



ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH, INC

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INFORMATION ABOUT AND DYNAMICS OF BULLYING

Compiled by Nate Terrell, LCSW and Anita Foeman, Ph.D.

- 1) 30% to 50% of students report that they have been bullied and 10% to 15% report that they are bullied regularly. However, bullying victims often do not tell their parents because they feel humiliated and fear that they will be judged or blamed.
- 2) It is estimated that 160,000 children stay home each day out of fear of being bullied.
- 3) Both bullies and the bullied often experience serious emotional and/or behavioral problems.
- 4) Being bullied is the third leading cause of suicide among adolescents.
- 5) Boys are more likely to bully physically or through threats while girls use more subtle behaviors such as “dirty” looks, isolation from social groups, rumor spreading, etc. As a result, it is often not taken as seriously. However, it is just as damaging to the victims.
- 6) Some theorists believe that girls use “indirect aggression” to bully others because they have been socialized to fear outward conflict. It is therefore important to teach girls healthy approaches to conflict resolution such as honest dialogue.
- 7) 14% of bullied students suffer reactions to bullying that may have a life long impact on their mental health.
- 8) 60% of children who bully will have a criminal conviction by the age of 24.
- 9) Causes of bullying include lack of empathy for bullying victims, the belief that it will enhance one’s social status, peer pressure, the need for attention, previous bullying victimization, personal problems, the need to be in control and the desire to be “one up.” Many bullies curiously view their behavior as an attempt to protect themselves from an actual or perceived threat.
- 10) Research demonstrates that bullies generally do not suffer from low self-esteem. Rather, they tend to be narcissistic and therefore lack empathy for their victims.
- 11) The popularity of bullies usually begins to decrease in ninth grade.
- 12) Girls often bully other girls in an attempt to make or preserve social connections since they fear social isolation.
- 13) Girl bullying often exists beneath the “radar” of adults and is therefore difficult to detect. In fact, girl bullies often hide their “indirect aggression” beneath a friendly or even charming façade.

- 14) Bullies usually choose their victims carefully. They have a keen sense of who they can get away with bullying and who they can't.
- 15) Since adolescent boys often have deep fears about whether they are sufficiently masculine, they often bully others to prove they are tough, sufficiently manly, etc. They also bully to protect themselves from being victims of bullying themselves – a “get them before they get you” approach to the ultimate boy fear of humiliation.
- 16) Victims of bullying are generally more sensitive, have negative attitudes towards aggression and are physically weaker than their peers.
- 17) Bullying victims often do not tell an adult because they fear that it will lead to retaliation from the bully.
- 18) Victims of bullying tend to have few, if any, friends which make them easier targets. However, they are often more highly connected to adults than their peers.
- 19) Students who do not initiate bullying behavior often participate in it to win favor with the perpetrator, out of fear that they will be the next victim if they do not or because their sense of personal responsibility is decreased by a “mob mentality.”
- 20) Teachers only intervene in 4% of bullying incidents they observe and often rationalize bullying through their erroneous beliefs that the victim deserved it, that it will “toughen them up” and that it is “only in fun.”
- 21) Peers intervene in 11% of bullying situations and are often effective in stopping it, particularly when they work together as a group.
- 22) Tolerating bullying damages not only the victims, but the bullies as well since it gives them the dangerous message that their behavior is acceptable. It also means that an opportunity to teach them more responsible behavior has been lost.
- 23) Bullying most often occurs in middle school when students generally feel the most socially insecure.
- 24) 22% of students report that they have had academic problems due to bullying. Therefore, one way to significantly improve school academic scores is to eliminate bullying.
- 25) It rarely works for victims of bullying to ignore it or stand up to the bully alone. Adult and/or peer intervention is almost always required to stop it!

