

Bullying / Harassment Information & Statistics (page 1 of 2)

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What is bullying/harassment? Coloroso definition (vs. legal definition)

- Coloroso definition: imbalance of power, intent to harm, threat of further aggression, generates terror
- Three kinds of bullying: verbal, physical, relational
- Verbal: boys and girls use this equally (70% of bullying)
- Physical: boys use more than girls (less than 33% of bullying)
- Relational: ignoring, isolating, excluding, shunning, rumors, subtle gestures; girls use more than boys (difficult to detect)

Statistics on bullying

(Kaiser Family Foundation, 2001; Zeigler and Rosenstein-Manner, 1991)

- 2001: More than 50% of children between the ages of 8 and 11 reported that bullying is a “big problem” at school
- 2001: 86% of children between the ages of 12 and 15 reported that they get teased or bullied at school, more prevalent than smoking, alcohol, drugs, or sex among this age group.
- Bullying peaks in the 11-12 year-old age group
- 38% of students identified as special education students were bullied compared to 18% of other students
- 23% of students bullied and 71% of teachers reported that teachers intervened often or almost always (This indicates that parents and school staff greatly underestimate the frequency of bullying when compared with student responses to surveys)

Characteristics of a bully

- Children are taught to bully (home life, school life, community life, media)
- Bullying is anti-social behavior and bullies are more likely to end up involved in fights, vandalism, and stealing, engaged in substance abuse and truancy, will drop out of school or carry a weapon
- Bullying is NOT about anger (Coloroso), it's about contempt – a powerful dislike of someone considered to be worthless, inferior, or undeserving of respect

Psychological make-up of bullies:

- They have a sense of entitlement – the privilege and right to control, dominate, subjugate, and otherwise abuse another human being;
- They have an intolerance toward differences – different equals inferior and thus not worthy of respect;
- They feel a liberty to exclude – to bar, isolate, and segregate a person deemed not worthy of respect or care
- These feelings usually mask deep hurt and feelings of inadequacy
- Bullies often lack empathy and compassion

10 traits of a bully:

- Like to dominate other people
- Like to use people to get what they want
- Find it hard to see a situation from the other person's vantage point
- Are concerned only with their own wants and pleasures and not the needs, rights, and feelings of others
- Tend to hurt other kids when parents or other adults are not around
- View weaker siblings or peers as prey, "predatory aggression"
- Use blame, criticism, and false allegations to project their own inadequacies onto their target
- Refuse to accept responsibility for their actions
- Lack foresight – the ability to consider the short-term, long-term, and possible unintended consequences of their current behavior
- Crave attention

Bullies who get caught often:

- Deny that they did anything wrong
- Trivialize the event/behavior
- Counterattack, blames the victim
- Claims to be a victim, accuses the bullied child of starting the episode
- Gets off the hook by characterizing the bullied child as the bully
- Counts on bystanders to deny anything and defend his/her behaviors

Some common myths about bullies:

- Bullies are loners: research shows that bullies are not socially isolated, have an easy time making friends, have a small group of friends who support the bullying behaviors
- Bullies have low self-esteem: research shows that bullies have average or above-average self-esteem, interventions that focus on building self-esteem in bullies are not effective
- Bullies are looking for attention: bullies are looking for control, behavior will not stop even if they are ignored
- Most bullying happens off of school grounds: most bullying occurs in classrooms, hallways, and playgrounds
- Bullying affects only a small number of students: research shows that 25% of students are victims of bullying and 20% are engaged in bullying; bullying affects everyone involved, even bystanders

Books:

Coloroso, Barbara. The Bully, Bullied, and the Bystander. Harper Collins Canada, 2003. ISBN: 0006394205

Olweus, Dan. Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do. Blackwell Publishing, 1993. ISBN: 0631192417