanced upbringing where children develop inner discipline, a strong sense of self and a sense of community. Unfortunately, it is easier said than done, that is why I would like to give instructions on how families can promote a positive development of their children.

By changing or adjusting the family dynamics parents can transform their family into what Barbara Coloroso describes as a 'backbone' family, and ultimately positively affect their children's development.

In short, a backbone family is a family that is interdependent, consistent, firm and fair, while at the same time calm and peaceful. Members of a backbone family have a well-balanced sense of self and sense of community in everything they do. There is absolutely no place for hierarchy or violence, and there is no need to control or manipulate others. Nothing is demanded (i.e. respect), instead everything is demonstrated and taught. Members of a backbone family love themselves as well as others. They are very compassionate and show a lot of empathy toward others.

The following are thirteen characteristics of a backbone family:

- **Network of support:** parents develop a network of support for their children by letting them know they believe in them, trust them, listen to them, care for them, know they can handle life situations and by showing how important they are.
- **Democracy:** children are allowed to take part in family meetings and are included in all responsibilities and decision making. Children see that their ideas

and opinions are accepted and respected. They learn how to work together as a group and how to peacefully resolve conflicts.

- **Creative and constructive environment:** the physical, emotional and moral environment is not rigid. Prosocial behavior is modeled and taught. Children are encouraged to explore, learn and resolve things by themselves. Mistakes are seen as opportunities to learn, and everyone is accountable for their actions.
- **Discipline:** when a child is mischievous he is shown that what he has done is wrong, what the consequences are and ways he can resolve the problem. The dignity of the child is always left intact.
- **Rules:** all rules are stated very simply and clearly.
- **Consequences for irresponsible behavior:** the consequences are always simple, valuable, purposeful and reasonable. There is no need for threats, bribes or punishment. For example: your child has borrowed an expensive toy from his friend and has lost it. Instead of punishing him or taking away his allowance, tell him to think about how he can replace the toy that he lost.
- **Second opportunities:** children always get a second chance to try and fix what they did wrong. They learn to be accountable for their own mistakes instead of blaming others for what they did.
- **Motivation:** children are accepted as they are and motivated to be all they can be.
- **No conditions for love:** children are given lots of smiles, hugs etc. freely and without conditions attached. Children do not have to earn affection from their parents and do not need others to affirm their worthiness.
- **Feelings are accepted:** children learn to accept their feelings and how to act upon them responsibly without hurting others or themselves.
- **Competency and cooperation:** parents demonstrate how to do things and help their children to learn new skills.
- **Thinking is important:** children are always encouraged to think for themselves and follow their intuition. They are allowed to discuss matters, ask questions, and take part in decision-making and problem solving.
- **Willingness to seek help:** problems are not ignored or hidden. There is no fear of asking for advice and help from others/professionals. Help and advice is accepted with an open mind. (Coloroso, 2005)

To conclude this chapter I want to clearly state that it is not easy to be or become a backbone parent and there are no guarantees or quick fixes to problems. Still, there are many opportunities to learn and grow and the possibilities of children becoming decent, caring and responsible people are enhanced considerably in a positive and nurturing environment.

Chapter 6: Tackling bullying at school

After an extensive coverage of bullying and its different aspects, it is now time to have a closer look at how bullying can be tackled at school. In this chapter I am going to discuss the types of schools, the anti-bullying policy, the components of an optimal intervention and what teachers can do to prevent or resolve bullying. This chapter will be presented in two parts: The school and The teachers

Part 1: The school

Bullying at school is an age-old problem. Bullying occurs at all kinds of schools, yet it is not a message schools want to admit. Many schools consider the admission of bullying as a failure on their part because it implies that the children who have been placed in their care are not being protected or looked after. To say that 'bullying does occur at our school' does not have to be a negative message if it is properly explained. Schools need to be clear that they did not cause the problem, but they certainly want to be a part of the solution. The fact is that bullying is being promoted in our society; just take a close look at the different kinds of entertainment children are subjected to, such as TV shows, movies, music and computer games where the messages promote disrespect, harassment, intimidation and violence toward others. It would be a downright miracle if bullying was not occurring among children. A school's attitude towards bullying is very important, bullying should be acknowledged instead of ignored.

6.1 The four types of schools

All schools have a different take on bullying. The attitudes of staff and the culture they nurture largely determine how the school deals with bullying. Just as people have different opinions and views on bullying, so do schools. There are four stances that schools adopt when it comes to bullying. These stances can also represent the stages of development that schools go through when dealing with bullying.

The four types of schools and the developmental stages in dealing with bullying:

- **Denial**
 - There is a policy somewhere, written by someone

- Bullying is not a problem in this school
- Bullying is a normal part of growing up
- It is better to keep the issue 'in-house'
- Being open about bullying at our school is bad publicity
- **Token**
 - There is a policy written by a nominated person after a professional development day
 - The policy is occasionally shown to parents and inspectors
 - Few people know what the policy actually says
- **Moving**
 - Bullying is taken seriously
 - There is a regular review of the policy
 - Students, parents and teachers are given advice and support
 - Staff share materials that they have found useful
 - Staff and students know the ways of dealing with bullying
- **Motoring**
 - There is a clear policy at the school
 - Everyone knows exactly how to deal with bullying
 - The school continuously gathers data from teachers, students and parents to monitor the situation
 - The school recognizes the importance of involving parents and other important parties (i.e. professionals) to counteract bullying
 - The school focuses on bullying prevention and teaches students how to play a positive role in school and how to make wise choices on a daily basis
 - Students are encouraged to develop positive peer relationships
 - The school encourages all students to value and respect each other

(Lee, 2004)

6.2 The characteristics of a positive school environment

Most incidents of bullying occur in school-related settings; because of this parents will want to know what is being done to make sure their child feels safe at school. In order to be able to effectively counteract bullying, schools need to develop a positive school environment which will serve as a strong foundation they can later build upon.

The following are four characteristics of a positive school environment:

- There is warmth, positive interest, and involvement from adults
- There are firm limits when it comes to unacceptable behavior
- There is a consistent application of sanctions (non-hostile and non-physical) in case of violation of rules or limits
- Adults display positive adult behavior that create an authoritative interaction between children and adults

(Coloroso, 2005)

6.3 The anti-bullying policy

The next step is to start thinking about developing an anti-bullying policy which can be put into practice to counteract bullying. Even though bullying in schools stems mostly from external forces such as social problems and attitudes, schools have the ability to make a difference in the prevention of bullying. Nonetheless, schools can also be a contributory cause of bullying if they fail to take action and instead simply choose to ignore, foster or condone bullying. In this paragraph a guide is offered on how to generate an anti-bullying policy. Schools can use this information to develop and personalize an anti-bullying policy that would best fit their school.

