

**Leader Guide - Bullying is Psychological**

**Video #1:** Show Day 1 Video Clip, “Bullying is Psychological” and ask students to fill in the blanks on their student guide while watching the video.

*“When people don't like themselves very much, they have to make up for it. The classic bully was actually a victim first.” - Tom Hiddleston*

We want to see a CHANGE in the trend of students bullying one another. A leading expert in the area of change, John Kotter (1995), explains that in order to see authentic change a frank discussion has to be held about the real issues driving the problem. In this case, the problem is that students are literally killing themselves due to constant bullying, so much so that we had to create a word for it, Bullycide. In addition to being taught math, history and science, students need proper training on how to deal with real life social issues, especially bullying. Kotter also explains that individuals impacted need to have buy-in on the solution to overcome the problem (1995). Today’s session gives you an opportunity to invite students to share openly about your school’s climate as it relates to bullying.

What we don’t want…some bullying prevention programs have actually had the opposite effect than intended when “bullies” are singled out and put into groups to improve behavior. The result was that the group of bullies taught one another new bullying techniques and the problem worsened (Dishion, McCord, & Poulin, 1999). Sometimes by using language like “anti-bully” or “bully-free,” the unintended effect can be that bullies feel bullied by the adults in their lives. It is like saying, “if you are a bully, *you* do not belong here” when the true goal of the program is to say, “if you are a bully, you belong here but your bullying behavior does not.”

Reminders for Leaders

* **Bullying Programs-** Your students have been taught all kinds of ways to handle bullies at school. Truth is, every situation is different but we can still give students tools that they can apply in their lives. .
* **Focus**- The key is to help students focus on how bullying can impact the way they think.
* **Proactive Approach**- It’s helpful for students to find an adult that they trust even if they aren’t being bullied at school.
* **Angles**- When we understand that some bullies are acting out their hurt we can then *attack the problem, not the person*. A person who is hurting needs attention.

We want to express acceptance to each of our students but place appropriate boundaries to aid students in understanding what behavior will be accepted and/or rejected in the school’s climate.

Adults know that teenagers will do everything they can to push the boundaries that are set upon them. It’s their tendency to push the boundaries. The job of adults is to hold the boundaries and reinforce consequences for going outside the boundaries.

You cannot put prevention in a box; it must be tackled from many angles.

Joint studies done by the Department of Education and the FBI show a link between bullies and many school shooters. In fact, the Secret Service study found that **71 percent of shooters had been bullied, threatened, attacked or injured.**

Hurt people hurt people

When someone has been hurt, it’s highly likely that they may hurt another person in the same way, it’s not 100%, but if it’s their norm, it’s all they know. Some students have only learned how to resolve conflict through physical or emotional pain.

Students emulate what they see from others or what they receive themselves. People could be hurt an hour ago, yesterday or a year ago. If they haven’t talked their issues out, then they start to act out.   
  
**“What students don’t talk out, they act out.”** –Josh Shipp

Our brains are not fixed; they are highly adaptable and can learn new tricks.

Healthy Habits

The brain is not a muscle, but you can create some healthy habits that can help cope with pain that is associated with being bullied.

A healthy practice to implement is to vent. Venting is releasing or transferring your emotions through words. Other examples that do not include talking: sports, drawing, painting, writing.

Here are some conversation statements to help start the venting process with someone you trust.

When he/she said \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I felt \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.   
Whenever he/she makes fun of me, I feel like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (giving up, going home, skipping school, hitting him/her).

**5 (keys) To dealing with bullies through venting**

1. Analyze - Don’t react right away (take time to analyze your current situation)
2. Assume  the best (Did they misinterpret what I said or did?)
3. Don’t take it personal (What’s wrong with me, instead, they must be going through some hard stuff, ex. iceberg)
4. Act Upon Your Feelings - Don’t bottle up your feelings, find a release (art, journal, sports)
5. Don’t talk to everyone about issue. Pick an individual you trust.   
     
   Say what you need to say. This way, you’re not trying to get affirmation from everyone you talk to. This can lead to feeling the pain over and over again, which is contrary to what venting is, which is releasing emotions.

These steps will help students cope with the emotions that can derive from being bullied.

**Discussion questions:** Did you learn a new phrase or action about bullying in this video?

How can you use what you learned today at school?

**Action:** Ask students to share one item that really stood out to them from the video with their parent or guardian this evening.

Reemphasize how important it is for students to speak with an adult that they trust about issues they face at school.

**References**

Kotter, J. P. (1995). Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail. Harvard Business Review, 73(2), 59-67.

Paynes, R. (2003). A framework for understanding poverty. Highlands, TX: Aha process, Inc.

Ross, S. W. & Homer, R. H. (2009). Bully prevention in positive behavior support. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 42*(4), 747-759.