

# COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

## BULLYING AWARENESS WEEK

October 19 through October 23

### Monday Oct. 19

"I'm Dreaming of a Bully-Free World"

Wear your Pajamas



### Tuesday Oct. 20

"It's no Sweat to be Kind"

Wear sweatshirts, sweatpants, hoodies



### Wednesday Oct. 21

"Black Out Bullying and Disrespect"

Wear all black clothing



### Thursday Oct. 22

"Be Proud to be Unique and Different"

Wear tie dye clothing (no two tie dye patterns are the same, just like no two people are the same)



### Friday October 23

"My Family is My Support System"

Have family members all dress in blue (the national color for Bully Prevention and Awareness) and take a family picture. Upload your picture in the comments section of the Pine Valley Facebook post referencing our Bullying Prevention Week activities for Friday.



# 6 Things Every Parent Can Do to Address Bullying Behavior

Bullying has become a chronic national concern. The only way we can change this is if we get involved. If we take action together, we can successfully decrease bullying.

## 1. Understand What Exactly is Bullying

Bullying is a form of emotional or physical abuse that has three defining characteristics:

1. **Deliberate** – a bully’s intention is to hurt someone
2. **Repeated** – the behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time
3. **Power Imbalanced** – a bully chooses victims he or she perceives as vulnerable

These three aspects must be included for a behavior to be labeled as bullying. It is important to teach children the difference between true bullying behavior and “rude and unkind” acts by others. Children need to know how to respond to both when and if they occur.

## 2. Identify Signs of Bullying

Although children do not tell us outright, they do give us clues. Your child could be a victim of bullying if he/she:

- Is reluctant or refuses to go to school
- Clams up when you try to discuss school
- Demands some sort of change in a long-standing routine, like riding the bus to school or going to the park on Saturdays
- Does not want to participate in after-school activities or play with old friends
- Shows signs of physical ailments such as headaches, stomach-aches, or nausea
- Goes to the nurse to avoid going to class
- Performance in school (grades, homework, attendance) suddenly declines
- Acts sullen, angry, and frequently wants to be left alone
- Shows marked behavior change after computer time or a phone call
- Has unexplained bruises or injuries

What if your child is the bully? Although you don’t want to see your child acting mean, it is important to know the signs that your child may be engaging in bullying behavior:

- Lack of empathy
- Needs to be in control
- Weak social and interpersonal skills
- Seems to derive pleasure from pain and suffering of others
- Seeks retaliation if they feel wronged by another
- Has been bullied by peer, sibling, or parent
- Refuses to include certain kids
- Engages defiant behavior
- Is very concerned with being and staying popular
- Seems intolerant of and/or shows contempt for children who are “different” or “weird”

- Frequently teases or taunts other children
- Observes you excluding, gossiping about, or otherwise hurting others: As human beings, we occasionally exhibit some bullying behaviors. It is only natural, and it doesn't mean we're bad people. But think about your own behavior and ask – do your kids also show these traits?

### 3. Model Positive Social Behavior

The most effective way to keep children from being bullied, and from becoming bullies, is to make sure they grow up in loving relationships. Succinctly put, “Don't worry that your children never listen to you. Worry that they are always watching you.” Parents are a child's number one role model.

### 4. Teach Your Child Social Skills

Kids need to know they can have their needs met while being respectful of other people. Give children words to stick up for themselves early on (“I don't like that.” “Please stop.”). Role play with your child how to join a game at the playground, introduce themselves to another child at a party, or initiate a play date/sleepover. Kids who are successful in joining groups of kids usually observe first, and find a way to fit into the group, rather than just inserting themselves. Make games out of social skills and practice at home. Encourage your child to join groups and clubs that s/he enjoys.

### 5. The Importance of the Bystander: Teach Kids to Intervene When They See Bullying

When bystanders (children who are nearby) intervene positively, studies find they can cut bullying more than half the time and within 10 seconds. Your child will witness bullying at some point. Teach them what to do.

- **Partner with the victim and remove them from danger:** Go stand with the victim physically, turn the victim away from the bully and walk her off in the other direction — towards adult help. Say “You look upset” or “I've been looking for you” or “The teacher sent me to find you.”
- **Stand Up for the Victim:** Teach your child to ask the bullying child to stop in a respectful manner.
- **Get help:** Report the bullying to an adult.