6.3.1 The importance of taking action

In order to make schools safe places for children, it is very important to take action to counteract bullying. There are many reasons why schools should commit themselves to taking action; the following are a number of reasons:

- Bullying impacts learning
- Bullying is an enduring problem in schools
- Bullies are at high risk to end up with a criminal conviction
- Lifelong emotional scars for victims

- Victims of bullying may resort to drastic measures (i.e. suicide) to escape their tormentors
- Eventually a majority of peers will dislike bullies
- Parents often do not know what to do in bullying situations
- The experience of victims is often overlooked by adults
- Bullying often occurs in or near to school
- Victims often do not report bullying

(Lee, 2004)

6.3.2 To write an anti-bullying policy

The above-mentioned reasons for taking action against bullying clearly show that bullying is a serious matter that demands immediate attention from schools. Schools can give attention to bullying through an anti-bullying policy that is read, understood and known by everyone at school, whether staff or students. Unfortunately, writing an anti-bullying policy is not a simple process. An anti-bullying policy is basically a series of statements that express what the school will do about bullying and what kind of advice it will give to students and parents. It also reflects the values of the school. But an anti-bullying policy can also be used for issues that are beyond bullying, such as to promote tolerance, respect and concern for the well-being of others. Writing an anti-bullying policy requires flexibility in order to be able to accommodate a variety of needs and to address a variety of audiences (students, staff and parents).

When preparing to write an anti-bullying policy, there are certain key questions that need to be asked first before the actual writing process begins, such as:

- What are the core values of the school?
- Should the anti-bullying policy be self-standing, or should it be part of a wider policy on behavior in the school?
- How far is the policy on paper seen around the school as a policy in practice?
- Who will be involved in the policy? (key parties)
- How does the staff feel about what should be done or included in the policy?
- Should the policy incorporate awareness-raising and preventative approaches as well?

(Lee, 2004)

6.3.3 The elements of an effective anti-bullying policy

After deep consideration of the key questions the writing process can finally begin. For a successful anti-bullying policy, I recommend the inclusion of a number of important elements to the policy.

The following is a list of elements that are often included in effective anti-bullying policies:

- A strong and positive statement of the school's desire to stimulate positive peer relations
- A strong statement of the school's desire to oppose bullying and harassment in any form and by all members of the school community
- A concise definition of bullying with specific examples
- A declaration of the right of individuals (school staff and students) to be free of harassment and victimization by others
- A statement of the responsibility of bystanders to help stop bullying whenever they witness it
- Strong encouragement for students and parents to speak up and seek help at school whenever there are concerns about victimization at school
- A clear description of how the school will deal with the bullying problem
- A plan on how the policy will be evaluated in the near future

(Coloroso, 2005)

The following is a model of an anti-bullying policy that is widely used in Dutch schools. This model can be used as it is, but it can also serve as a guideline so that schools can create their own unique anti-bullying policy.

Model of an anti-bullying policy:

HET NATIONAAL ONDERWIJSPROTOCOL TEGEN PESTEN

Het Nationaal Onderwijsprotocol tegen Pesten beoogt via samenwerking het probleem van het pestgedrag bij kinderen aan te pakken en daarmee het geluk, het welzijn en de toekomstverwachting van kinderen te verbeteren.

De ondertekenaars van dit protocol verklaren het volgende:

1. Pesten is een wezenlijk en groot probleem. Uit onderzoek blijkt dat één op de vier kinderen in het basisonderwijs slachtoffer is van pestgedrag. Pestgedrag is schadelijk tot zeer schadelijk voor kinderen, zowel voor de slachtoffers als voor de pesters. De omvang en zwaarte van het probleem leiden tot de noodzaak van een aanpak door alle opvoeders van kinderen en jongeren, in het bijzonder door de leraren en door de ouders.
2. Het bevoegd gezag en de directie gaan, om een passend en afdoend antwoord te vinden op het pestprobleem, uit van een zo goed mogelijke samenwerking tussen leraren, ouders en leerlingen, gebaseerd op afgesproken beleid dat gericht is op samenwerking.
3. Onze school wenst een samenwerking, zoals bedoeld onder punt 2, ook daadwerkelijk aan te gaan, te stimuleren en te onderhouden.
4. De ondertekenaars van dit protocol verbinden zich daarom het volgende te doen:
 - het werken met de vijfsporenaanpak;
 - het bewust maken en bewust houden van de leerlingen van het bestaan en de zwaarte van het pestprobleem;
 - het bewust maken en bewust houden van de (levenslange) gevolgen van pesten; een gerichte voorlichting over de preventie en de aanpak van het pesten aan alle ouders van de school;
 - het zorgen voor toegankelijke, actuele informatie over het pestprobleem voor een ieder aan de school verbonden persoon, inclusief de leerlingen;
 - het beschikbaar stellen van geld waarmee de scholing van de volgende zaken bekostigd zouden kunnen worden: scholing van personeelsleden, lesmaterialen, lezingen, activiteiten voor de ouders, de aanschaf van boeken en andere informatie;
 - het continueren van ons sociaal-emotioneel leerlingvolgsysteem, zodat probleemgedrag bij leerlingen zo vroeg mogelijk kan worden onderkend en tegengegaan.
5. De ondertekenaars verklaren zich in principe bereid tot deelname aan een periodieke zelfevaluatie binnen een door de medezeggenschapsraad vastgestelde termijn.
6. Als het protocol is ondertekend, wordt een kopie op een duidelijk zichtbare plaats opgehangen in de school. De tekst van het protocol wordt verder bekend gemaakt via de schoolkrant en de website van de school.

7. Het bevoegd gezag en de directie zorgen er verder voor dat naar aanleiding van de ondertekening van dit protocol een beleid tegen het pesten wordt geformuleerd. Dit beleid wordt in het schoolplan en de schoolgids opgenomen.

Naam en plaats van de school:

Getekend namens:

Bevoegd gezag:

Directie / personeel:

Medezeggenschapsraad:

Ouderraad:

6.3.4 Tackling bullying in Dutch schools

Let us now have a look at how schools in The Netherlands tackle the bullying problem. The following is a concise description of methods that are used in Dutch schools to counteract bullying. In addition, I also include websites on which more information can be found about a certain method.

- **The National Educational Protocol Against Bullying:**

In the year 1994 the national organizations for parents in Education (LOBO, NKO, OUDERS & COO and VOO) confirmed that every year about 350.000 children become victims of bullying. The four organizations decided that something had to be done about this. They started a national campaign against bullying. In many primary and secondary schools parents, students and staff held discussions on how the bullying problem can be tackled. To round off the campaign at school all parties involved signed the National Educational Protocol Against Bullying.

The National Educational Protocol Against Bullying is a declaration against bullying that is signed by students, parents and staff. The National Educational Protocol Against Bullying makes use of the so-called 'Five-track approach'. The five-track approach gives assistance to teachers, bullies, victims, bystanders and parents by means of information and advice on how to tackle bullying.

To learn more about the protocol and to see an example of the protocol [click here](#) or visit <http://www.deborgwal.nl/Pestprotocol.pdf>

- **The No-Blame method:**

A method that is widely used in The Netherlands is the No-Blame method. This method has been developed by George Robinson and Barbara Maines. The No-Blame method is a simple seven-step process that focuses on: the absence of blame, the encouragement of empathy, shared responsibility and problem solving. The seven steps involved are: (1) talk with the victim, (2) convene a meeting of the group, (3) explain the problem, (4) share responsibility, (5) ask for ideas, (6) leave it up to them (the group) to solve the problem and (7) meet again to evaluate the progress. The No-Blame method is an effective approach to bullying because no-one gets blamed or punished; instead it

focuses on the ability of the group to solve a problem. This method is suitable for the upper classes of elementary schools and for secondary schools. To learn more about the No-Blame method [click here](#) or visit www.noblame.nl

- **The PRIMA method:**

Another method that is used in The Netherlands is the PRIMA method. The PRIMA (Proef Implementatie Antipeestbeleid) method has been developed by Dan Olweus and is originally called The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. This method has been designed to prevent or reduce bullying in schools with students varying from ages 6 to 15. All students participate in this method, while bullies and victims receive additional individual interventions. This method attempts to restructure the existing school environment in order to reduce opportunities for bullying and prevent new cases of bullying by improving peer relations and ultimately making the school a safe place for students. The PRIMA method works with three intervention levels: school wide interventions, classroom-level interventions and individual-level interventions. To learn more about the PRIMA method [click here](#) or visit <http://prima.nigz.nl/index.cfm>

I advice all teachers to find out what is being done to tackle bullying at your school at the moment. If nothing is being done, discuss the possibilities to write an anti-bullying policy and to introduce one of the methods mentioned above at your school.

