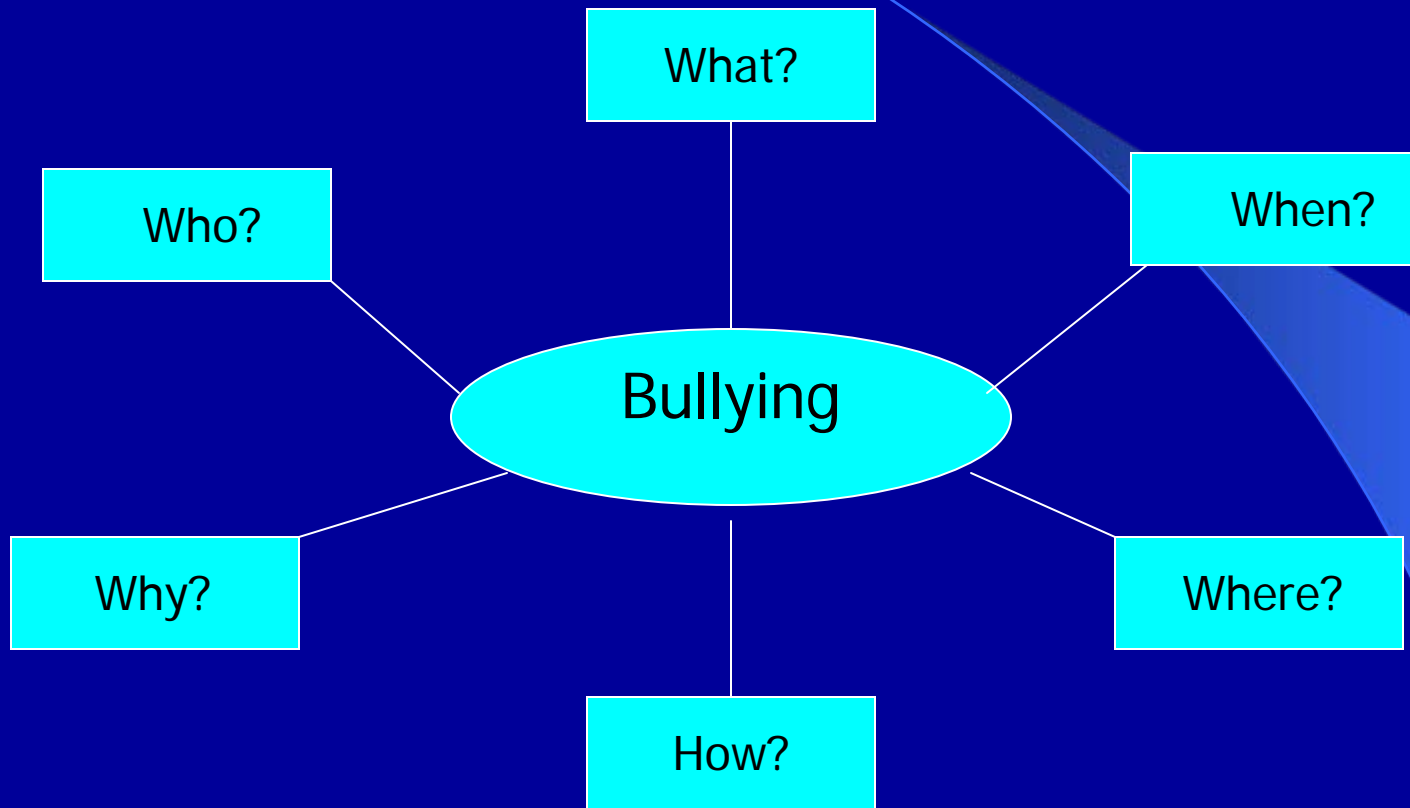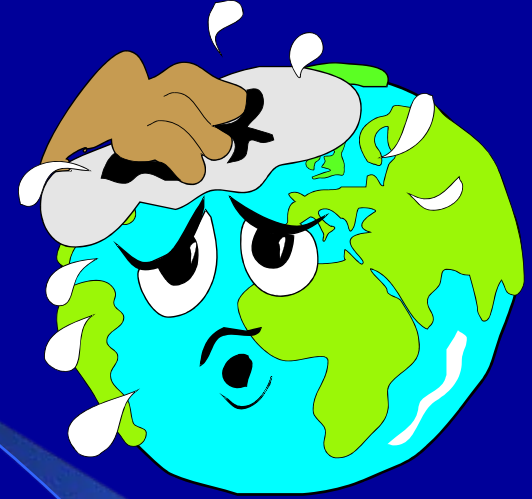# BULLYING – WHERE DOES IT END?

