

## BULLIES ARE NOT GOING AWAY.

As an adult, you may deal with bullies in the workplace, in your HOA, or even in your extended family. Most of us have probably bullied someone in the past. We've overused our influence to get what we wanted. So, how do we best set up our students to deal with this issue?

## FOUR TYPES OF BULLYING



### VERBAL

Calling someone names, making fun of or mocking, the spreading of rumors and gossip.



### PHYSICAL

Physical threats and violence; taking or destroying property by force; hitting, pushing, or shoving.



### SOCIAL

Forced isolation by a group by ignoring or excluding someone from social activities.



### ONLINE

Not necessarily a different type of bullying, but verbal or social bullying using technology. Because online bullying can be done anonymously, bullies are often more hostile.

## SIGNS YOUR STUDENTS ARE BEING BULLIED

Bullying is something you hope your students never experience. But if they do, we know you want to be prepared to support them. So what should you be on the lookout for? Watch for any sudden or abrupt changes in character, mood, interests, or activities. Because the teenage years are full of natural mood swings and changes in interests, parents must use their own discernment. Most signs of bullying are going to be abrupt and unforeseen.

- Sudden lack of interest in school and schoolwork
- ▶ Seeks to skip or get out of activities
- Abrupt drop in grades
- ▶ Seeks additional alone time; lacks interest in social activities
- Starts taking different routes to school
- ▶ Comes home from school hungry because they didn't eat lunch
- Needs extra money unexpectedly
- ▶ Experiences mood swings after screen time
- Stops talking about friends or daily activities or only uses negative language when describing them
- ▶ Has torn or damaged clothing and possessions without reasonable explanations
- Experiences stomachaches, headaches, little sleep, and other signs of extraordinary stress

### ALWAYS

Teach your students the difference between telling and tattling. Tattling is spiteful reporting to an authority over petty offenses. Bullying is a vicious cycle that needs to be stopped for the good of the victim, the bully, and the other students in your community. Even if your students are able to stop the bullying themselves, an adult needs to know in order to stop the bully from just moving on to their next target.

### NEVER

Tell your students to simply avoid the bully. Avoidance is a dangerous coping strategy that only deepens the psychological power an aggressor has over your students. You are giving them more influence on your students' lives by teaching them that an entire hallway of the school is not safe.

### ALWAYS

Do something. Your students need to learn how they can assert themselves and stop the bullying behavior on their own. Additionally, you need to tell teachers, coaches, and school authorities so they can be on the lookout as well.

### NEVER

Rush in to try to solve the problem. Students must learn to deal with tensions in their relationships. This doesn't mean you do nothing. Find ways to equip your students to deal with the problem. Don't confront the bully's parents and try to solve this. You and your students are a team, and each of you has responsibilities.

# ALWAYS

# NEVER

### ALWAYS

Keep an open line of communication. Make time and remember that students often share most when they are procrastinating or after prolonged shared experiences with their parents.

### NEVER

Freak out (on the outside). Your reaction to any news is going to determine if they feel comfortable sharing in the future.

### ALWAYS

Make sure they feel you've heard them and that you are there for them. Remember that being bullied is never their fault. Students often feel they have done something wrong.

### NEVER

Minimize or try to explain away what they feel. Students need to feel they have your support, and you could inadvertently communicate that they are in this alone and no one is on their side.

### ADDITIONAL READING

*The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander*  
by Barbara Coloroso

*The Bullying Workbook for Teens*  
by Raychelle Cassada Lohmann  
and Julia V. Taylor