

Positive Steps Against Bullying

A TEACHER'S GUIDE

This national awareness campaign is a joint effort by the Canada Safety Council and the National Film Board of Canada, with the support of the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, the Government of Canada's initiative to help Canadians deal with the root causes of crime and victimisation. The program is endorsed by Kids Help Phone, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

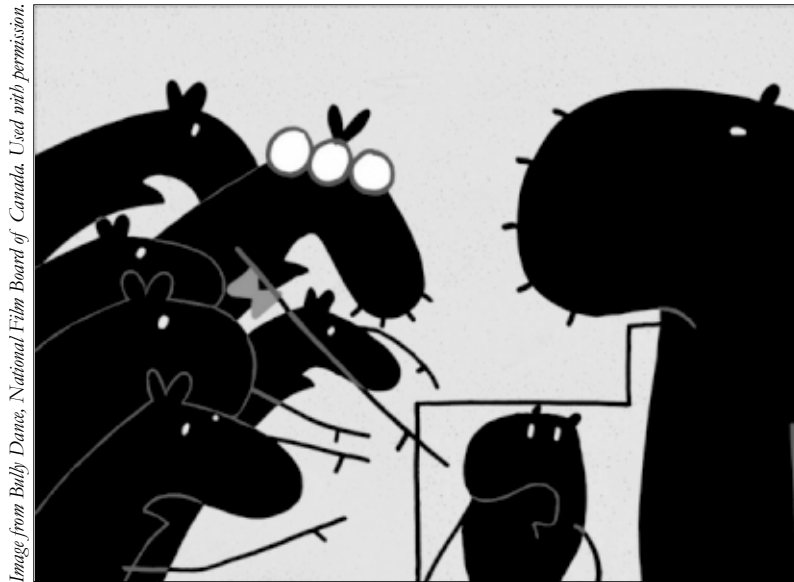


Image from Bully Dance, National Film Board of Canada. Used with permission.

The purpose of this Teacher's Guide is to provide a starting point to address bullying in your class, the playground and the school community. The guide requires a partnership between you and your students to identify the bullying problem and collaborate to create responses that work.

Solutions to bullying don't have to be punitive. While it is important to provide consequences to the bully, teachers need to educate bullies and peers about the problem. An informative, constructive response to bullying can help develop leadership and citizenship skills in your class. It is an opportunity to identify the strengths of kids, and their potential to resolve conflicts in responsible ways. The overwhelming majority of kids want a peaceful, safe place of learning. These are the ones whose attitudes, knowledge and behaviours around bullying can be most easily shifted.

If there is bullying, there is a kid culture that supports it. The inverse is true: without a supporting culture, there is less bullying.

Lesson 1: Bully Dance

Initiate discussion about bullying by showing the animated National Film Board video *Bully Dance*. This ten-minute video is part of the *ShowPeace* Series that deals with conflict resolution. The series was produced in association with UNICEF and Justice Canada, and has won 21 international and national awards. A guide for teachers comes with the video.

Bully Dance uses animation, original music with no words so it lets kids explore the issue. It opens up their minds to think about the experiences of the bully as well as the impact on others. Play the video through again and stop it at key points to discuss the roles of the various players and what they might have done differently. The poster uses images from the film and helps build on the themes and players.

Lesson 2: Poster Talk

Almost all children have had an experience of being bullied. They are very aware and can talk about the impact. Use the poster to warm up the class by reviewing the information, discussing the meaning of the more difficult words (e.g. intervener) clarifying what bullying is, and examining the roles played by all. Ask questions about what they understand about bullying. For example, what is bullying? Ask questions that lead students to an understanding of the subtle forms of bullying such as gossip and exclusion.

Discuss the *Players* on the poster. What is a bully? What do bullies want to achieve by their behaviour? Who is the bully trying to impress?

How do boys bully? How do girls bully? Pay particular attention to *Bystanders*. What role do they play

in bullying? Bystanders are watchers. Just by watching, young people become part of bullying. In fact, watchers inadvertently support it; after all, bullies need an audience. Explain that watching without intervening reinforces bully behaviour,

Question children about the motivation of the bully (i.e. to look powerful) and the long-term consequences of their violent behaviors for them: they may be punished, lose friends, or people become afraid of them. Bullies are not liked.

Have the children identify the consequences of being bullied: depressive thoughts, isolation, constant fear, inability to concentrate, feeling of being worthless.

Now use the *Action* section of the poster to discuss responses to bullying. Explain the roles of adults in preventing bullying and the need for kids to report incidents.