6.3.5 The components for an optimal intervention at school

For any protocol or method to be successful there are certain conditions that need to be met at school. These conditions are the components for an optimal intervention at school.

The following is a list of these components:

- Raise awareness among students, parents and staff on the definition of bullying and the kinds of bullying
- Gather information about bullying at school directly from students
- Establish clear rules about bullying at school
- Provide training for the staff so they can respond accurately to bullying

- Provide sufficient and adequate supervision at school, especially in the playground and in the cafeteria
- Involve parents in counteracting bullying

(Coloroso, 2005)

Zero tolerance

Last but not least, I want to strongly emphasize that zero tolerance is not the way to go when counteracting bullying. Many schools have introduced zero-tolerance policies against bullying. Although these schools probably have very good intentions to prevent and resolve bullying, zero-tolerance policies are not very effective. Zero-tolerance policies have an all-or-nothing character and are inflexible and harsh. Students who are caught bullying are immediately suspended or expelled from school. There is no room for dialogue or problem solving. Zero-tolerance policies are therefore punitive approaches to bullying; they do not help to create a positive school environment.

Part 2: The teachers

Teachers can and should play a bigger role in the prevention of bullying. What is holding teachers back in counteracting bullying is that many teachers do not know what bullying is. Furthermore, many teachers do not know how to identify bullying and what to do about it. All too often bullies are simply warned or punished; this does not solve the bullying problem on short-term or long-term. In the following paragraphs I am going to discuss the role of teachers, what they should know about bullying and what can be done about bullying.

6.4 Awareness is the key to prevention

The key issue in the prevention of bullying is awareness. The lack of insight from teachers on bullying only contributes to the escalation of the problem. Therefore I find it very important to raise awareness among teachers so they can respond quickly and accurately in cases of bullying. A greater understanding of what bullying is not only helps teachers to evaluate the behavior of their students, but it also helps teachers to evaluate their own behavior. Unconsciously teachers may also be contributing to bullying with their own behavior at school. How many times have teachers not

participated in bullying by talking down to students in class, by giving unreasonable punishment under the heading of 'discipline' or by gossiping or sharing stories about students and their supposed upbringing sometimes even in the presence of other students? It is then no wonder that some parents or students may view the school as an adversary rather than as a partner. Stopping bullying among students is practically impossible if adults in their environment are demonstrating this same behavior.

6.5 The role of the teacher

"My job is to teach. It is not my responsibility to take care of their petty squabbles"

"I was not taught in my teacher training education how to deal with their personal needs"

"Children just do that to one another. It happened to me and I survived"

"I already have too much responsibilities dumped on me to also pay attention to the fights between kids. I will only act if it gets physical right in front of me"

These are only a couple of reasons, or excuses if I may say so, that some teachers have when it comes to not taking action against bullying in school. The truth is that teachers spend a lot of time with children on a daily basis second only to parents. Unfortunately, many adults including teachers have forgotten the pains of growing up and how bullying affects the well-being of a child and the ability to learn. One of the most harmful things a teacher can do to his students is to ignore the impact of bullying and how it poisons the entire environment at school. The role of a teacher is not only that of teaching his subject. A teacher is also an educator who should be equally concerned about his students' mental and physical well-being as he is about his students' academic well-being. Teachers are role models and they must realize the powerful influential roles they play with their responses to the lives and dilemmas of their students. Therefore teachers have a responsibility in addressing the bullying problem at school.

6.6 What teachers must know and do in cases of bullying

I have stated that teachers have a responsibility in taking action against bullying at school, but there are certain things that teachers must know and do if they want to actively counteract bullying.

The following is a list of a number of things that teachers must know and do when it comes to bullying:

- **Bullying does exist:**

The first step to counteract bullying is to never ignore bullying. It is very important for teachers to open their eyes and realize that bullying does exist. Bullying happens far more than teachers think it happens. The reason for this is because children tend to hide their questionable behavior from adults. For every act of bullying a teachers sees, he has to ask himself how many did he not see.

- **Taking action does not have to be disciplinary to be effective:**

Sometimes teachers see something happen and they simply are not sure if it was bullying. This is the biggest reason why teachers hesitate to take action. Many teachers actually believe that students will come to them if they are being bullied. This could not be further from the truth. Children often do not tell adults they are being bullied for fear of reprisals, being called a snitch or simply because they fear the situation will only get worse. Teachers must know that they do not have to be 100% sure it was bullying to intervene, and intervention does not always have to be disciplinary. In this case teachers should always approach the students and let them know that the behavior was noted, it is not acceptable and that they will be watched closely from now on.

- **Four basic steps to intervention:**

When teachers see behavior that is clearly bullying they should act immediately. There are four steps that must be taken. The first step is to let the bully know the behavior has been seen, the second step is to clearly state that the behavior will not be condoned, the third step is to give a direct command that the behavior should stop and the fourth step is to give a fair warning that there will be consequences should the unwanted behavior continue.

- **Talk to the victim:**

It is important for teachers to give attention to the victim of bullying. Victims of bullying must know that whatever happened is not their fault and that it is not acceptable. Teachers must encourage students to report bullying whenever it happens.

- **Discussions:**

It is advisable for teachers to spend some time doing classroom discussions with students. Talk to the students about bullying and ask them to define bullying and give

specific examples. Ask students to describe how they think others feel when they are being bullied. Also discuss why bullying occurs and why it needs to stop.

- **Bystanders:**

Teachers should let bystanders know that bullying affects everyone and that they have the power to do something about it. Bystanders should never participate in bullying but always try to support the victim. If it is possible bystanders should try to stop the bullying or get a teacher immediately to deal with the situation at hand.

(Plaford, 2006)

6.7 Emotional intelligence

Besides all of the external steps and interventions mentioned previously to monitor and control bullying at school, bystanders, bullies and victims also need certain skills to be able to decrease or even reject bullying. These skills can be learned through internal interventions. Although internal interventions can be directed toward bullies or victims separately, they can and should be done in classrooms. This is very important because all students will then benefit from it and because bullying thrives in a culture of secrecy. The power of acceptance and rejection should be used as a driving force in counteracting bullying among students. The acceptance of bullying should be shifted to the rejection of bullying in order to create a positive, nurturing and non-bullying environment at school. In order to give the bully the skills necessary to decrease his desire to bully others and to give the victim the skills necessary to decrease his susceptibility to bullying, it is important to raise the students' level of emotional intelligence.

