



BULLYING

**A BIG PROBLEM WITH
BIG CONSEQUENCES**



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Welcome and Introductions (10 minutes)

Begin by introducing yourself as the facilitator and welcoming the group. Invite participants to introduce themselves by their first names. In addition, ask them to give the age and gender of their teen children. Go over the shared responsibilities outlined in "Setting the Stage for Your Workshop."

OBJECTIVES

To help parents:

- Understand how to identify bullying behavior, both face-to-face and online
- Understand reasons these behaviors occur
- Develop strategies to help teens handle bullying behavior in themselves or others – as a victim or a bystander
- Learn steps to take whether their teen is bullying others, being bullied, or is a bystander



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Review Objectives (3 minute)

Provide a general description of the lesson and review the lesson objectives. At the conclusion of this lesson, participants will:

- Understand how to identify a wide range of bullying behavior, whether it occurs in person or online (cyberbullying).
- Understand reasons bullying behavior occurs.
- Develop strategies to help teens avoid being victimized by bullying behavior, recognize and stop their own bullying behavior, or handle being a bystander when others bully.

Start the lesson by discussing the following ideas:

Traditionally, bullying was dismissed as a normal part of growing up. In recent years, however, awareness of the devastating effects of bullying and its connection to other forms of violence has grown. To help teens deal with bullying, we need to understand what constitutes bullying behaviors and the reasons behind them. Once we understand these things, we can develop strategies for teaching our children how to effectively handle bullying behavior.

Note: Be aware that bullying can be a sensitive subject for those who have been victimized by bullies and discussion might prompt emotional responses from some participants. In addition to demonstrating sympathy and understanding, having a list of counselors or other resources available for participants who need it may be helpful.

DISCUSSION

Write down your definition of bullying.



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Distribute a blank note card to each participant. Ask each participant to write down his or her definition of bullying on one side of the card. Invite participants to share their responses with the group if they choose.

BULLYING DEFINITION

Experts define bullying as behavior that is:

- Physically or emotionally harmful
- Directed at people deemed less powerful
- Perpetrated by a person or group repeatedly over time



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Define bullying: any harmful behavior perpetrated by a person or a group repeatedly over time on a less powerful person as a target or victim (Nansel et al., 2001).

Ask participants to think about bullying behavior they saw or experienced when they were growing up. Invite participants to form small groups of two or three and discuss the following questions:

- What were your experiences with bullying when you were young?
- When it comes bullying, how do you think things are different today for your children compared to when you were young?
- What lessons have you learned about bullying during your adult life – at work, at home, as a parent?

After the small group discussions, ask the entire group for examples of bullying behavior in their teens' lives – at school, in the community, etc.

DIRECT AGGRESSION

- Occurs face to face
 - For example, physical violence or name calling
- Is more common among boys than girls



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Describe direct bullying (such as physical violence or name calling) and give examples.

INDIRECT AGGRESSION

- Also called relational aggression
- Designed to hurt others by damaging their peer relationships (e.g., social exclusion)
- More common among girls, but girls often do not regard social exclusion as bullying



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Describe indirect bullying (such as malicious gossip, online rumors or social exclusion) and give examples.

Instruct parents that boys tend to engage in direct bullying, while girls tend to engage in indirect bullying but may not recognize it as bullying.

Invite the full group to rejoin their small groups to discuss some conditions in which direct bullying might occur and conditions in which indirect bullying might occur. Ask each small group to share what they discussed with the large group, if time permits.

BULLYING IS MISUNDERSTOOD

When we say things like, “Boys will be boys,” or “Bullying is just part of growing up” what messages are we giving our children?



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Conduct a short discussion on the "three B's" of bullying based on the following ideas:

Bullying behavior is frequently misunderstood. We've all heard people say things like: “Boys will be boys”, “She's just a Queen Bee”, “Middle School kids are mean. Everyone knows that. So what?” or “Kids need to learn to roll with the punches!”

Ask participants to discuss what harmful messages each of these sayings communicate to our children.

THREE B'S OF BULLYING

- Bully
- Bullied
- Bystander



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Discuss three types of individuals involved in bullying: the bully, the bullied (the victim), and the bystander or the “three B’s.” Ask participants to name some characteristics of a bully, a victim (the bullied), and a bystander. List answers on a flipchart or whiteboard under each heading.

Distribute the handout “Teen Talk: Bullying, a Big Problem with Big Consequences” and review the information.

THOSE WHO BULLY

Tend to be:

- Aggressive, hostile and domineering toward peers
- Stronger than victims, and view aggression positively and peers negatively
- Considered popular, generally, with other kids
- Low scoring on measures of acceptable behavior and cooperation
- Impulsive and lacking in self-control



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Discuss:

- The characteristics and warning signs for bullies.

THOSE WHO ARE BULLIED

Tend to be:

- More anxious, insecure, cautious, sensitive, and quiet than their peers
- What others call “loners”
- Prone to feelings of abandonment



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Discuss:

- The characteristics and warning signs for victims.

BYSTANDERS

Bystanders are the
“supporting cast.”



