

SILENT WITNESS

Topic: Bullies, victims and bystanders

The Facts

- 👤 1 out of every 4 students is bullied. (National Institute of Mental Health, 2001)
- 👤 30% of students in 6th through 10th grades have admitted to being involved in bullying - as a bully, a victim, or both. (Safe Youth, 2004)
- 👤 Most bullying happens on school grounds, not on the way home or to school. (NIMH, 2001)
- 👤 Every 7 minutes, a child is bullied. 85% of the time, peers are present, and *no one* intervenes. (NIMH, 2001)

Start a Conversation with Your Kids

1. How do you deal with bullies at your school? When there is a fight or a bully picks on someone, are you part of the problem or part of the solution?
2. Some people theorize that certain kids are just asking for bullies to pick on them - that bullies can sense a victim. Why do you think someone would believe this is true? Do you? Explain.
3. What do physical abuse, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, sexual harassment, cyber-bullying and racism have in common? Is any one of these worse than the other? Have you seen examples of any of these in school? How do all of these come under the topic of bullying?

Advice From the Experts

Experts from the National Institute of Mental Health and the organization 'Stop Bullying Now!' offer the following advice for parents to steer their children away from bullying others and protect them from bullies.

- Establish clear rules about how bullying behaviors will not be tolerated by anyone.
- Consequences must be outlined and applied when necessary.
- Build empathy. Teach children how to help others who are being bullied and help them understand that telling an adult about someone being bullied is not tattling; it is important for everyone's safety. If you are a bystander that does nothing, then you are part of the problem.
- Find ways to build self-esteem in children and ways to include those who might easily be left out. Find a club or an organization for them to join outside of school to make new friends and establish a supportive group.
- Work together to create a list of adults who can help in bullying situations.
- Teach your children ways to avoid bullies and/or react in ways that will not draw more attention or promote bullying behaviors.
- Create an environment that makes your children feel comfortable and, above all, loved.

