



ONE ON ONE MENTOR BRIEF: Facts and Approaches to Talking About Bullying With Your Mentee

Multi-County Data

- ✓ Over half of 6th and 8th grade students report being verbally bullied in the past 30 days.
- ✓ 22.7% of 6th grade students and 18.7% of 8th grade students report being physically bullied in the past 30 days.
- ✓ 9.7% of students in grades 6, 8, and 11 report incidents of on-line bullying in the past 30 days.
- ✓ An average of 5.3% of all students in grade 6, 8, and 11 report being made fun of because of their race or color.

www.iowayouthsurvey.iowa.gov

County data used include those served by local mentoring programs: Cerro Gordo, Floyd, Hancock, Mitchell, Winnebago, & Worth

The Issue

For far too many children, bullying is an unfortunate reality of life. At school, in the community, and even online, young people can be exposed to a barrage of physical, verbal, and emotional attacks and are often left wondering why the adults in their lives are unwilling or unable to help. Unlike the bullying that takes place in schools or the community, cyberbullying can be relentless, taking place 24 hours a day and destroying young lives that are increasingly lived online.



Bullying occurs in many forms, ranging from physical assault and intimidation, to verbal attacks, such as name calling or taunting. According to an October 2014 article from MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, regardless of the form bullying takes, the physical danger and emotional stress can have serious consequences for victims:

- Bullied children often suffer from feelings of isolation, anger, loneliness, and depression.
- Bullying leads to lower relationship quality and disconnection from peers, teachers, and other adults.
- Victims often lose their self-confidence and self-esteem, while also losing their faith in institutions, especially schools.
- Bullied children participate less in extracurricular activities and suffer a variety of anxiety-related health issues.
- These children are also more likely to skip or drop out of school and perform worse academically when they do attend.
- And the ripple effect of this bullying can impact an entire community: One estimate by the Secret Service found that 71% of school shooters were victims of bullying.

Learn more about bullying by exploring internet sites with your mentee:

www.stopbullying.gov

www.thebullyproject.com

<http://www.pacerkidsagainstbullying.org/kab/>

A WORD ABOUT BULLIES

Research published by the American Psychological Association found that "A typical bully has trouble resolving problems with others and also has trouble academically. He or she usually has negative attitudes and beliefs about others, feels negatively toward himself / herself, comes from a family environment characterized by conflict and poor parenting, perceives school as negative and is negatively influenced by peers. Younger bullies were more defiant, aggressive and disruptive, whereas older bullies were more withdrawn, depressed and anxious. Younger bullies were not as bothered by rejection and being unpopular as were older bullies. And older victims suffered from depression and anxiousness more than younger victims." **Both bullies and victims of bullies need support and guidance from their mentor.**

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is **unwanted, aggressive behavior** among school aged children that involves a **real or perceived power imbalance**. The behavior is **repeated, or has the potential to be repeated**, over time.



AVOID THESE PITFALLS WHEN DEALING WITH BULLYING

- ! Personal intervention by the mentor or a parent may make matters worse by creating additional conflict between the bully and victim or drawing additional attention of peers to the bullying. This can actually intensify the bullying activity. It may however, be helpful if the mentor reports the bullying to the school.
- ! We must be very careful not to blame the victim for their bullying. Needless to say, this can increase feelings of isolation or being a “burden” on others.
- ! We cannot place responsibility for stopping the bullying on the victim. Bullying occurs because of an inherent imbalance of power and the bullied are often not in a position to solve the issue on their own.

There is free, confidential help from trained professionals available in North Iowa! This help line is a good resource for both mentor and mentee.

All Calls Confidential **(641)424-9071** **Call 24/7**

Bullying Help Line

Crisis Intervention Service

Contact

Jess Prazak
Mason City Youth Task Force Mentoring Coordinator
Email: jprazak@masoncity.net
Phone: (641) 421-2708

Tips for Starting the Bullying Conversation

- Share your own stories of bullying experiences and how you persevered, letting your mentee know that, while unfortunate, this situation is common and solvable.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has some good starter questions on their website:

- *Do you ever see kids at your school being bullied by other kids? How does it make you feel?*
- *What's it like to ride the school bus/walk to school? Tell me about it.*
- *What is lunch time like at your school? Who do you sit with, what do you do, and what do you talk about?*
- *Have you ever tried to help someone who was being bullied? OR Did someone try to help you? What happened?*

What Your Mentee Needs to Hear From You

- That you are a safe person for them to talk with about bullying. Many children do not tell their parents or peers when they are being bullied.
- Ask your mentee-Now that we're talking about bullying, what can I do to help?
- Your mentee needs to hear that they have strengths and that they can make a difference for others and take action for a positive future.