

Bullying:

Prevention and Intervention

Tips for Scout Leaders and Parents



Why Talk About Bullying?

Bullying

- Is encountered by the majority of students.
- Can cause serious harm to its victims.
- Has been associated with victims' acts of extreme violence against themselves and others in recent years.
- Can be stopped.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is any behavior that is

- Deliberate and hurtful
- Repeated over time
- Characterized by a relationship involving an imbalance of power, such as size or popularity

Bullying can

- Be physical, verbal, emotional, social, behavioral, or any combination.
- Occur on the bus, at school, at after-school activities, and even online via the Internet.

Examples of Bullying

- Hitting or kicking
- Stealing or damaging belongings
- Menacing gestures or facial expressions
- Repeated name-calling
- Teasing and taunting
- Spreading rumors
- Coercion
- Intentional exclusion from the group
- Cyberbullying

What is the difference between bullying and good-natured joking?

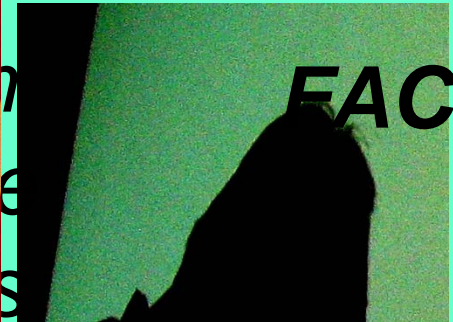
Bullying

- Is intentionally hurtful.
- Happens repeatedly.
- Involves an imbalance of power, real or perceived, between the bully and the victim.

Beliefs About Bullying: Fact or Myth?



MYTH



*When adults intervene in bullying
it makes matters worse.*



How can Scout leaders assist victims of bullying?



How can Scout leaders assist victims of bullying?

1. Take victims of bullying seriously.

- They may be very upset and not show it.
- Talk privately so they feel safe, while observing Youth Protection standards, and let them know it's not their fault.
- Bullying situations are not appropriate for mediation sessions, where youth work things out themselves.
- Interview bystanders if the bullying happened during a Scouting activity.

How can Scout leaders assist victims of bullying?

2. Help victims of bullying communicate with others and seek additional help.

- Encourage them to talk to their parents, and offer to help them do this if they want you to.
- Be aware that some youth may not believe their parents will be sympathetic. Some aggressive parenting styles could be seen as bullying as well.
- ***If a young person confides in you, and you believe he is in danger from others, or is contemplating hurting himself or others, take immediate steps to get him help, in accordance with Youth Protection policies.***

How can Scout leaders assist victims of bullying?

3. Help victims develop coping strategies, *but be sure they know it is not their fault for being bullied, even if these don't work:*
 - Use the *buddy system*.
 - If bullied with insults, ignore them, tell them to stop, or use humor. Then walk away.
 - If in danger of physical assault, call for help, get away, tell an adult. Don't make threats or fight back.
 - Be alert and remember details.

How can Scout leaders assist victims of bullying?

4. Recognize some of the red flags that a Scout may be a victim of bullying:

- Frequent absences
- Avoidance of peers
- Nervousness
- Unexplained anger and resentment
- Feeling sick to avoid things
- Avoidance of group restrooms
- Cuts and bruises

How can Scout leaders and parents redirect Scouts who bully others?



How can Scout leaders and parents redirect Scouts who bully others?

1. Stop bullying immediately.

- Intervene immediately so that it does not escalate.
- Identify specific behavior you observed, and emphasize that the bullying behavior is unacceptable.
- Make it clear that you will address the issue further in private, to allow those who bullied to save face and to increase the chances that they will be receptive to your redirection.

How can Scout leaders and parents redirect Scouts who bully others?

2. Hold Scouts who have bullied others accountable for their actions.

- Stress that the behavior is not acceptable, and that they are fully responsible for their choices.
- Calmly impose consequences for bullying behavior, while communicating that you value the Scouts, but they must stop behaving aggressively.
- Encourage apologies, but do not set up a mediation session as this could be intimidating for victims.
- Be alert for the Scout who stops bullying when adults are around, then continues bullying when alone with victims.

How can Scout leaders and parents redirect Scouts who bully others?