They don't initiate the bullying, but they either join in or simply stand by and let it happen.



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Discuss:

- The definition and characteristics of bystanders.

FREQUENCY

- Nearly 32% of U.S. teens are involved in bullying, either as victims, perpetrators, or both.
- 11 million students in the U.S. report being involved with bullying.
- 13% of 6th -10th graders report bullying others, and 11% report being the target of bullies.
- 37% of middle school students report someone being mean to them online (cyberbullying).



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Frequency of Bullying (2 minutes)

Discuss the frequency of bullying behavior on the referenced slide and some of the statistics listed in the “Teen Talk” handout or the “Research Overview for Facilitators.” Ask participants if they are surprised at how common bullying is. Also ask what types of bullying they see most frequently.

CYBERBULLYING DEFINITION

- Bullying behavior exhibited online through such media as:
 - Social networking sites or other websites
 - Email
 - Instant messaging
 - Text messages or images on cell phones
- 70% of cyberbullying occurs while kids are home.



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Cyberbullying (5 minutes)

Discuss cyberbullying, referring to points on the slide or using the handout "Steps for Dealing with Cyberbullying." You may want to show some video clips about cyberbullying listed on the "Media Resources for Facilitators" sheet. One clip uses the metaphor of a virus to dramatize cyberbullying, another portrays an experience of cyberbullying, and another shows teens reacting to a father's extreme discipline tactics.

PARENTAL CHARACTERISTICS RELATED TO BULLYING BEHAVIOR

- Generally negative attitude
- Tolerance, or even approval, of aggressive behavior
- Use of “power-assertive” parenting methods, such as physical punishment



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Parental Characteristics Related to Bullying Behavior (Optional, 7 minutes)

If time permits, discuss the following ideas to give participants background on parental characteristics that may foster bullying behavior in children.

Bullying behavior is often related to three parental characteristics:

- A negative emotional attitude such as lack of warmth and involvement;
- Permissiveness toward aggressive childhood behavior;
- The use of “power-assertive” parenting methods, such as physical punishment.

Parents who use inconsistent and highly punishing discipline techniques are more likely to have aggressive children. These children report more troubled, less loving relationships with their parents. Aggressive children also say their parents either protect them too much or neglect them. Highly punishing discipline and lack of warmth are characteristic of an *authoritarian* parenting style, also called a dominating or “brick wall” parenting style. Children of these types of parents are most likely to become bullies.

Conversely, a more *authoritative* parenting style is marked by consistent, fair discipline techniques, vigilant monitoring of children’s activities (but not over-protection), and high levels of warmth and support. Children of authoritative parents tend to have the best outcomes.

Developmentally, teens may be susceptible to bullying behaviors for several reasons:

- Teens can be egocentric and may see themselves as being in the spotlight. In other words, they worry that others are noticing everything about them.
- Teens are seeking to define their identity; they may critique peers who do not fit with their “crowd” to help themselves fit in.
- Although teens are developing cognitive skills, teens may not fully think through the dangers and implications of their actions when they are with a group of peers.

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

- Listen to and acknowledge children's feelings
- Identify alternative responses and discuss possible consequences of each
- Use conflict resolution and communication skills to stop bullying; involve both those who bully and victims in interventions
- Closely monitor children's online activity for cyberbullying
- Report bullying incidents to school authorities



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Parental Actions to Prevent Bullying Behavior (7 minutes)

Discuss actions parents can take to prevent or stop bullying. Ask participants to write some thoughts on the back of their note cards and invite them to share some ideas with the group. Reinforce the following points, using information from "Research Overview for Facilitators" and the slide:

- Listen to and acknowledge your children's feelings about bullying incidents.
- Ask your teen to brainstorm ideas for effectively dealing with bullies. Review alternative ways to respond and possible consequences of retaliation.
- Use conflict resolution and communication skills to stop bullying. Remember to involve both parties in actions (interventions) to stop bullying; interventions that ignore the relationship between those who bully and the victims are less effective than those that involve both parties. Intervention works best at an early stage to prevent bullying rather than once it's become a serious problem.
- Attempt to understand the motivations of perpetrators when helping your children deal with teasing and bullying.
- Be aware of the warning signs that your child is being bullied or that your child is bullying others (see "Teen Talk" handout).
- Monitor your child's online activity in order to detect any cyberbullying.
- Report bullying incidents to school authorities and keep written record of circumstances, such as physical injuries, and who you reported the incidents to.

Discussion hint: You may want to show some video clips listed on "Media Resources for Facilitators" to illustrate different strategies for intervening when bullying occurs. Also refer parents to "Video Resources for Parents and Teens" for a list of videos they can watch at home.

If time permits, discuss some issues from the "Research Overview for Facilitators" background report, including:

- Influence of school environments on bullying;
- Importance of parental monitoring of teens' activities, with an eye toward preventing or stopping bullying;
- Implications of Minnesota laws and policies on bullying;
- Importance of parents' modeling respectful behavior to their teens;
- Awareness of their teen's school policy on bullying.

