

## The ABCs of Bullying: Addressing, Blocking, and Curbing School Aggression

### Fact Sheet: Prevention and Intervention—Students

#### What Students Can Do

Students play a very important role in helping a school eradicate bullying. Students may not know what to do if they witness a bullying incident or become the target of bullying themselves. Students can, however, do the following:

- Seek immediate help from an adult. If adults do not hear about the incidents, they cannot disrupt and stop the behavior.
- Report bullying/victimization incidents to school personnel.
- Speak up and/or offer support to the victim.
- Participate in the development of school safety planning through committees and organizations.
- Encourage their parents to become involved in school activities.
- Become a buddy for a younger or quieter student.

#### What Students Who Are Victims Can Do

It is important that students learn appropriate tools to address bullying. Any adult, including teachers, school counselors, and parents, can help provide students with the skills necessary to deal with bullying. Students can be taught to respond as follows:

- Ignore the bully's behavior whenever possible.
- Use social skills, such as assertiveness, negotiating, sharing, taking turns, inviting others to participate, assisting others, and asking for permission instead of using aggression and intimidation (when the victim is also a bully).
- Leave the situation.
- Rebuff in a firm manner.
- Protect themselves emotionally and physically (without using retaliation).
- Request that the bully stop, and then walk away (if this fails, then tell the teacher).
- Use humor.
- Agree with the bully to take his or her power away (e.g., a child called "four eyes" could respond "Yes, I guess it might look like I have four eyes with my glasses on").
- Spend time in groups.
- Practice what to say in front of a mirror or with friends (role playing).

#### What Students Who Are Victims Should Resist Doing

Children who are victims can be taught to **resist** the following actions:

- Cry or act hurt **in front** of the bully, which gives the bully the satisfaction of upsetting his or her victim.
- Lose their temper.
- Escalate the situation.

- Return the aggression.
- Encourage others to gang up on the bully.
- Tease back.
- Call the bully names.
- Bring weapons to school.

### **What Witnesses and Bystanders Can Do**

Witnesses and bystanders can play a large role in stopping bullying at school. They can be taught to react in the following ways:

- Request that the bully stop.
- Seek immediate adult help if the bully does not stop.
- Speak up and/or offer support to the victim (e.g., pick up his or her books, offer kind words).
- Privately support those being hurt with kind words.
- Take the bully aside and ask him or her to “cool it.”
- Disapprove of the bullying behavior by not joining in the laughter, teasing, or spreading rumors or gossip.

### **References**

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