3. Avoid labeling *bullies*

- when addressing Scouts who have engaged in bullying behaviors directly and
- when referring to them while speaking to their parents and others.
- Talk about the specific unacceptable behaviors instead.

How can Scout leaders and parents redirect Scouts who bully others?

4. Notice appropriate behavior.

- Youth who are trying to change for the better often continue to receive feedback only about their negative behavior.
- Sandwich feedback about how to improve between genuinely positive comments.
- Don't be tempted to negate compliments by saying, "Why can't you always behave this way?"

How can Scout leaders and parents redirect Scouts who bully others?

5. Help the Scouts discover *replacement behaviors* to engage in instead of bullying.

- Give the Scouts leadership roles, and provide immediate feedback about what they do well.
- Tell the Scouts what you want them to do, not what you don't want.
- Encourage the Scouts to use their influence in positive ways.

How can Scout leaders and parents redirect Scouts who bully others?

6. Help Scouts who bully develop empathy.

- Encourage participation in service activities that foster empathy for people who are different from them.
- Discuss the feelings of characters being bullied in movie clips.

How can Scout leaders create an antibullying culture in their units?



How can Scout leaders create an antibullying culture in their units?

1. Be a role model.

- Remind adults in the unit that Scouts may model them when they gossip, ridicule, or use physical, verbal, or passive aggression to solve problems.
- Remind yourself that Scouts are watching and modeling you as well.

How can Scout leaders create an antibullying culture in their units?

2. If you see any bullying, stop it right away.

Bullying relationships are often maintained by a lack of action on the part of authority figures and bystanders.

How can Scout leaders create an antibullying culture in their units?

3. If you suspect bullying is happening

- Talk individually with Scouts to gain more information.
- **Provide a constant adult presence** while continuing to allow the troop to be boy-led.

How can Scout leaders create an antibullying culture in their units?

- 4. Establish an open-door policy** for Scouts to discuss incidents of bullying that they have experienced or witnessed.

How can Scout leaders create an antibullying culture in their units?

5. Talk to the bystanders individually.

- If they did not help the victim, help them recognize what they could do if it happens again, *emphasizing that they should go for help if they do not feel safe intervening directly.*
- If they tried to help, let them know you admire their efforts, even if they were not completely successful.
- Be even-handed in your investigation.

How can Scout leaders create an antibullying culture in their units?

6. Facilitate a discussion with the patrol leaders' council, and then with the troop.

- Review kinds of bullying and how Scouts may be impacted.
- Ask for volunteers from the PLC to share their insights about bullying in Scouting and in other settings.
- Review what Scouts should do if they are being bullied, if they see others being bullied, or if they realize that they are bullying others. Talk about how to stand up for victims of bullying when they are a bystander.

How can Scout leaders create an antibullying culture in their units?

6. Facilitate a discussion with the patrol leaders' council, and then with the troop.

- Talk to patrol leaders about protecting their patrol members by setting an example and by recognizing bullying early. Encourage them to ask for support from the SPL and Scoutmaster.
- Ask the PLC to brainstorm ways to communicate to the troop that bullying is unacceptable and how to stand up for Scouts being bullied.
- Encourage the PLC and the troop to make a promise to stand with anyone they see being harassed or bullied.

How can Scout leaders create an antibullying culture in their units?

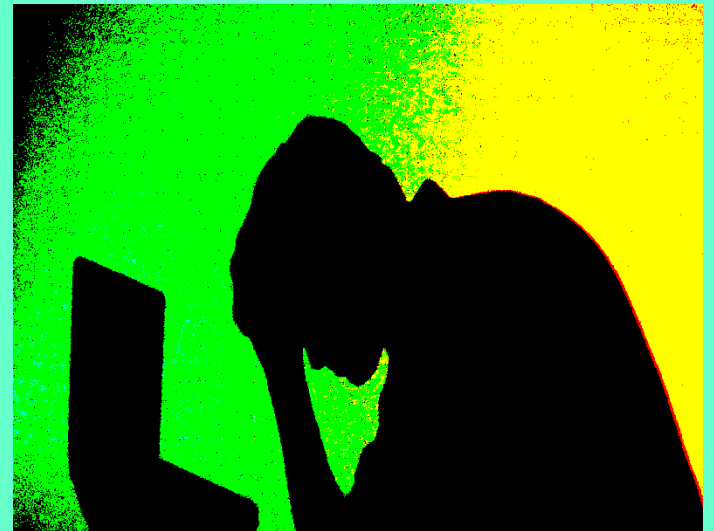
6. Facilitate a discussion with the patrol leaders' council, and then with the troop.