What does emotional intelligence mean?

- It means having an understanding of your own emotions
- It means understanding how your own emotions affect you
- It means being able to recognize your emotions
- It means being able to express your emotions
- It means being able to express and discuss what you are feeling
- It means understanding how your thoughts and actions impact your emotions
- It means understanding how your thoughts and actions impact another person's emotions

- It means being able to express empathy for others
- It means having a sense of control over your emotions

The ability of recognizing emotions is a very important skill. Many people including children have a limited emotional vocabulary. For example, they often do not know the difference between being angry and being frustrated. This limits their ability to express their feelings and to understand their feelings. But it also limits their ability to understand what another person is feeling; therefore it is impossible for them to feel empathy for another person.

In addition, emotions are also the driving force behind decision-making. Emotions determine and dictate decisions no matter if they are good ones or bad ones, big ones or small ones. For example, emotions determine who people make friends with, who people fall in love with, why people give up or postpone something that has to be done, what people eat, how people dress, but also why people bully or accept to be bullied by others.

One of the greatest aspects of emotional intelligence is that it can be learned through observation. Emotional intelligence is thus modeled. It is very difficult for children to learn or develop emotional intelligence and make good decisions if they grow up in homes where emotional intelligence is not being modeled. Because of this it is imperative for schools to teach emotional intelligence and to provide opportunities for modeling emotional intelligence.

How can emotional intelligence be taught?

- Teach emotional vocabulary. (see: emotional vocabulary match test in chapter 7, page 100)
- Let students read stories and describe the emotions of the characters by using emotional vocabulary.
- Let students select words from the emotional vocabulary list and act these words out for others to guess what they are feeling. (see: emotional vocabulary game in chapter 7, page 101)
- Hold class discussions on how students can calm themselves when they are angry, agitated or sad. Let students describe how they would do it.

- Use movies to discuss and pinpoint emotions they see in a particular scene.
- Ask students to write about a situation where they were bullied or saw someone else being bullied. Let them describe how they felt.
- Present the students with a number of scenarios of bullying and ask them to describe how they think that person is feeling.
- Have discussions about how the decision-making depends on emotions.
- Have students discuss how emotions impact their everyday decisions. Let them give examples.
- Talk with students about disciplinary issues. How does their behavior make you feel and ask them why they display such behavior?

(Plaford, 2006)

How can teachers provide opportunities for modeling emotional intelligence?

When students know how to understand and express their own emotions, they can also understand the emotions of others (empathy). Teachers can create opportunities for modeling emotional intelligence in a number of ways.

The following is a list of things teachers can do to create these opportunities:

- Let students do nice things for each other (help carrying heavy books or bags etc)
- Provide opportunities for students to help in the classroom (give out papers, clean the blackboard, run errands)
- Let students serve as conflict mediators at school
- Let older students tutor younger students
- Encourage participation in events for charity
- Encourage volunteer work
- Take field trips to nursing homes and hospitals. Let students help the residents and patients.
- Give recognition for service toward others
- Have class discussion on what can be done to help other people
- Have classroom discussions on how it feels to help others and what it means to others who need help

(Plaford, 2006)

I believe schools and teachers should focus more on internal interventions than on external interventions to prevent and resolve the bullying problem at school. Once children can understand and express their own emotions, they will also be capable of putting themselves in someone else's shoes. Children who have high levels of emotional intelligence are capable of making good decisions when it comes to rejecting bullying. When children are able to do this, schools will not necessarily need anti-bullying policies or different methods to counteract bullying. Furthermore, even the amount of disciplinary issues at school will decrease. High levels of emotional intelligence help to create a positive school environment where everyone can feel happy and safe. Unfortunately, the process of building emotional intelligence takes a lot of time. The sooner schools and teachers start working on building the emotional intelligence of their students the better.

Chapter 7: Ready-to-use materials

At this point teachers have all the information they will need to be able to work actively on bullying prevention. In order to make it easier for teachers to really get going I am offering ready-to-use materials in this chapter. Teachers can use these materials to get more information on how much bullying is going on at school, to find out what their students know about bullying and to change the rising tide of bullying by creating a positive school environment. Naturally, teachers can always adjust these materials to fit their lesson or needs. The following are a variety of examples of what is available for teachers when it comes to bullying prevention.

1. Student questionnaire

This questionnaire can be used to confirm that bullying is going on at your school and to find out how much bullying is going on. It can also be used regularly to check if the bullying has decreased or increased. The results of this questionnaire can indicate whether the school needs an anti-bullying policy or to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy if the school is already using one. The students are not required to write their names on the questionnaire.

Student Questionnaire
Have you been bullied (hit, kicked, shoved, tripped, or threatened) within the past 30 days? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> No<input type="radio"/> Yes, 1 time<input type="radio"/> Yes, 2-3 times<input type="radio"/> Yes, 4-5 times<input type="radio"/> Yes, 6 times or more
Have you had friends who have been bullied within the past 30 days? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> No<input type="radio"/> Yes, 1 time<input type="radio"/> Yes, 2-3 times<input type="radio"/> Yes, 4-5 times

- Yes, 6 times or more

Have you been harassed (teased, put down, called names, or touched in an uncomfortable manner) within the past 30 days?

- No
- Yes, 1 time
- Yes, 2-3 times
- Yes, 4-5 times
- Yes, 6 times or more

Have you had friends who have been harassed within the past 30 days?

- No
- Yes, 1 time
- Yes, 2-3 times
- Yes, 4-5 times
- Yes, 6 times or more

Have you been the victim of relational aggression (been left out, been ignored, had rumors started about you, been isolated, or been lied about) within the past 30 days?

- No
- Yes, 1 time
- Yes, 2-3 times
- Yes, 4-5 times
- Yes, 6 times or more

Have you had friends who have been the victim of relational aggression within the past 30 days?

- No
- Yes, 1 time
- Yes, 2-3 times
- Yes, 4-5 times
- Yes, 6 times or more

Have you been ridiculed (made fun of, had pranks or joked played on you, teased, or been laughed at) within the past 30 days?

- No
- Yes, 1 time
- Yes, 2-3 times
- Yes, 4-5 times

- Yes, 6 times or more

Have you had friends who have been ridiculed within the past 30 days?

- No
- Yes, 1 time
- Yes, 2-3 times
- Yes, 4-5 times
- Yes, 6 times or more

Have you been harassed through notes, over the phone, or via e-mail or a web page over the past 30 days?

- No
- Yes, 1 time
- Yes, 2-3 times
- Yes, 4-5 times
- Yes, 6 times or more

Have you had friends who have been harassed through notes, over the phone, or via e-mail or a web page over the past 30 days?

- No
- Yes, 1 time
- Yes, 2-3 times
- Yes, 4-5 times
- Yes, 6 times or more

Please check all the places where these behaviors have happened.

- Classroom
- Playground
- Lunchroom
- Restroom
- In the hallways
- At the bus stop
- On the school bus
- Other

(Plaford, 2006, p.7)

2. Bullying Questionnaire

This is another questionnaire that can be used to monitor the bullying situation at school. This questionnaire can give you more information on what students know about bullying and what they have done in cases of bullying.