### 6. Coach Your Child to Handle Teasing and Bullying

- Roleplay with your child is a great way to prepare them to stand up to a bully. Practice until your child is confident in handling difficult situations.
- Prepare your child with simple phrases that are direct and not antagonistic: “You know, I'm just going to ignore that comment.” “Don't do that.” “No.” “Well, that's what you think.” Then walk away.
- Teach your child to act brave, look the bully in the eye, and say one of these things. Practice until your child has a strong, self-assured tone.
- Assert by standing tall and using a strong voice. “Stop making fun of me. It's mean.”
- Ignore it. Bullies love it when their teasing upsets their victims, so help your child find a way to not let his tormentor get to him.

#### **If your child is being bullied:**

1. Assure the child that you believe them and that they are not alone with this problem.
2. Affirm that this is not their fault.
3. Establish that there are things that you can do and develop a plan.
4. Report the bullying to school personnel.

**When Your Child is the Bully:** Nobody sets out to be the parent of a mean kid. But what do you do when you get a phone call that your child bullied?

- Talk to your child about what happened.
- Show your child what they have done is wrong.
- Give your child ownership of the problem. No “if only”s, blame shifting or excuses.
- Help your child find a way of solving the problem that he created.
- Leave his dignity intact.
- Create opportunities to do good.
- Nurture empathy.
- Teach friendship skills.
- Engage in entertaining, energizing, and constructive activities.
- Closely monitor technology. Children regularly exposed to media violence are apt to become desensitized to real life violence.
- Watch out for signs that you may be unknowingly encouraging bullying.

## Cyber Bully Prevention

COVID-19 has reshaped how our society has functioned over the past months as we are having to adjust to a new normal. The need for social media platforms has rapidly increased as safety protocols have been put into place (social distancing) while simultaneously attempting to carry on with everyday life (i.e., work, school, shopping, communicating). This has also been a reality for our students. As technology usage in and out of the classroom has increased, so has the need for students to learn how to safeguard themselves against cyberbullying. Therefore, it is important to know what cyberbullying is, symptoms of cyberbullying, and how to prevent it.

### Definition of Cyberbullying:

The use of technology to repeatedly and intentionally harass, hurt, embarrass, humiliate, or intimidate another person.

### Signs of Cyberbullying:

- **Anger/Anxiety:** Pay attention to your child’s mood when they are online or gaming and afterwards. Are there sudden anger outbursts and nervous/ anxious/ avoidant behavior (i.e., slamming phone on the ground, nervous about peer interaction, avoiding school)?
- **Depression:** Be aware of your child’s mood during and after being online. Does your child appear sad? Is your child avoiding previous activities that they used to enjoy? Is there a change in sleep and eating patterns? Are they withdrawing from close friends or relatives?
- **Secretive:** Notice if your child becomes secretive, defensive, and unwilling to share about their online activities. Notice if they try to hide the fact that they receive communication on a social media platform. If they refuse to discuss what they do online or get agitated when you try to discuss it with them, they might be attempting to hide the fact that they are being bullied. It is important to remind the child that they have a voice and if something wrong is taking place that you will support them and want to keep them safe.

- **Avoiding Technology:** Take note if the frequency of online activity suddenly declines. They may not know how to navigate the stressful situation, and so they may avoid being online altogether.

If you are noticing these signs it is best to have an honest conversation with your child by asking them questions regarding their online activities. Having a greater insight about what social media platforms they use (apps/games/texts) will help you navigate cyberbullying. You can always do a quick google search to learn more about apps. Emphasizing the importance of internet safety and reminding your child how to handle online conflicts in a healthy manner will safeguard them from bullying and will teach them how to protect themselves and others from cyberbullies.

### Prevention for Parents:

- Monitor children's online activities.
- Take away children's mobile devices if they are caught mistreating people online.
- Teach children how to use technology responsibly.
- Find out to whom children are speaking, and making friends with, online.
- Understand the signs of someone who is a bullying victim.
- Learn how to use the technology that children are using to get a greater understanding of their world.

### Prevention for Students:

- Think before posting online. Avoid making posts that have a negative effect on your reputation.
- Learn what cyberbullying is and what behaviors are involved in cyberbullying.
- Avoid putting inappropriate photos online because they can be the fuel that cyberbullies use.
- Treat everything and everyone with respect.
- Tell a trusted adult if you are experiencing cyberbullying.