"Bullying . . ."

A student is being bullied when he or she is exposed, **repeatedly and over time**, to intentional negative actions on the part of one or more students, and whose ability to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities is adversely affected.

Bullying implies an imbalance in power or strength.

The student who is bullied has difficulty defending himself/herself.
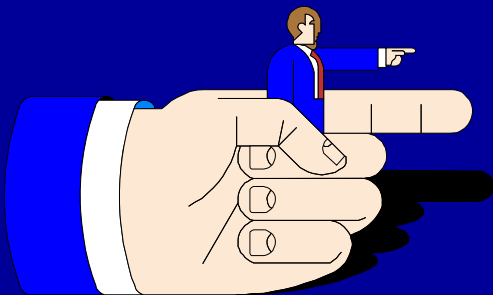
Rough Play/fighting vs. Bullying

- Relationship among parties
  - Equal vs. unequal
- Facial expressions and general atmosphere
- Balance of power vs. imbalance of power
- Intentional and planned vs. spontaneous
- Repeated vs. single incident

Aggressive, Violent, and Bullying Behavior

- Aggressive Behavior

- Violent Behavior

- Intentionally inflicting or attempting to inflict injury or discomfort

- Aggressive behavior where the perpetrator uses his/her body or an object to inflict injury or discomfort

"Harassment"...

A student feels harassed when he or she perceives or actually experiences discomfort with identity issues in regard to race, color, national origin, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, or other identifying characteristics, and whose ability to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities is adversely affected.
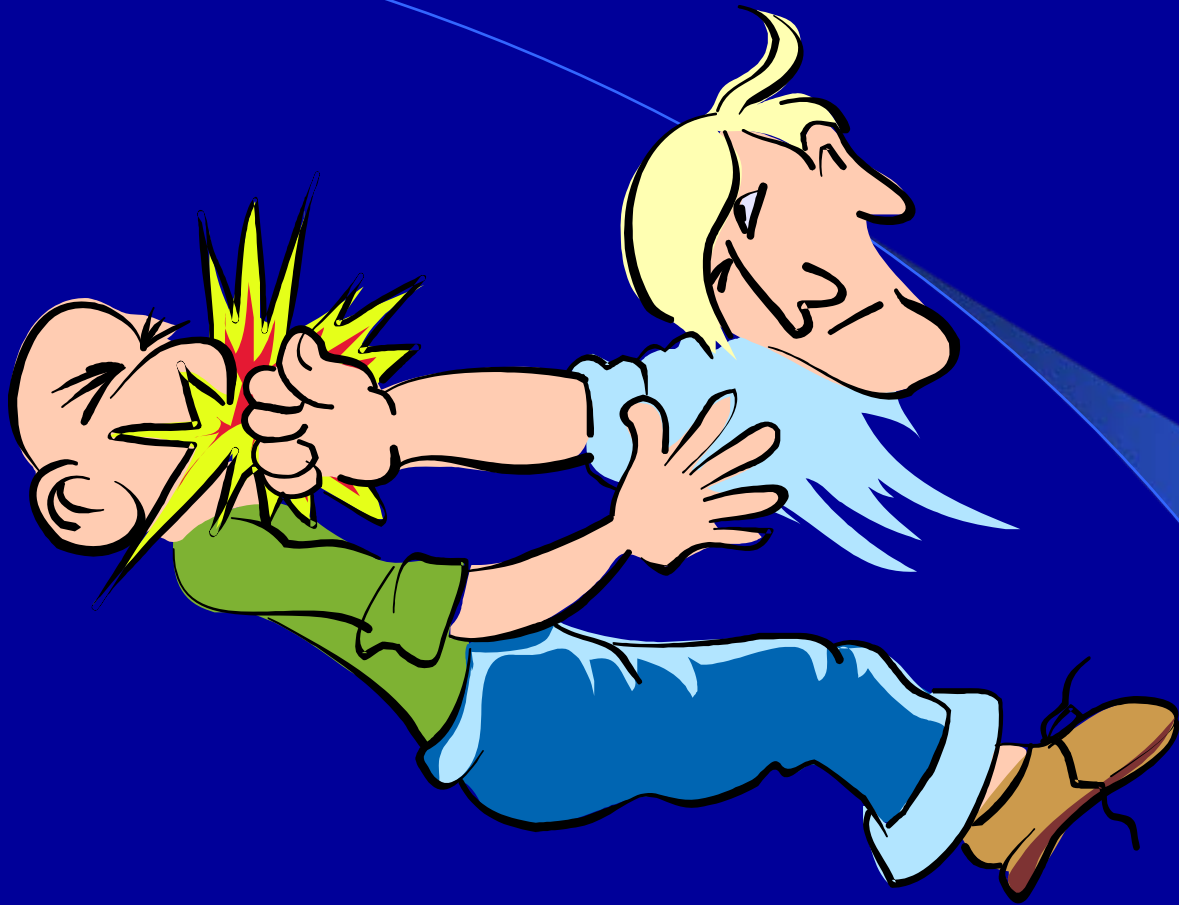
Bullying