Bullying Questionnaire
<p>1. About you (You don't have to write your name but we would like some information)</p> <p>I am</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Female<input type="radio"/> Male <p>Class:</p>
<p>2. What is bullying?</p> <p>Please write down what you think bullying is.</p> <p>Bullying is:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>3. Being bullied</p> <p>Have you ever been bullied in this school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Yes<input type="radio"/> No <p>If you said 'Yes', in what way(s) were you bullied?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Were you bullied in any other school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="radio"/> Yes<input type="radio"/> No

If you answered 'No' go on to section D.

If you answered 'Yes', in what way(s) were you bullied?

.....
.....

Who did you tell?

- Parents
- Brother or sister
- No one
- Tutor
- Friend
- Someone else

4. Bullying others

Have you ever bullied anyone?

- Yes
- No

If you answered 'No' go on to section E.

If you answered 'Yes':

What did you do?

.....
.....

Why did you do it?

.....
.....

Did you mean to hurt them?

- Yes
- No

5. Witnessing bullying

Have you ever seen anyone being bullied?

- Yes / No (Encircle your answer)

If you answered 'No' go on to section F.

If you answered 'Yes' what did you do?

- Walked by
- Tried to help
- Told someone
- Other

6. Dealing with bullying

What is your opinion of bullying?

.....
.....

How do you think the school should deal with bullying?

.....
.....

How can we prevent bullying?

.....
.....

Why do you think bullies bully?

.....
.....

Thank you!

(Lee, 2004, p.65)

3. Students' view on the importance of dealing with bullying

Divide the class in groups of 4 or 5 students. Each group needs a large sheet of paper and felt-tip pens. Each group will discuss the most important reasons why they think bullying should be dealt with at school. Each group has to come up with 10 reasons. Afterwards the sheets of paper will be displayed in front of the classroom so the students can compare their reasons to that of their classmates.

Reasons why bullying should be dealt with at school
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

4. 'True for you' activity

The following activity can be done individually or in groups of two students. The idea is that the student has to think for himself whether the statements are true or false. If the students work in groups they have to discuss the statements and choose whether they believe the statements are true or false. They have to agree on all answers so it is important to discuss all points to reach a final agreement. Afterwards a short discussion will be held on the individual reasons why a statement is true or false.

True for you?	True	False
I do not have to put up with bullying!		
It is okay to tell on bullies		
It is not okay to bully		
Bullying hurts my body and my feelings		
I am an individual		
I respect people's possessions		
We are all different, yet share a great deal		
I have rights and responsibilities		
There are people I can ask for help		
There are things I can do to stop bullying		
I can play safely without hurting others		
You have to be a friend to have a friend		
I am responsible for my own actions		
I can help make our class a bully-free zone		

(Lee, 2004)

5. Anti-bullying Quiz

The following activity is an anti-bullying quiz. Teachers can test their students' knowledge on bullying by letting the students answer the questions of this quiz with true or false. Students have to work individually on this quiz. Afterwards the answers can be discussed in class. The key to the answers will also be included for the teachers.

Statements	True	False
1. Every year thousands of teens are involved in bullying.		
2. Bullies almost always admit to bullying others		
3. Students who are bullied in school are usually attentive students with good attendance		
4. Most students who bully are insecure		
5. Contrary to stereotypes, male bullies are not usually bigger and stronger than their peers		
6. Students who witness bullying often refuse to remain friends with the victim and feel guilty for not reporting the incident		
7. Bullies have trouble making friends		
8. Victims of bullying often do not do well at school		
9. Most bullies discontinue violent or aggressive behavior in adulthood		
10. If you are being bullied it is best to handle it alone		

Keys:

- | | |
|---------|----------|
| 1.TRUE | 2.FALSE |
| 3.FALSE | 4.FALSE |
| 5.FALSE | 6.TRUE |
| 7.FALSE | 8.TRUE |
| 9.FALSE | 10.FALSE |

Activity created by Lijan Sam

6. Bullying scenarios activity

Divide the class in groups of 4 students. Each group gets a sheet with bullying scenarios. The students discuss each bullying scenario and decide whether a scenario is **definitely bullying** (D), **might be bullying** (M) or **not bullying** (N). The results of the groups will be discussed afterwards.

Scenarios	D	M	N
Jane puts a worm in Julie's bag. She knows that Julie is frightened of worms.			
Amanda and Sally refuse to speak to Jane for a whole week.			
Keith and Alan refuse to let Brian play with them.			
Marc's parents have divorced and Tony tells everyone in class.			
David kicks Sally's bag and it goes all over the classroom			
Harry kicks Mike's bag on purpose and it goes all over the classroom.			
James always nudges Max when he passes him in the halls.			
Jenny always pulls Adele's hair in the playground.			
Natalie has nicknamed Paula 'fatso'			
Danny spits into Billy's drink and forces him to drink it			
Helen keeps telling others that Mandy smells (it is true)			
Helen keeps telling others that Jane smells.			
A group of older boys will not let anyone use the basketball court			
The youngest boy in the class is helped by two of the oldest ones			
Caroline's father is unemployed and a group of girls call her 'little poor girl' all the time			
Nick and Ben always play with John because he is always left out of all the games at school			
Andrew makes fun of Ronald because he wears second hand clothes			
A group of girls spread nasty rumors around school about Amanda			
George gets beaten up because he does not want to give away his lunch money			

(Lee, 2004)

7. 'Take a stand' activity

Give each student a 'Take a stand' activity sheet. Each student will write down how he would handle the situations mentioned. Afterwards the students will form groups of 4 and discuss the different ways they have chosen to handle the situations and choose for each situation which one is the best way to go.

Situation	What would you do?
During lunch, the new girl in your school sits by herself in the cafeteria. You notice that she looks sad and lonely.	
You overhear some of your classmates making fun of the new student.	
Your gym teacher is distracted and does not notice when the biggest boy in your class shoves another boy into the mud.	
Two of your best friends got into a fight. Now, one of them is spreading hurtful rumors about the other.	
For some reason, you are being bullied by one of your classmates. You are having trouble concentrating in class.	

(Lee, 2004)

8. Defining bullying

Divide the class in groups of 4 students. Give each group a large sheet of paper. Each group has to come up with one definition of bullying. In addition, they also have to write down 4 examples of bullying. Afterwards each group will present their definition of bullying and examples to the other groups.

Defining bullying
Group:
Our definition of bullying:
Examples: 1..... 2..... 3..... 4.....

Activity created by Lijan Sam

9. Student discussion facilitation questions

It can be difficult for teachers to hold a discussion with students about their views and ideas on bullying. Chances are that students do not know enough about the topic and that teachers do not know what kind of questions they need to ask. Therefore I am supplying teachers with a list of questions they can use for such discussions. Teachers can choose which questions they want to ask from the list. The list is intended as an aid for teachers.

Student discussion facilitation questions
How do you define bullying?
Have you ever heard of bullying? If not, what comes to mind when you hear the word?
Are there certain people that you label as bullies?
Are they teachers or students or both?
If bullying happens in hallways or in classrooms, do you think the teachers are aware of this kind of behavior?
What do they do about it? Do you think they care?
Do you see people making fun of others and excluding them?
What about rumors?
Do any of these bother you?
Do you see adults doing this kind of thing, too?
If this kind of thing makes you uncomfortable, what do you do about it?
Do you feel that there is not much anyone can do about this kind of behavior?
If it was up to you, how would you change things?
Before making friends with someone, do you think about whether they will fit into your group?
Do people call others names that hurt?
Who are considered 'cool' around here?