- Emphasize key elements of the Scout Oath and Law.
- Make it clear that Scouts are expected to take action if they see someone being bullied or hurt. *Tell them to go for help if they do not feel safe stepping in directly.*
- Empower Scouts to step in to help when others are being bullied by:
 - Being a friend.
 - Speaking up; this tells those bullying that their actions are unacceptable and gives others the courage to join you.
 - Getting an adult, or going with the victim to speak to an adult.

What Is Cyberbullying?



Cyberbullying is the use of electronic communications such as the Internet to harass, threaten, and harm others.



What tactics are used by those who cyberbully?

- “Dissing” or “Flaming” – spreading damaging gossip
- Harassment – repeatedly sending or forwarding hateful messages; posting pictures of victims without their consent
- Impersonation – Pretending to be someone else online and posting damaging information, or tricking someone else into revealing personal information

What misconceptions do those engaging in cyberbullying often have?

- Cyberbullying is not a big deal; no one really gets hurt.
- My friends think it's funny, so it's OK.
- There's no way I can get caught.

What can Scouts do to prevent cyberbullying?

- If you wouldn't say it in person, don't say it online. Be kind online.
- Refuse to forward cyberbullying messages; delete them instead.
- Tell friends to stop cyberbullying.
- Block communication with those who cyberbully.
- Stay away from sites that tolerate and encourage bullying.
- Report cyberbullying to a trusted adult.

What should Scouts do if they are victims of cyberbullying?

- Never try to seek revenge.
- Calmly ask for the cyberbullying to stop.
- Tell the person that you will take other steps will be taken if the cyberbullying does not stop.
- Tell a parent or guardian if it continues.

What should parents or Scout leaders do if a Scout tells them he is the victim of cyberbullying?

- Let victims know they are not to blame.
- Understand they may be afraid to tell their parents, but encourage them to do so, or offer to talk to their parents with them.
- Encourage them to block messages, delete messages without reading them.
- Report incidents to Internet service providers.
- If threats are made, parents should call the police.

BUZZ GROUPS

- 1. Is this bullying?**
- 2. How do you know?**
(If you don't know, what would you do to find out?)
- 3. How would you respond as a Scout leader or parent?**

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- Boy Scouts of America. (2008) *Rank Requirement Changes*.
www.scouting.org/boyscouts/resources/32215/rankchanges.html
- Boy Scouts of America. (2007) *Power Pack Pals #1: Bullying Comic Book*.
- Feinberg, T. (2003) "Bullying Prevention and Intervention," National Association of School Principals.
Produced in cooperation with the National Association of School Psychologists.
- Jeffries, P. W. & Goodwin, K. (2001) *Stop School Bullying: Kalamazoo College's Site Dedicated to Creating Safe Learning Environments for Kids*. Kalamazoo, MI: Kalamazoo College.
<http://www.kzoo.edu/psych/stop%5Fbullying/>
- National Crime Prevention Council (2006) <http://www.ncpc.org/topics/by-audience/parents/bullying/>
- Newman, D. A., Horne, A. M., Bartolomucci, C. L. (2000) *Bully Busters- A Teacher's Manual for Helping Bullies, Victims, and Bystanders*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.
- Olweus, D. (1993) *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Sassu, K. A., Elinoff, M. J., Bray, M. A., & Kehle, T. J. (2004) "Bullies and Victims – Information for Parents." *Helping Children at Home and at School II: Handouts for Families and Educators*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.
- Sheras, P. (2002) *Your Child: Bully or Victim?* New York, NY: Skylight Press.
- Tassell, B. (2006) "Dealing with Bullies," *Don't Feed the Bully*. Santa Claus, IN: Llessat Publishing.
www.dontfeedthebully.com/DealingwithBullies.html
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2004) *Stop Bullying Now!*
<http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov>

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Special thanks to Wesley Harris, Dan Miller, and John Harris for their assistance with the graphics.

This unit of supplemental training may be copied, without change, for use in BSA training courses and other Scouting activities.