1. Causes harm from

2. Repeated negative conduct

3. In a relationship with an imbalance of power

Harassment

1. Causes harm from

2. Discriminatory conduct that is severe or pervasive

3. Based on race, national origin, sex, disability, etc.

Direct Bullying

- Physical
  - Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, hair pulling, strangling
- Verbal
  - Taunting, teasing, racial slurs, name calling
- Non-verbal (Emotional)
  - Threatening, obscene gestures, rejecting, blackmailing, extorting, defaming, terrorizing
- Sexual
  - Voyeurism, propositioning, exhibitionism, assault, date-rape (and others listed above

Indirect Bullying

- Physical
  - Getting another person to assault someone
- Verbal
  - Spreading rumors, gossip
- Non-verbal
  - Deliberate exclusion from a group or activity

Cyber-Bullying

Tech-savvy teens send harassing instant messages and e-mails or post anonymous online diatribes against their peers.

Policies Governing Off-Campus Internet Use

- Protected Speech – A person's free speech rights under the Constitution.
- True threats are not protected speech.
- Person making threat must intend for the statement to be a serious threat.
- School must prove the speech disrupts instruction or impinges on the rights of others.

Problems with policies

- Too vague – must specifically define language that is harassing.
- Must prove disruption to school atmosphere.
- Unpopular speech (disagreement with school policies, not liking a teacher, etc) is still protected.
- Mock obituaries may not show signs of violence.
- Working with internet providers (privacy laws).

CHALLENGE

What are some policies and procedures that would address cyber-bullying?

Gender Differences

Sugar and Spice,
And Everything Nice

Gender Plays a Role

- Boys are more likely to bully others.

- Girls and boys bully differently.

- Both boys and girls engage in frequent verbal bullying.

- Girls are more likely to bully by exclusion.

- Boys are more likely to use physical actions.

Bullies and Bullying Behavior

- **Often part of a conduct-disordered behavior pattern**

- **This pattern may continue into young adulthood**

- Olweus study: By age 24, 60% of former bullies have been convicted of a crime

Bullying and Violence

- Bullying is related to four violence-related behaviors:
  - Carrying a weapon in school
  - Carrying a weapon anywhere
  - Involved in more than four physical fights a year
  - Being injured in a fight

Other Facts about Bullies

- Bullying occurs more in school then outside of school.

- Bullying is more prevalent among middle school students than among high school students.