What kind of people, in your opinion, will never fit in no matter what they do?
Do you ever feel that way yourself?
Can people just move from one group to another?
Can you share some times that you felt angry or frustrated about a group of students that seem to think they are better than others?
Do some students seem to go out of their way to avoid other students?
Do students get a kick out of putting other people down?
Do certain groups do this regularly?
What types of people or groups makes you feel angry, worried, or hurt?
Do you believe these people/groups do this on purpose?
Do you feel safe riding the bus to school, walking to school, biking to school?
When do you hear students make jokes about threatening someone?
Is school a safe place for you to be?
When are students most likely to not get along?
When do you wish people would be nice and simply leave each other alone?
Would you feel okay going to a school function alone?
Do you feel safer when you are with your own group of friends?
Are there some students or teachers who you wish would just go away?
What happens to new students?
Are people nice to new students?
Do you wish to get involved in some activities or groups, but feel that you cannot?
What happens to students who report incidents to teachers?
If you saw a student being picked on, would you step in to help?
Does your taking action depend on who is involved?

Do you think that students know more about what is going on than teachers or parents?
Do you think that the climate between certain students or groups is 'an accident waiting to happen'?
Are there teachers you can trust to talk about things that worry you?
Do you sometimes feel that nothing you do will make a difference?
What would you do to educate teachers or parents about relationships at school?
What types of situations seem to cause you or others you know the most stress at school?
What would you like to change if you could?
How trustworthy do you think teachers are in solving problems between students?
Is there a way to stop bullying at this school? Can you give examples?
Do you feel that school staff ignore or make excuses for problems?
What are your ideas for making things better for everyone?
What is being done at this school to avoid bullying? And do you think it works?

(Lee, 2004)

10. Emotional vocabulary match test

The emotional vocabulary match test evaluates whether students know the meaning of words that have to do with feelings. By letting students take this test teachers can get an idea of the extent of the emotional vocabulary of their students.

Emotional vocabulary match test	
<i>Match the words in the left column with the definitions in the second column</i>	
A. Content	1....Filled with fear
B. Jealous	2....Treated as small or unimportant
C. Afraid	3....Satisfied, happy
D. Powerful	4....Lacking hope or spirit
E. Hurt	5....Tight, taut, nervous
F. Awful	6....Easily deceived or duped
G. Silly	7....Engulfed or submerged in turmoil
H. Victimized	8....Envious, apprehensive, bitter over lost affection
I. Belittled	9....Harmed or injured by another
J. Funny	10....Capable, forceful, dynamic, strong
K. Lost	11....Lacking affection, warmth, acceptance from others
L. Unloved	12....Helpless, bewildered, unable to find one's way
M. Sad	13....Annoyed, impatient, inflamed
N. Discouraged	14....Bad, unpleasant, terrible
O. Tense	15....Inspired, filled with hope or confidence
P. Concerned	16....Explosive, angry, furious
Q. Rageful	17....Feeling pain, distress, suffering
R. Encouraged	18....Sorrowful, unhappy, gloomy
S. Overwhelmed	19....Amusing or odd
T. Gullible	20....Interested, anxious, troubled
U. Irritated	21....Lacking good sense, foolish

(Plaford, 2006, p.133)

11. Emotional vocabulary game

Divide the class in two groups. Each group gets a sheet with the emotional vocabulary words. The groups are going to play against each other. The students will stand in line behind each other. Each time one student of each group will face the other, they will take turns. The student of one group has to choose a word from the emotional vocabulary list and play it out for the other to guess what he is feeling (charades). The other student gets 20 seconds to point out which word it is on the list. Every right answer is 1 point; a wrong answer is 0 points. When everyone has had a turn to play the group with most points wins. Each word can be used only once.

Emotional vocabulary list	
Afraid	Miserable
Annoyed	Nervous
Bitter	Paranoid
Confused	Powerful
Disappointed	Rejected
Encouraged	Sad
Explosive	Scared
Furious	Shamed
Hopeful	Surprised
Irritated	Threatened
Jealous	Unsure
Lonesome	Victimized
Mad	Worried
Lost	Tolerant
Lovable	Silly

(Plaford, 2006)

12. Making rules

Divide the class into groups of 4 students. Each group needs a large sheet of paper. The students have to come up with 10 rules for appropriate behavior at school and in the classroom. All the rules have to have a positive character. That means that the students have to write down what they should do instead of what they should not do. The rules of the groups will be displayed in front of the classroom. In the end the entire class will work on one final version to be hung in the classroom.

Our rules	
Group:	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

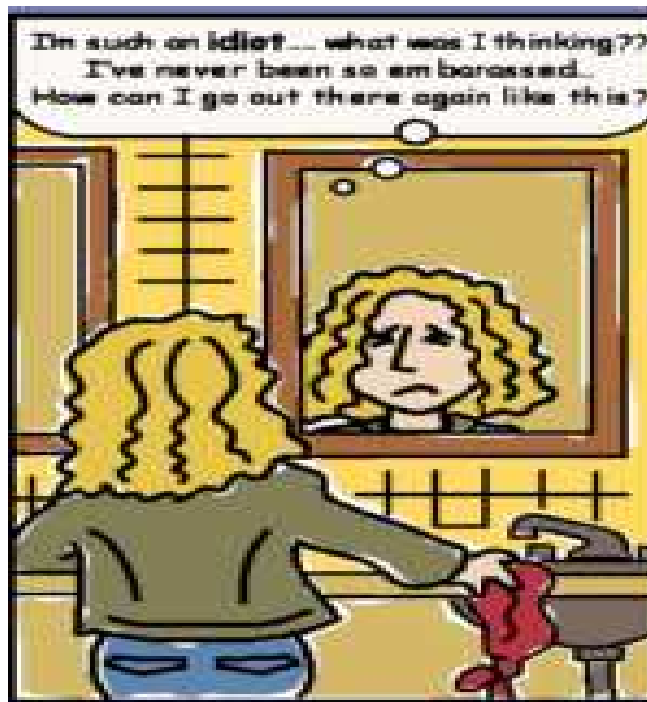
Activity created by Lijan Sam

13. Bullying comic strip

The students work in pairs on this activity. Make enough copies of the comic strip for every group. Each scene of the comic has to be on a different sheet of paper. The students have to try to put the comic strip in the right order. Afterwards a short discussion can be held on the topic of this comic strip. (Or: take away the original text and let students write the story)











<http://www.skerry.ca/Images/socialbullying.gif> (21 September 2008)

14. A note to my teacher

This activity is intended to increase the students' comfort in informing teachers about bullying situations in the classroom. For this activity the materials needed are a shoebox with a hole cut in the lid and copies of 'A note to my teacher' for every student.

To introduce this activity the teacher can say something like this:

"Bullying happens when one student who has more power harms another student. That is why it is very important to have a teacher or another adult help you if bullying occurs. I would like to help you stop bullying in our classroom. I want you to know that I will be here for you to talk to and that I will not be mad at you for talking to me about bullying. I will not consider anyone a tattletale if they are helping to keep our classroom a safe place to learn".

Tell the students that you will give them a copy of the note every day or every week and that you would like them to take a few minutes to write you a brief message. The messages can be about anything, not just bullying. The students can choose whether they want to write their names or not.