ACTIVITY: BULLYING SCENARIOS

- Choose a scenario from the discussion guide that is typical at your local school or in your community
- Read the scenario and brainstorm strategies for dealing with it
- Discuss ideas for stopping bullying - consider what a victim, bystander, and parent can do



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Activity (15 minutes - Optional)

Conduct one of the two primary activities with your group: 1) discussion of bullying scenarios, or 2) cyberbullying role play. Again, be aware that some participants may become emotional or distressed when discussing their children's bullying experiences.

Activity 1: Bullying Scenarios

Use "**Bullying Experiences: An In-Class Discussion Guide**" to conduct this activity. Also refer to the facilitator overview for more information to aid in discussions.

If your class has fewer than six participants, conduct this activity with the entire group. If your class has six or more participants, conduct the activity with small groups of 3-4 people. Each group should choose a scenario from the discussion guide that members think is typical at their local schools or community.

Someone from the entire class or from each small group should read a scenario, and then participants should brainstorm alternative strategies and action steps for dealing with that scenario.

Encourage participants to use real-life examples in their discussions. Ask participants to indicate whether the scenario describes direct or indirect bullying.

Ask participants to discuss ideas for stopping bullying behavior and defusing emotional situations. They should consider the issue from three points of view: what a victim can do, what a bystander can do, and what a parent can do.

Give each group 10 minutes to discuss and list ideas as a group; have small groups report back to the entire group.

Discuss the pros and cons of each solution. Remember, there is no one correct answer. **Note:** As the facilitator, be prepared to advocate for kinder, non-violent solutions if participants suggest violent or aggressive responses to bullying.

ACTIVITY: CYBERBULLYING ROLE PLAY

- Choose one scenario to enact in a role play
- Then discuss:
 - The pros and cons of each approach
 - Based on the parental response, will the teen depicted likely tell their parents the next time they encounter cyberbullying?



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Activity (15 minutes - Optional)

Conduct one of the two primary activities with your group: 1) discussion of bullying scenarios, or 2) cyberbullying role play. Again, be aware that some participants may become emotional or distressed when discussing their children's bullying experiences.

Activity 2: Cyberbullying Role Play

Use the "Talking with Kids About Cyberbullying: An In-Class Role Play Guide" to conduct this activity. After the activity, distribute the "Steps for Dealing with Cyberbullying" handout to participants. Be aware of local experiences with bullying and be sensitive in choosing scenarios to discuss.

If your class has fewer than six participants, conduct this activity with the entire group. If your class has six or more participants, divide the class into groups of 3-4 people to act out the parental responses before their group.

Choose one of the scenarios for participants to enact in the role play. (One scenario depicts a victim's experience; the other depicts a teen in a potential act of bullying.)

After participants complete the role plays, lead a discussion with the entire class about the pros and cons — the challenges and opportunities — of the approaches reflected in the parental responses. A key question to ask about each approach is: "Based on the parental response, will the teen depicted likely tell their parents the next time they encounter cyberbullying?" Also ask participants to discuss future implications of each response on parent-teen communication.

If time permits, show video #3 listed under "Video clips on cyberbullying" on the "Media Resources for Facilitators" sheet and lead a discussion on the line between a funny YouTube clip and cyberbullying. You may also show video #4 under "Video clips on cyberbullying" and discuss methods for monitoring teens' online activities.

HOMEWORK

Talk with your teen at home about what you have learned using the following handouts:

- Bullying Experiences: A Discussion Guide Including Teens.
- Steps for Dealing with Cyberbullying.



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Homework (5 minutes)

Give participants ideas for discussion at home, using the "Bullying Experiences: A Discussion Guide Including Teens" and "Steps for Dealing with Cyberbullying" handouts. Direct parents to ask teens for ideas on how they would react to each situation — as a bully, as a victim, and as a bystander.

CONCLUSION

As a parent, you can make a critical difference in how your adolescent handles bullying.



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Closing (5 minutes)

Close the discussion by noting that youth may shift from being bullies, victims and bystanders as they grow older. Discuss the role of adults in helping children avoid dominating others, being dominated by others, or acting as a passive bystander to bullying.

Distribute the “Resources for Parents and Teens” and the “Video Resources for Parents and Teens” handouts to parents for more information on help their teens effectively deal with bullying.

EVALUATION AND WRAP-UP

Please complete the evaluation before you go:

- Survey is anonymous
- Feedback will help improve future classes

Thank you for participating and completing the evaluation!



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Conduct Evaluation (5 minutes) and Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Distribute evaluation forms and administer the evaluation.

Please take a few minutes to complete the evaluation form. This is an anonymous survey. That means all responses will be summarized, your name will NOT be shared with anyone. Your feedback will help me improve my teaching, and it will help Extension staff improve lesson content and activities.

Collect the evaluation forms, and thank participants for taking the time to fill them out. Announce future sessions and topics if applicable. (Make copies of the evaluation forms after class for your own use before turning them into Minnesota Extension.)



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Find more information on parenting on the University of Minnesota Extension website at www.extension.umn.edu.

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