- Bullying is often not an isolated behavior.

Why do kids bully other kids??

- Need to feel powerful and in control
- Derive satisfaction from inflicting injury and suffering on others
- Seem to have little empathy for their victims
- Defend their actions by saying that their victims provoked them in some way

Home Life:

- Bullies often come from homes where physical punishment is used
- Children are taught to strike back physically as a way to handle problems
- Parental involvement and warmth are frequently lacking

TERRORISTS AND BULLIES VS. VICTIMS

- Bullying - occurs when 1 or more persons intentionally uses power to harm another.

- Terrorism – to systematically inspire fear in another by threat or violence

Effects of Bullying on School Climate

- **Interferes with student learning**

- **Creates a climate of fear and disrespect**

- **Students may perceive lack of control/caring**
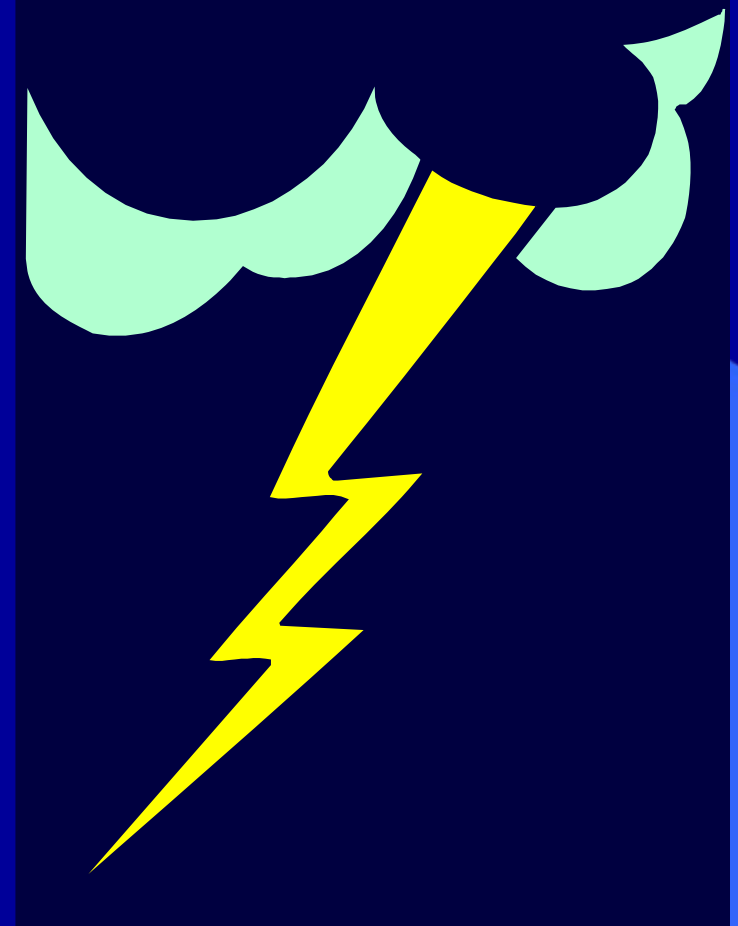
Bullying Effects _Everyone_:

- **Victims**
- **Bullies**
- **Bystanders**

Short-Term Effects of Being Bullied

- Lower self-esteem
- Illness
- Absenteeism
- Depression & anxiety
- Thoughts of suicide

Lasting Effects

- Lower self-esteem
- Higher rates of depression
- Suicide

Victim Characteristics:

- Anxious, insecure, cautious, low self-esteem, fearful…
- Lack of social skills and friends, socially isolated…
- Parents become overprotective
  - "Victims often fear school and consider school to be an unhappy place. As many as 7% of America's 8th graders stay home once a month because of bullies"

Behaviors that bring on more bullying:

- Acquiescing to demands
- Crying and defensive postures
- Handing over possessions
- Rewarding attackers psychologically and materially
- Bullies are rarely punished by retaliation, only reinforced with more power

School as seen through the eyes of a victim

Effects on Bystanders

- Feel afraid

- Feel powerless to change things

⌘ Feel guilty

⌘ Feel diminished empathy for victims

Reporting of Victimization

- Many children do not report bullying to school staff

- Older students and boys are less likely than younger students and girls to report their victimization.

