

## **IDENTIFYING SIGNS CHILDREN WHO ARE BULLIED**

- Increasingly withdrawn & socially isolated.
- Increasingly does not want to go to school.
- Avoids former friends and/or groups of kids he/she formerly hung out with.
- Frequent nightmares and cries self to sleep
- Increasingly self-conscious about looks, behavior, personality, or group membership (religion, race, sexual orientation).
- Significant drop in grades.
- Significant change in eating habits.
- Becomes afraid of walking to school or riding on school bus
- Attempts or talks about suicide or intentionally hurts self.
- Has unexplained injuries, cuts or bruises.
- Shows a major change in typical behavior or personality.
- Comes home from school with torn, damaged, or missing clothing, books, and belongings.

## **ENGAGING CHILDREN TO TALK ABOUT BEING BULLIED**

- Talk with your child about what's going in his/her life.
- Non-judgmentally, discuss significant behavioral or emotional changes you've observed.
- Ask your child if he/she is having trouble with particular kids, gently probe for details.
- Praise your child for confiding.
- Reassure your child that you will do your best to make school life better.
- Listening is more important than talking.
- Engage your child when he/she is most relaxed, at ease, and least distractible.
- Be sensitive to your child's unique personality: what upsets some kids doesn't bother others.
- Encourage your child to come up with strategies for dealing with bullies.

## **HELPING CHILDREN WHO ARE BULLIED: Individual Level**

- Ask your child what he/she thinks he/she can do to improve the situation. Use his/her ideas as a guide to offer suggestions about how he/she may effectively respond to bullying: ignore the bully, walk away, use humor or silence, or change the subject.

Remember that children often feel powerless against the bully and are often temperamentally unable to use such techniques. Do not criticize your child if he/she feels unable to adopt any of your suggestions. Bullying is neither their fault nor their responsibility to stop. It is the school's responsibility.

- Advise your child to avoid unsupervised areas.
- Discuss ways he/she can seek help in school.
- Reframe ideas about snitching and ratting so that your child feels comfortable in reporting instances of bullying to the designated school representative.
- Encourage participation in structured & fun activities.

For more information contact Dr. Greene at [mbgchef@gmail.com](mailto:mbgchef@gmail.com)

## **HELPING CHILDREN WHO ARE BULLIED: School Level**

- Secure a copy of your school district's anti-bullying policy and discuss it with your school's principal and teachers.
- Organize parents to meet with school administrators to discuss what is being done in your school to reduce bullying behavior.
- Encourage your school to adopt a bullying prevention program (Child Assault Prevention - 856 582-7000 ext. 153; Olweus' Anti-Bullying Program ([www.clemson.edu/olweus](http://www.clemson.edu/olweus)); or at least to bring in an expert to speak with them.
- Contact advocacy groups such as SPAN (Statewide Parents Advocacy Network), the Attorney General's Office of Bias Crime and Community Relations, the NJ Division on Civil Rights, Education Law Center, & the ACLU.
- Encourage your school to conduct a bullying survey.

## **IDENTIFYING CHILDREN WHO BULLY**

- Your child frequently hits, kicks, pushes, or chokes other kids.
- Your child frequently taunts other kids, makes fun of them, or spreads nasty rumors (either verbally, in writing, or through the internet) about them.
- Your child is manipulative with other kids and says/does things that make others avoid or tease these kids.
- Your child intentionally excludes other kids from activities.
- Your child sexually harasses other kids.
- Your child expresses intolerance of certain kids, characteristics, or life styles and/or expresses little empathy for kids who are hurt physically or emotionally.
- Your child extorts or blackmails other kids.
- Your child likes to dominate weaker kids.
- Your child is very sensitive about criticism and/or tries to appear psychologically invulnerable.

## **HELPING CHILDREN WHO BULLY OTHERS**

- Help your child understand that bullying hurts: use real life stories, as well as literature and film.
- Make it clear to your child that you take bullying seriously and do not tolerate such behavior.
- Make sure that you use and model cooperative and empathic styles of dealing with conflict.
- Establish a set of negative sanctions with your child in response to reports you receive of him/her bullying others. Also establish a set of positive sanctions when you hear of positive changes in his/her behavior.
- When you learn that your child has bullied others, calmly convey your disappointment and talk with him/her about how he/she might have behaved differently. Never embarrass your child in front of others and do not use shaming punishments; these techniques model the bullying behavior.
- Work with your child's school to establish coordinated ways to help your child to stop such behavior.