

EDUCATION INTERVENTION PREVENTION

Robin D'Antona, Ed.D. is an educational consultant and Adjunct Professor at Nova Southeastern University. She is author of:

- 101 Facts About Bullying: What Everyone Should Know (2008 Rowman & Littlefield Publishers)
- The Comfort Zone: Providing a Safe and Bully Free Environment for School Age Childcare (2008 - Bryson-Taylor Publishers).
- Tackling Bullying in Athletics (2010 Rowman & Littlefield Publishers)

Robin is a founding Board Member of the *International Bullying Prevention Association, Inc.* She is a Certified National Olweus Bullying Prevention Trainer and works with school districts, after school programs and other groups training parents, teachers, coaches and practitioners about bullying prevention. Robin frequently presents at conferences on a variety of topics related to school safety.

Dr. D'Antona offers bullying prevention programs to meet a variety of school and community needs including:

- **Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP)** the most researched and best known bullying prevention program available today
- **No Bully Zone™** half-day seminar tailored to meet the specific needs of individual teachers, coaches and school staff in the prevention, intervention and evaluation of bullying issues
- **Bullying Awareness Workshops** for parents, educators and coaches to help communities understand the effect of bullying and what they can do to stop it
- **Consulting** to communities, school systems and schools to assess bullying prevention needs

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Protecting Your Child From BULLYING

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Facts about Bullying Behavior

- **Bullying behavior** is when one or more persons repeatedly and on purpose says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending him/herself.
- Think **RIP** – Bullying is **Repeated**, **Intentional** and there is always an imbalance of **Power**.
- **Cyberbullying** is bullying through email, instant messaging, in a chat room, through social networking, on a website, or through digital messages or images sent to a cell phone. It is different from traditional bullying because of anonymity, accessibility and lack of understanding of the impact of the behavior on the victim.
- “*Kids will be kids*” – Bullying is a social issue rather than a moral or intellectual problem. Bullying has been an accepted behavior that is often dismissed simply as a part of growing up.
- Bullying behavior causes isolation of the student that can lead to depression, school phobia and in some instances, suicide.
- Bullying behavior is a prelude to other forms of violence whereby the juvenile is either the offender or the victim in violent crimes rooted in verbal harassment and physical aggression (Olweus, 1998).
- **Bullying behavior as peer abuse!**

The Child Who Bullies Others

- The stereotypical bully is one who picks on a person regarded as different or weak. They are feared by their classmates. They travel in groups and are most often looked upon as the leader. However, most bullies do not fit this profile.
In fact, research shows that bullies have strong self-esteem with a positive attitude toward violence. They lack empathy for their victims
- Boys tend to be more direct and physical with their bullying behaviors. Girls tend to be more indirect and use relational tactics for bullying. However, it is important to note that neither gender behaves exclusively in one manner or another.

The Child Who is Targeted

- Typically the target is someone who is viewed as different, as being unusual weak or different either physically or emotionally. But victimization can also be situational, occurring at any time to anyone due to changing social circumstances. The most unlikely student can be a target because of circumstances and an imbalance of power.
- **Any student can be a target of bullying. The common stereotype is not a predictor of who is vulnerable to become a target.**

The Bystander

The bystander is the key to stopping and eliminating bullying behavior. A person who would not ordinarily attack another person could be caught up in the behavior and participate by encouraging the bullying or by allowing it to continue by ignoring it. Bullying decreases when bystanders have empathy for the target and know how to appropriately respond to this destructive behavior. We want to encourage students to be proactive and protect their peers by getting involved or asking an adult for help.

Talk to your child

- Teach your child about bullying/cyberbullying. Point out bully/cyberbullying situations to him/her as they arise and make suggestions about the most appropriate ways to address the issue.
- Tell your child that the best way to deal with a bullying behavior is with adult intervention, so it is important for you to take complaints of bullying incidents seriously.
- Remind your child that he/she can be a participant in a bullying incident by watching and not helping. Help your child understand that by simply being present they are part of the bullying incident. He/she has a responsibility to reject bullying behavior and to focus on helping out the person who is being bullied. The best defense against bullying is a proactive bystander. This means to step-up and speak up!
- Remind your child that this behavior is unacceptable in any form and he/she does not have to tolerate it. Your job is to protect him/her and to make certain there is no retaliation.

Empower your child to...

- **Stay with their friends since there is strength in numbers.**
- **Tell those who are bullying to leave you alone – only if it is safe -- then walk away to prevent things from escalating.**
- **Protect their friends! Bystanders who help their friends by speaking up or getting assistance from an adult are the best tool for eliminating bullying.**
- **If the bullying is online – don't reply & save the evidence**
- **Join new groups or clubs to make new friends.**
- **MOST IMPORTANTLY – TELL AN ADULT – IMMEDIATELY!**