



Shedding Light on Bullying: Raising Awareness to Aid Prevention

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Statistics:

- 1 out of 4 children are bullied.
- 1 out of 5 admits to being a bully.
- Playground statistics: Every 7 minutes a child is bullied.
- 43% of kids surveyed were bullied while on-line.

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Most of us can recall situations from childhood where we either witnessed bullying or were bullied personally. Media reports extreme cases of bullying—however, less severe cases often fall under the radar. Bullying is a widespread issue that crosses all ages, ethnic, gender, cultural and class boundaries.

What is Bullying? Deliberate, unwanted actions that bring damage (emotional or physical) to the victim. There is persistency and the attacks are repeated over time. Often there is an imbalance of power, where the bully is stronger (mentally or physically) than the victim, who is unable to respond effectively.

Bullying has many forms: physical harm and intimidation; relational aggression (spreading negative rumors); emotional abuse (name-calling); shunning (excluding); harassment (repeated verbal abuse); coercion (using their power to make you do something you do not want to do).

Tips for Parents:

Be aware of your child's behavior. Possible signs: Non-communicative/withdrawn; sleep disturbance, complain of physical symptoms, such as stomachaches or headaches; avoid social events; become easily agitated or more aggressive with siblings at home.

If Bullying Occurs

- Be calm; avoid reacting emotionally—model respectful behavior. Children may be afraid to share problems if an adult becomes upset.
- Gather all facts from everyone involved; advocate for your child but accept the possibility that they may have contributed to the problem.
- Identify possible causes, such as not enough supervision or a shortage of human resources
- Meet with school or youth program's administrators and teachers.
- Protect your child by giving them skills needed, such as boundary-setting, walking with confidence and talking in a calm, firm, assertive tone.

All children deserve a safe environment and to be free from danger. Let's all strive to put an end to bullying - pass the message on and help raise awareness of this issue.

Resources:

www.bullyingeducation.org
www.kidpower.org
www.stopbullyingnow.gov