Discuss the role of the intervener, someone who acts to end the bullying. It can be a parent or another child. The point is to intervene in pro-social ways, not by simply confronting the bully, but by showing leadership and positive ways to resolve disputes.

Talk about resources for kids in trouble. Kids Help Phone numbers and Internet address on the poster. Kids Help provides excellent resources for kids who need to share problems in a moderated chat, or discuss problems with counselors.

Lesson 3: Bully Talk

It's important to help children tune into their feelings about bullying. Some might regard bullying as theatre or excitement on the playground. They need insight into the reality that other kids are getting hurt. They need to see things from the victim's perspective.

Set some ground rules for the discussion: you are not asking the class to blame anyone, so no individuals are to be named. Then ask some questions about bullying around the school. Who has seen bullying? How did they know it was bullying? What kind of bullying was it? Were there bystanders? What do bystanders do? I.e. were they helpful to the bully or the victim? How can bystanders play a role to stop bullying?

Help your students identify strategies for dealing with bullies. Look for pro-social responses to bullying, strategies that are safe and effective. CAUTION: Many

Intervention is effective: research shows that when children intervene bullying ends within 10 seconds every other time.

kids will come with 'bully the bully' solutions. Encourage them to think of other, pro-social ways they can intervene. Ask the children what might happen if the victim tries to bully the bully.

One group of kids may decide to just peek at bullying incidents, then turn their backs and ignore the bully. They could remove the victimized child from the situation, inviting him or her to play. They could get an adult. A group of friends could stand up and help the victim. They could distract the bully.

Encourage kids to speak up against bullying and to get an adult to intervene when they witness it.

Be clear about the role of adults in dealing with bullies but also trust the kids to come up with their own solutions. The reality is they don't usually call on adults. But if you encourage them, they'll probably come up with peer mediation ideas that are responsible, safe and likely to be done.

Talk to them about intervention. They may be afraid to intervene, and that's okay. They need to be reminded that they should not put themselves in danger. How can they intervene without becoming a victim themselves? What can they do if they do not feel safe intervening themselves? There is a need to talk about the "secrecy" of bullying – the threats that bullies make to keep others silent – and the need to break down the code of silence.

Activity

Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to imagine a situation between a bully and a victim. They can base their scenarios around real bullying incidents. Ask students to work through different responses to bullying in each situation. Each group can report to the class on how they solved a bullying problem, or they can present stories or improvised role-plays that rehearse responses to bully behaviour. Ask the class to vote on the responses that seem to work the best.

Lesson 4: Bully Audit

Once you have identified bullying as an issue, work with your class to gather more information about it. This is an opportunity for teacher reflection on systemic issues around bullying. For example, is there a school policy about bullying? Is it consistently enforced in your class and on the playground?

Report Box

Create a box where bullying incidents can be reported. However, bear in mind that once the class has created the box, the teacher takes responsibility for responding to incident reports.

Survey

Students working in groups can develop questions for a questionnaire on bullying. Keep the questions to just a few. You may want to limit the number of questions in advance. The group has to create a questionnaire, then survey the class or beyond the class and gather the figures and information on bullying together. Have each

group present its report. Discuss the reports with the whole class. Use the data to integrate some math skills. Try to bring the stats alive, perhaps by having a group of 10 students demonstrate — for example, three out of ten step forward to represent that 30 percent of students have been bullied.

Map of Bully Behaviour

Have groups of students work to draw a map of the school and schoolyard, then plot bullying incidents on the map. Use the completed map to talk about hotspots, and places to avoid or frequent only with friends.

Follow-up

- From time to time after a recess, ask about bullying. If it happened, let the students know you are monitoring the problem and are concerned about it
- Ask the kids to use a different strategy the next time bullying happens, then ask them to report to the class on how it worked
- Teachers need to find opportunities to talk about power, control, aggression, and inclusion / exclusion throughout the year. Follow-up discussions can draw children's attention to ways to promote inclusion and safety in the class and school.
- Perhaps the results of working with your students will convince you that you need to get together with other teachers and the principal to work on the bullying issue. Probably, you should be working with the parents too. In any case, you'll need to call up more expert resources if the problem is serious. You can begin with the resources listed in this guide but also look for helpers from within your school and school board, and your community policing officer.

Building an Anti-Bullying Strategy

What should teachers do to address bullying problems? Here are some steps to help you deal with bullying in your school.

Short-term

Even when you didn't actually witness an incident of bullying, you can always respond. Support the victim. Students seldom make up stories about bullying. Talk to the young person about what they are feeling. Talk to them about what they can do differently to change the situation. Bear in mind that there is sometimes very little that victims can do to extract themselves — the bully has so much power. Let them know the behaviour is unfair and not right.

