

Bullying, Not Cool: 7th Grade Parent/Youth Follow-Up Discussion

Dear Parents: The following is a suggested discussion for you to have with your 7th grader as a follow-up to the online safety ed program on bullying. This is a very important topic and one that I'm sure you will want to make sure your child well understands. Taking the online course is a first step. It's also important that you discuss this subject with your 7th grader so as to make sure he/she has learned the concepts and to be able to give your input. We invite you take the course yourself if you find that you need to explore more of these topics yourself so as to better discuss them with your middle-school youth. (For more discussion on the topic of bullying, check out the discussion guide for 5th graders.)

Statistics about bullying are a good starting point for discussion.

- 30% of U.S. students in grades six through ten are involved in moderate or frequent bullying — as bullies, as victims, or as both.
- 43% of students fear harassment in the bathroom at school.
- 100,000 students carry a gun to school — 28% of youths who carry weapons have witnessed violence at home.
- 282,000 students are physically attacked in secondary schools each month.
- 46% of males and 26% of females reported they had been in physical fights.
- 87% of teenagers say that school shootings are motivated by a desire to “get back at those who have hurt them.”
- 39% of parents with a child in grade 6 or higher fear for their child’s physical safety when the child is at school.
- Bullying was reported as more prevalent among males than females. For males, both physical and verbal bullying was common, while for females, verbal bullying and rumors were more common.
- Bullying occurs more frequently in 6th through 8th grades, with little variation between urban, suburban, town, and rural areas.

How do these facts make you feel about the issue and the importance of learning more about it?

Physical Bullying:

How would you define physical bullying?

What constitutes the physical?

Why do you think boys are more likely to engage in this kind of bullying than girls?

What are some different ways that someone might defend themselves from physical bullying?

Emotional Bullying:

How would you define emotional bullying?

What does the term “self-concept” mean?

Why might emotional bullying be more hurtful than physical bullying?

Can you think of any emotional bullying situations that you’ve recently observed?

Why are sexual slurs so common in bullying situations?

How do slurs for boys and girls differ and what do they say about the standards and expectations of girls and boys?

Relational Bullying:

How would you define relational bullying?

Compare and contrast relational bullying with emotional bullying. How are they similar and how are they different?

Why do you think girls are more likely to engage in this kind of bullying than boys?

How might someone inadvertently take part in relational bullying?

What emotions do victims of relational bullying feel?

Bullies

What are the different characteristics of Confident Bullies, Anxious Bullies, and Bully-Targets?

What motivates bullies?

How might a target of bullying become a bully himself?

What are the differences between teasing and bullying?

How have media portrayals of bullies formed the stereotype of what a bully looks like?

What’s the difference between bullying and teasing?

Targets

Are there certain people who become targets more often than others?

Why might it be that a bully and her target are often on a similar social level?

How does popularity play into being a target?

What are some dangerous long-term effects of being a target of bullying?

Bystanders

Why do bystanders have the most power in a bullying situation?

Why do so few bystanders ever intervene?

What are some ways in which bystanders can help the target without fear of retaliation from the bully?

Being Valiant:

What kinds of images come to mind when you think of the word “valiant”?

What does being valiant specifically mean for you?

What might keep you from being valiant?

What will it take for young people to develop a sense of responsibility for each other’s well-being?

When Adult Help is Necessary:

In what situations is adult help essential?

How well do you trust adults to listen to them and take action?

Is there a stigma placed on students who go to adults for help?

What are some things adults can do to reduce instances of bullying?

Having Hope:

Why is hope a useful emotion in everyday life? Why is it particularly important to targets of bullying?

How might someone take their experience of being bullied and turn it into something good?

Are there any famous artists or musicians who have triumphed over persecution?