The students can put their notes in the box at the end of a lesson. Make sure to let the students know that you will read all the messages and you will work on solving any problems the class might be having. At the end of each week talk to the students about the steps you have taken to solve the problems that have been presented to you.

<p><i>A note to my teacher</i></p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
--

(Lee, 2004)

15. Bully Bingo!

Give every student a Bully Bingo sheet. The students will move around the classroom asking others if they have ever witnessed the events listed on the bully bingo sheet. When a student finds someone who has witnessed an event in a box, they have to write that student's first name in the box. When a student gets a BINGO! (4 names across, down or diagonally), the students return to their seats. Afterwards a short discussion can be held about how we have all witnessed bullying behaviors, and most of us have been bullied.

Bully Bingo!

Calling someone names	Taking someone's lunch money	Saying "You come near me, I will hurt you!"	Pushing a student out of a line and not letting them back in
Giving someone a threatening stare (really mean look)	Saying "You cannot do it because you are a girl".	Pulling someone's underwear up (wedgie)	Calling someone stupid
Pulling someone's pants down/skirts up	Not letting someone sit at a (lunch) table	Telling the whole class that someone is not invited to a party	Punching someone in the stomach
Telling someone to go away from them	Telling people all day something embarrassing about a student	Tripping someone in the classroom or in the hallways	Blocking someone's way on purpose

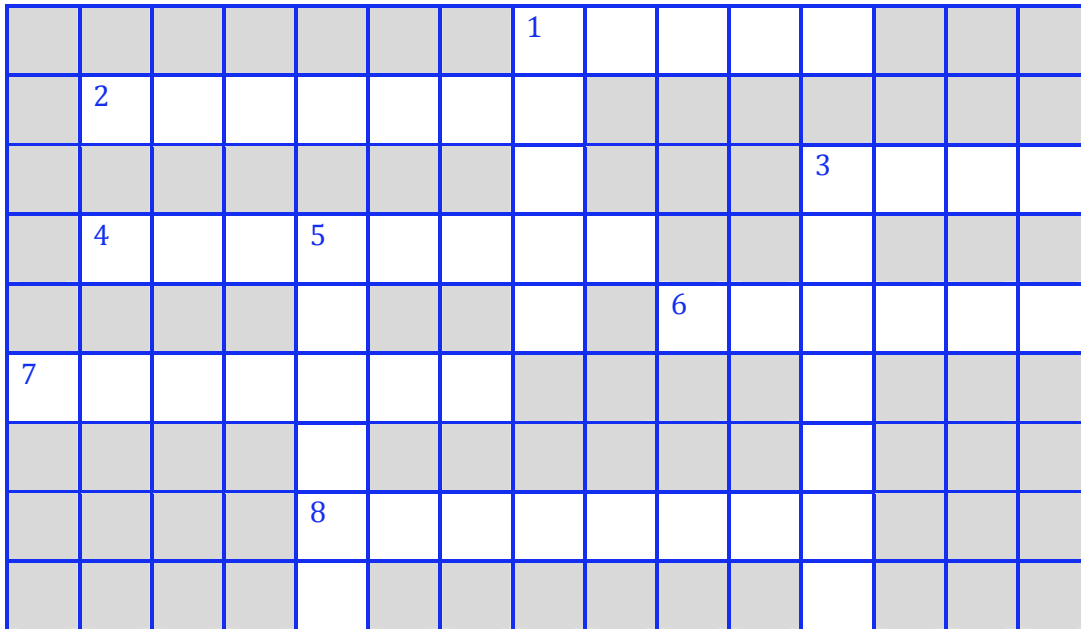
Activity created by Lijan Sam

16. Bullying Crossword Puzzle

Give the student a copy of the Bullying Crossword Puzzle sheet. The students can work individually or in pairs. I am also including the solution for the teachers.

Bullying Crossword Puzzle

Solve the puzzle and learn about bullying!



ACROSS

1. Someone who picks on or teases others
2. Someone you should talk to if you are having problems at school
3. True/False The best way to stop bullying is by telling an adult or someone you trust.
4. 'Be.....!' Antonym: Negative
6. How a bully makes you feel
7. People you are related to that love you and want to keep you safe
8. Your faith; the reason why some bullies tease others

DOWN

- 1. Quality you should have when a bully tries to scare you; synonym: courageous
- 3. Something a bully does to make you feel bad; saying things like “You’re weird! Take that thing off your head.”
- 5. To pay no attention to someone/something; something you can do when a bully teases you.

Keys:

							1 B	U	L	L	Y			
	2T	E	A	C	H	E	R							
							A				3T	R	U	E
	4P	O	S	5I	T	I	V	E			E			
				G			E		6S	C	A	R	E	D
7P	A	R	E	N	T	S					S			
				O							I			
				8R	E	L	I	G	I	O	N			
				E							G			

(Lee, 2004)

17. A story of friendship

The following story can be used in different ways. It can be used as an introduction to a lesson on bullying. It can be used to talk about the severity of bullying. It can be used to talk about the importance of bystanders and taking action. But most of all it can be used to explain how important friendship is and to promote positive behavior.

A story of friendship

One day, when I was in secondary school, I saw a thin, smallish kid walking home from school, not my school but another school. His name was Karl. It looked like he was carrying all of his school books. I thought to myself, 'Why would anyone bring home all their books on a Friday? He must be a real swot.'

I had quite a weekend planned with a party and a football game with my friends tomorrow afternoon, so I shrugged my shoulders and went on. As I was walking, I saw a bunch of kids running towards this kid, Karl. They ran at him, knocking all his books out of his arms and tripping him so he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying, and I saw them land in the grass about 2 meters from him. He looked up and I saw this terrible sadness in his eyes. My heart went out to him. So, I ran over to him as he crawled around looking for his glasses and I saw that he was crying. As I handed him his glasses, I found myself saying, 'Those kids are real prats. They really should get lives.'

He looked up at me and simply said, 'Thanks!' A big smile came to his face. It was one of those smiles that showed genuine gratitude. I helped him pick up his books, and asked him where he lived. As it turned out, he lived near me, so I asked him why I had never seen him before. He said he had gone to private school before now. I have never talked to or really got to know a kid from a private school before. We talked all the way home and I carried some of his books.

He turned out to be okay, pretty cool in fact. I asked him if he wanted to play football on Saturday with my friends and myself. He said he would. We were around each other for most of the weekend and the more I got to know Karl, the

more I liked him, and my friends all seem to think the same of him.

Monday morning came and there was Karl with the huge stack of books again. I stopped him and said, 'You are really building some massive muscles with this pile of books every day!' He just laughed and handed me half the books.

Over the next four years, Karl and I became best friends, despite going to different schools. We began to think about university. In the end we even chose different universities. I knew that we would always be friends, that the distance would never be a problem. He was going to be a doctor and I was going to be an architect.

Karl qualified highest in the whole of his year group at university. Because of his success he had to prepare a speech for the graduation and he invited me. I was so glad it was not me having to get up there and speak.

On his Graduation Day, I saw Karl. He looked great. He was one of those guys that really changed and became the real Karl during his time at university. He was much bigger now and actually looked good in glasses. He had more girlfriends than I had and all the girls seemed to love him. Frankly, sometimes I was jealous and today was one of those days. I could see that he was nervous about his speech. So, I smacked him on the back and said, 'Hey, big guy, you will be great!' He looked at me with one of those looks (the really grateful one) and smiled. 'Thanks' he said.