- Talk to the victim's parents. Express concern and determination to take action.
- Identify the bully

- Identify the peer group that is backing the bully and discuss with the individuals their role in bullying
- Take the child who bullied to the principal's office.
- Find out if your school has a bullying problem by using the Bully Audit in this Teacher's Guide.

Ask these questions

- Does this school have a policy on bullying?
- If so, is it enforced?
- Does the school effectively monitor bullying everywhere on the premises?
- Does the school record and follow up all bullying incidents?
- Is counselling and support provided to participants in bullying incidents (bullies, victims and bystanders)?
- Does the school work with parents to deal with bully behaviour?

If the answer to any of these questions is "NO," your school needs to do some more work around the issue of bullying. See the list of resources at the end of this guide.

Long-term

- Bring together bullies and bystanders to discuss their responsibilities, the problem and the consequences.
- Work with administrators, other teachers, adult supervisors on the playground, parents, and neighbourhood representatives to develop guidelines for behaviours, solutions for bullying problems, and potential consequences if bullying continues.
- Develop school procedures to guide teachers in responding to bullying incidents.
- Have a program to promote pro-social behaviours and conflict resolution in the school.
- Check in with the victim to ensure that this or other problems do not persist.
- Influence the peer group. Use the Talk about Bullying section of this Teacher's Guide to discuss bullying with the class
- Teachers should reflect on their own behaviour. Is there anything that the teacher does to model bullying for the children?
- Watch and listen for even minor forms of bullying and intervene on each occasion.

Research shows teachers intervene in only 18 per cent of bullying incidents in the classroom.

Print Resources

Parentbooks has many books on bullying for teachers, parents and children available from its web site at: www.parentbookstore.com/index.html or you can e-mail them for a book list at parentbk@netcom.ca

Recommended:

Keith Sullivan, *An Anti-bullying Handbook*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2000.

Carla Garrity et al, *Bullyproofing Your School: A Comprehensive Approach for Elementary Schools*. Longmont (Colorado), Sopris West, 2000

Sharpe and Smith, *Tackling Bullying in Your School*. New York, Routledge, 1994.

Internet Resources

www.crime-prevention.org/english/publications/children/violence

This Government of Canada site outlines bullying and victimization. The site examines characteristics of bullies and victims and discusses the roles of students, teachers, parents, and schools.

www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/family/nf309.HTM

The page speaks specifically to parents.

www.lfcc.on.ca/bully.htm

The London Family Court Clinic provides information for parents and teachers about bullying. There are very detailed suggestions for what parents, teachers, and schools can do about the problem.

kidshelp.sympatico.ca

A site where kids can learn about bullying, and participate in moderated chats on a wide range of topics.

www.deal.org

A by-youth-for-youth initiative of the RCMP's National Youth Strategy. The site has a section for parents and teachers.

www.unicef.ca

For additional resources on conflict resolution visit UNICEF Canada's Global Schoolhouse.

www.yorku.ca/lamarsh/articles.htm

Download the document *Making A Difference in Bullying*, a good resource for schools, communities and parents.

NFB Videos

Animation

Bully Dance, from the *ShowPeace* conflict resolution series (www.nfb.ca/showpeace), shows a bullying situation; no one stops the dance until serious harm is done. It compels viewers to take stock of their actions and find ways to end peer abuse. (10 minutes)

Documentary

Waging Peace: A Year in the Life of Caledonia Junior High follows the transformation of a school in crisis, and how it started to build a culture of peace. (70 minutes) A sequel, *Learning Peace*, will be released in 2002. In *Sticks and Stones*, children describe how it feels to be teased when their families don't follow traditional gender roles, and talk about name-calling and what can be done about it. (17 minutes)

To purchase NFB videos call 1-800-267-7710 or visit www.nfb.ca.

Acknowledgements

The Canada Safety Council thanks the following for their expert advice in the development of this Teacher's Guide:

Wendy Craig, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Queen's University

Jean Gervais, Ph.D., Département de psychoéducation et de psychologie, Université du Québec à Hull

Debra J. Pepler, Ph.D, LaMarsh Centre for Research on Violence and Conflict Resolution, York University

The guide was prepared by Rob McBride, Just So Productions, for the Canada Safety Council. It is based on *Making a Difference in Bullying*, a study by Dr. Craig and Dr. Pepler .

What goes on in the classroom may contribute to a bullying problem. In fact, research indicates that bullying occurs about twice an hour in the classroom yet teachers are not aware of most incidents. Teachers have to establish an environment where respect is shown toward and among learners, and set ground rules to limit put-downs and harassment.

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