

BULLYING

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying may be defined as the activity of repeated, aggressive behavior intended to hurt another individual physically, mentally or emotionally. It is characterized by following three minimum criteria: -

- (i) Hostile intent
- (ii) Imbalance of Power (Real or Perceived)
- (iii) Repetition over a period of time.

Both children - who are bullied and who bullies may have serious and lasting problems.

TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying can be of the following types:-

1. VERBAL BULLYING

- Teasing
- Name calling
- Inappropriate sexual comments
- Taunting
- Threatening to cause harm
- Making mean or rude gestures

2. SOCIAL BULLYING

- Leaving someone out of the group intentionally
- Telling other children not to be friends with someone, in particular
- Spreading rumours about someone
- Embarrassing/Humiliating someone in public

3. PHYSICAL BULLYING

- Hitting
- Spitting
- Tripping

- Pushing
- Taking/ Breaking someone's things

4. CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying is the use of technology to harass, threaten, ridicule, embarrass or target another person. This includes:-

- e-mail
- Instant messaging
- Social networking sites (such as Facebook)
- Text messages
- Cell phones

WHY DO CHILDREN BULLY:-

- May have witnessed physical and verbal violence or aggression at home.
- Are often physically strong.
- May or may not be popular with other children around of their same age.
- May use bullying as a tool to conceal shame or anxiety or to boost self esteem.
- Have trouble following rules.
- Bullies may bully because they themselves have been bullied in the past.
- Lack Empathy - "show little concern for feelings of others."
- May do it because others around him are doing it and getting pleasure.

EFFECTS OF BULLYING ON THE CHILD BEING BULLIED:-

* Children who are bullied are more likely to experience....

- Loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy earlier.
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns
- Increased feelings of sadness, loneliness, withdrawal, helplessness
- Increased susceptibility to illness
- Absenteeism from school
- Decreasing scholastic grades

- Depression, anxiety and self destructive behavior, suicidal tendencies in extreme cases.

BULLYING ALSO HARMS BULLY!!!!

If bully not checked at the initial stage it may lead to:-

- Anti social behavior
- Deterioration in scholastic achievement
- Drop out from school
- More prone to substance abuse
- Engage in early sexual activities
- Denial/rebellious attitude
- If not checked or intervened at the school level it may get carried over to adulthood which may invite legal action and spoil the career of the child.

HOW DO YOU STOP GETTING BULLIED

- Exude (show) confidence; Confidence is bully's biggest enemy.
- Believe in yourself
- Learn to stand up for yourself
- Stop living in fear
- May consider taking some self defense classes to enhance self confidence.
- Do not think it is your fault. Nobody deserves to be bullied (otherwise it can lower self esteem).
- Avoid the bully as much as you can.
- Do not get aggressive or stoop down to bully's level.
- Do not fight back or bully a person back.
- Do not skip school or after school activities because you are afraid of the bully.
- Do not keep it to yourself and just hope the bullying will "go away" on its own.
- Avoid the bully and use the buddy system.
- Act brave, walk away and ignore the bully.
- Don't keep your feelings inside; talk to friends, parents, teachers, counselor.
- Talk about it - must tell an adult in your safety net.

TIPS TO REDUCE BULLYING IN YOUR SCHOOL:-

- Have a clear definition of what bullying is. Set clear and enforceable rules and expectations. They must be displayed at prominent places of the school.
- Remove labels; Need is to address behavior: -
Counselor to play a major role to sensitize the teachers, parents, SMC members and other school authorities.
- To take an anti bullying pledge.
- Have open communication; Students should be encouraged to report any kind of physical, verbal, sexual, emotional or cyber bullying at the very ONSET. **Don't wait for the problem to aggravate.**
- School teachers to look for warning signals.
- When bullying occurs, clear the scene, take bully and the bullied away and talk to them.
- Monitor hot spots (more prone areas) like areas where often school staff is not there like Hallways, Bathroom, Playgrounds, Lunchrooms, Gymnasium , Cyberspace etc.
- "All staff must work together to keep these spots monitored."
- Reward positive behaviour.

SCHOOL SHOULD HAVE "ZERO" TOLERANCE FOR BULLYING AND THE SAME MUST BE COMMUNICATED TO THE STUDENTS.

**STOP
BULLYING**

STAND UP. SPEAK OUT.