As he started his speech, he cleared his throat, and began. 'Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years – your parents, your teachers, your siblings, but mostly your friends. I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a story'.

I just looked at my friend with disbelief as he told the story of the first day we met. He had planned to kill himself over the weekend. He talked of how he had cleaned

out his locker so his Mum would not have to do it later and was carrying his stuff home. He looked hard at me and gave me a little smile. 'Thankfully, I was saved. A friend saved me from doing the unspeakable.' I hear a gasp go through the crowd as this handsome, popular young man told us all about his weakest moment. I saw his parents looking at me and smiling that same grateful smile. Not until that moment did I realize its depth. Never underestimate the power of your action. With one small gesture you can change a person's life – for better or for worse. You have that choice and that power.

(Lee, 2004, p.42)

Extra ideas

18. Design a poster

This activity can be done for the entire school or just for a class. Divide the class into groups of 4 students. Each group has to design a poster with the theme “Bullying”. Of course, they have to show that they are against bullying. The students have total freedom to choose what they are going to do to design their poster. A date will be set for the presentation of the posters. Everyone in the classroom will vote for the poster they like the most. A number of copies will be made of the top three posters and they will all be displayed around the school.

19. Writing activity

Have students write a short reflection paper about an incident of bullying that they have witnessed. Ask them not to write real names of children or adults in the paper. Ask them to describe: what happened and where it happened, how they felt about the bullying, how did they and others respond to the bullying and if they wished they had responded differently to the bullying.

Important: Make sure the responses are safe. That means the students cannot say they wish they had retaliated or hurt someone.

20. Interview

Ask students to interview an adult family member or friend about an incident of bullying that they witnessed or experienced when they were children or teenagers. Students should ask who, what, when, where, how and why questions as well as other questions that help them to understand what happened.

Students should ask:

- Who was involved in the bullying?
- What happened?
- What kind of bullying took place?
- When and where did the bullying happen?
- How did they feel about the bullying?
- How did they respond or react?

- How do they wish they had responded?
- Why did they react that way?
- Why do they think they still remember this bullying incident?

(Lee, 2004)

All the activities provided in this chapter are originally in English, but they can be translated to Dutch if necessary.

Conclusion

The question that I wanted to give an answer to with this thesis was: 'What do teachers need in order to be able to play a more significant role in the prevention of bullying inside the classroom and outside the classroom?'

The answer to that question is that teachers need the proper knowledge in order to be able to tackle bullying at school. In addition to acquiring the correct knowledge about bullying teachers also need some materials to get started.

The biggest problem for teachers is that they are expected to effectively handle bullying problems at school, but they do not get a special training on the topic of bullying. Therefore teachers like many other people in our society view and handle bullying according to the myths and misconceptions that contribute to the intensification of the problem.

With this thesis I showed that children bully others because that is what they have learned through experience and observation and because our society promotes bullying in many ways. Bullying is all about power, contempt, ignorance and intolerance. It is not a normal part of childhood and it can destroy a person's life.

I also showed that because bullying behavior is learned it can also be unlearned through external and internal interventions. Children have to learn what bullying is and that everyone is and should be held responsible for their actions. Furthermore, children need to understand their own emotions before they can be able to understand someone else's emotions and how their actions impact the lives of other people. When children can recognize their own emotions they will be able to feel empathy toward others, this will considerably minimize the odds against bullying.

In order to help teachers create a positive, nurturing and anti-bullying environment at school I have provided a variety of materials which can be used to actively counteract bullying. Turning the tide will not be easy and it will take a long time, the sooner teachers start working on it the better.

Afterword

By carrying out an extensive research on the topic of bullying I have gained a significant amount of valuable information which will undoubtedly be very helpful to me in my professional career as a teacher. The information I found through my research quickly confirmed my opinion that I did not know nearly enough about bullying as I thought I initially did. I was also a victim of myths and misconceptions about bullying and as a result of that, painfully clueless on how to effectively handle bullying situations at school.

I encountered some difficulties while doing my research. The hardest part of my research was going through an array of literature on bullying and having to choose only the information I truly needed. It was also hard to be concise throughout my thesis because everything I read seemed so important. It was very challenging to decide exactly where to draw the line while discussing the aspects of bullying. In the end I chose to include the information I want as a teacher in order to be able to effectively work on bullying prevention.

As a result of my research I now know so much more about bullying. I can define bullying, I know the kinds of bullying and I know more about bullies, victims, bystanders, anti-bullying policies and interventions. I also know what works and what does not work when trying to tackle bullying. I feel confident that I will not be doing a disservice to my students anymore by not being able to solve bullying problems among my students. I thoroughly enjoyed working on this thesis and I cannot wait to put all this new knowledge to practice. Furthermore, I am curious to find out whether teachers have had good results using the information and materials I have provided in this thesis.

I sincerely hope that teachers will find this thesis a valuable source of information and that they will finally be able to play a bigger role in bullying prevention at school.

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Summary

The topic of this thesis is 'Bullying and Bullying Prevention'. As a student teacher I have been confronted with bullying many times during my internships. I initially thought it would be easy to recognize and handle bullying, but before long I realized it was not. I tried to get some help by turning to teachers in order to inquire how they handle bullying at school. I was surprised to find out that many teachers do nothing to prevent or resolve bullying at school. Even more surprising was the fact that teachers do not know what bullying is.

I strongly believe that teachers can and should play a bigger role in bullying prevention at school and because of this I decided to do more research on this topic.

The question that I wanted to give an answer to with this thesis was: 'What do teachers need in order to be able to play a more significant role in the prevention of bullying inside the classroom and outside the classroom?'

The answer to that question is that teachers need the proper knowledge in order to be able to tackle bullying at school. In addition to acquiring the correct knowledge about bullying teachers also need some materials to get started.

In order to do my research I consulted many books and websites to obtain the necessary information. After a careful selection I processed the information and ultimately included it to this thesis. This thesis is meant as a guide for teachers, it includes all the information and materials teachers need in order to effectively counteract bullying at school.

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Each chapter describes a different aspect of bullying.

Chapter one offers a definition of bullying, kinds of bullying, the difference between boys and girls when it comes to bullying and finally some facts and figures.

Chapter two focuses on the bully. It explains why a child becomes a bully, what bullying is all about, how to recognize a bully, the different kinds of bullies and why bullies are victims too.

Chapter 3 focuses on the bullied. It explains which students are at risk for being bullied and how to recognize them. Furthermore, it also explains why children do not seek help when they are being bullied.

Chapter 4 focuses on the bystanders. It explains who bystanders are, the different kinds of bystanders and why they are not innocent when it comes to bullying.

Chapter 5 is all about the importance of family. It explains how parents can find out whether their child is a bully or a victim of bullying. It also describes what parents can do to help their child and especially what parents should not do.

Chapter 6 focuses on the school and the teachers. It describes the different kinds of schools, how schools can create a positive environment for their students, the components of an effective anti-bullying policy and what teachers can do in cases of bullying.

Chapter 7, the last chapter of this thesis, is a collection of various ready-to-use materials which teachers can put to practice in order to counteract bullying.