Kids Who Observe

What do you usually do when you see a student being bullied?

- **38%** Nothing, because it's none of my business

- **27%** I don't do anything, but I think I should help

- **35%** I try to help him or her

What happens to the bullies if we don't intervene?

- Increased criminal behavior

- Incarceration

What happens to the bystanders?

☞ Anxiety and guilt for not taking action

☞ Lowered self-respect and self confidence

Prevalence of Bullying

(National Institute of Child Health and Human Development)

- National sample of 15,686 students, grade 6-10
- 30% of students reported being bullied or targeted by a bully
- 19% reported bullying others "sometimes" or more often;
- 17% reported being bullied "sometimes" or more often; and
- 6.3% reported bullying and being bullied. *(Nansel et al. 2001)*

Why Do We Care?

- 160,000 students skip school each day due to fear of bullies (National Association of School Psychologists in Bethesda)

- 75% of students are victimized by bullies during their school career (National Crime Prevention Council)

- In more than 2/3 of the school shootings, the attackers felt "persecuted, bullied, threatened, or attacked

- By age 24, 60% of former bullies have been convicted of a crime

Bullies Can Change

- **Bullying behaviors and victimization experiences are relatively stable over time if there is no intervention.**

- BUT, appropriate intervention can change behaviors.

BULLY-PROOFING YOUR SCHOOL

The Purpose of Bully-Proofing

- Safe, respect, cooperative schools
- Higher incidence of academic/social learning and teaching
- Improve teacher moral, sense of self effectiveness and empowerment
- System-wide message about intolerance for bullying
- Change balance of power so the silent majority becomes an empowered caring majority
- ALL students have an opportunity to experience power, control, attention, popularity, value and influence in ways that enhance academic/social learning and teaching

How to begin an anti-bullying program… The Action Steps

- Promote facts not myths about bullying

- Dispel beliefs about aggressive behavior

- Conduct a school-wide assessment of bullying

- Develop a student code of conduct

- Provide individual counseling, social skills development and conflict resolution activities

- Involve parents in the intervention process

- Implement intervention strategies specific to aggressive children

- Implement interventions with the peer group

- Build in accountability and evaluation

Prevention/Intervention

- School-level intervention: questionnaires, committees, in-service, supervision, school-wide rules, parent involvement
- Classroom Activities: meetings, lessons
- Individual Interventions: immediate consequences, friendship groups, counseling, parent involvement
- Community Activities: residential awareness, engagement of community members, in-service from Police Departments

Olweus Bully Prevention Program

- Core Program
  - Understanding and Involvement of Adults
    - Anonymous survey among students
    - Findings presented at a school assembly
    - Parents made aware of findings
  - Questionnaire should include:
    - Definition of bullying
    - Specific time period
    - Response alternatives (several times per week)
  - Better supervision (especially during unstructured times)

Cont.

- Class rules against bullying
  - What does bullying look like
  - What is not acceptable behavior
  - Sanctions for such behavior
- Class meetings
- Talks with victims and their parents
  - Agreements between school and home
- Help teachers develop creative solutions

Goals of Olweus Program

- Focuses on changing norms and behavior
- Implemented at three levels:
  - School-wide prevention
  - Classroom interventions
  - Individual interventions
- Reduction of bullying, prevention of bullying, improvement of peer relations

Implementation of Program

- Designate a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee
  - Administrator, teachers, counselor, psychologist, non-teaching staff
- Designate a chair and co-chair
- Schedule a two day training for committee
- Commit to monthly meetings
- Order all required materials and supplies

Cont.

- Schedule 4 – 6 hours of training for school staff after committee training
- Annually administer the questionnaire
- Enter data into computer
- Conduct weekly classroom meetings
- Ensure for consistent staff discussions led by members of the committee
- Establish school-wide rules against bullying with positive and negative consequences
- Work to actively engage parents.