

Identifying and Reacting to Bullying 4-6

Work on identifying whether an incident is bullying or not. The key is to identify what questions to ask to determine if bullying is going on. What pieces of information would inform whether bullying or sexual harassment is occurring, and the best way to obtain that information. Then determine what are the best possible responses to each situation (regardless if the situation is bullying or not, as students need to feel their voice matters).

Response Example:

A group of boys have been physically threatening a younger student after school. The situation is brought to a teacher's attention by another student.

Information Needed:

- Where does this occur?
- Who else is involved?
- Are there other victims? Who are they?
- Who are the witnesses? Are others aware of it?
- How is it impacting the child who is being threatened?
- How long has this been occurring?

Responses:

- Make sure the victim is involved in a group that will support them.
- Talk to the victim about what they would like to happen to reduce the issue.
 - Give them voice. It does not mean have to do exactly what they want, but to involve them in the discussion.
- Get the victims counseling to address any self esteem issues.
- Bullies need to receive punishment that is comparable to the behavior based on the policy dictated in the school.
 - Restorative Justice
 - Bullies need to receive appropriate intervention for their issues.

- Educate on self control and empathy
 - Second Step Program
- Mentoring: Positive power experiences; acceptance of difference
- Talk to all parents about the school decision
 - Offer assistance to parents in maintaining expectations.
 - Educate parent on policies and procedures, communication network, contacts for such situations, etc.

Bullying Examples:

Attempt to identify necessary information to determine if bullying is occurring, what form of bullying and how to respond. Then, assuming bullying occurred, identify possible responses to the bullying to reduce the likelihood of it happening again.

A female student, who normally eats lunch with several other girls in a group, has begun to eat alone, or in the classroom with a teacher. She also has missed a few days of school and is not as focused in school, although not failing.

Another student informs you that one female student is regularly called overweight by a host of other students. The informing student does not know who specifically and the victim refuses to inform you who said it.

An anonymous note is left informing you that a male student (they identify the student) is constantly being called “gay” by other students.

One student informs you that two students are fighting on the playground. They tell you that one is bigger than the other, but both are the same age. Upon breaking up the fight, the students inform you that they were arguing over a girl.

You are informed that a freshman is being physically harassed off campus after school everyday by some older students, threatening him if he tells anyone.

A boy, who has ADHD, is made fun of by other students because of how active he is, and tends to be a little socially awkward. He bothers teachers as well, who constantly have to redirect him, as well as struggle to get the rest of the class to focus.

Two students get into an argument over sharing a ball. The older child shoves the younger child to the ground and takes the ball. Neither of the two children regularly engage in such behavior.

A popular boy claims a row of seats on the bus and “saves” them for the kids he wants to sit there. He doesn’t use physical means to keep the others out of the seats, but all the kids on the bus refrain from sitting there.

On the playground during recess, a group of popular girls stand near a girl who is not as popular as the aforementioned girls and say negative things about her to one another that are loud enough for her to hear, but they never direct them at her.

A girl who is continuously told by the “popular girls” that she cannot sit at their lunch room table forms her own peer group and claims her own table. She then forbids the girls at “her table” to interact with the girls at the “popular table”, so the girls at the new table avoid the “popular girls” table.

A girl wants to play a different game at recess. Her best friend cries until she agrees to play what her best friend wants to play. You have observed a similar interaction between these two girls on a previous occasion.

A boy requires other boys that want to be in “his club” to bring him items from home, such as trading cards, special pencils, and toys. The boys willingly comply as it is considered “membership dues”.

A student, who has to sit out of first recess because he didn’t finish his homework the night before, is told by his peer group that he cannot play with them for the rest of the day because he was in trouble with the teacher.

A girl tells the other girls in her group that they are not allowed to play with a specific girl at school because her clothes are not in style.

A popular girl claims a tetherball court as hers for her peer group to use when they want. The other kids accept this and allow her access to the court when she wants it.

A child has been designated as a classroom “captain”, who is suppose to be responsible for helping the teacher in her regular duties. In the classroom, while working on a group project, he dictates how he wants the project done and all the other kids in the group accept his ideas.

A student tells his friend that he does not want to play a game because it is “gay.”