CRC Concepts For Creative Responses to Bullying

1. Skills learned in creative conflict resolution and problem solving have an important place in preventing and intervening in bullying behavior. These skills are included in the CRC themes of cooperation, communication, affirmation, conflict resolution, responding to bias, problem solving, and mediation.

2. For victims and witnesses of bullying and biased behavior, important skills for prevention and interruption are assertiveness and communication skills. For those who exhibit bullying behavior, it is important to develop empathy and positive leadership skills (e.g., cooperation, affirmation).

3. CRC's bias awareness concepts apply to CRC's concepts of creative responses to bullying.

4. We see that there is often a connection between bullying behavior and acts of bias. In responding creatively to bullying and bias, it is important to separate the behavior from the individual.

5. Bullying involves a power difference. Those who are bullied are not equal in power and status to bullies and they lack the skills to protect themselves. It is often not reasonable or helpful to expect them to "work it out" on their own. Interrupting bullying behavior may need to be done by assertive peer allies or adults.

6. In CRC, we try to build skills and nurture attitudes that empower people to choose nonviolent responses.

7. Bullying behavior harms bullies as well as victims.

8. Prevention and intervention for bullying may need to be supported by clear school rules.

9. Since bullying behavior is often learned at a young age, it is important to interrupt this behavior early.

10. Bullying behavior usually escalates if not interrupted.
Definitions of Bullying

1. "If we put together what we learn from looking at children’s drawings and talking to children about bullying, we can arrive at a reasonable definition or description of malign bullying. It has these components: There is an initial desire to hurt; that desire is expressed in action; someone is hurt; the action is directed by a more powerful person or group; it is without justification; it is typically repeated; and is done so with evident enjoyment."

   "...bullying is repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons."

   - Ken Rigby, in Bullying in Schools and What To Do About It

2. "Bullying is an outward sign of an inward spiritual crisis in which the bully seeks relation with others through repeated acts of violence. These acts of violence may be physical or emotional."

   - Ronald Cram, Columbia Theological Seminary, Atlanta, GA

3. "Bullying in its truest form is comprised of a series of repeated intentionally cruel incidents, involving the same children, in the same bully and victim roles. This, however, does not mean that in order for bullying to occur there must be repeat offenses. Bullying can consist of a single interaction."

   - article, “Bullying Hurts and Keeps on Hurting,” www.bullybeware.com

4. "Bullying is a type of behavior that intends to harm or disturb someone, occurs repeatedly over time, and involves an imbalance of power. Such behaviors may be physical, such as hitting or stealing; verbal, such as teasing or name calling; or psychological, such as socially isolating students. The key component is intimidation, with the more powerful person or group targeting the less powerful one."

   - Nicole Danforth, MD, in “Bullying: What It is and Why Kids Do It"
## Bullying: Agree or Disagree?

Mark each item *agree, disagree, or unsure.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>unsure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bullies act the way they do because of low self-esteem. <em>While self-esteem can be an issue, recent research indicates that many bullies do not have feelings of inadequacy. Bullies may be capable, accomplished, and popular, with strong leadership skills.</em></td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Victims of bullies bring it on by their own behavior. <em>Victims are never to blame for the torment inflicted on them. They do tend to have certain qualities that attract bullies. Many are targeted because they are timid and defenseless. Others, termed “provocative victims,” have poor social skills and are pesky and annoying.</em></td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Bullies grow out of their aggressive behavior. <em>Not always. Many bullies have a very poor prognosis. As adults they are more likely to become abusive of their partners and children, and to be incarcerated.</em></td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>More boys than girls are bullies. <em>The data say that this is true. This is not to say that girls don't bully. They do.</em></td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Girls' bullying is verbal and social, not physical. <em>For the most part, yes. There has been an increase over time in physical bullying and harassment by girls. Girls are most likely to be violent when their social group supports it.</em></td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>The best advice to give a child who is bullied is to physically fight back. <em>Many victims can't follow that advice—they are timid and see themselves as weak. Also, physical fighting can be dangerous if the bully is stronger, is backed by a group, or has a weapon.</em></td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Bullying is an inevitable part of life. <em>It does appear to be inevitable that some powerful children will victimize weaker ones. But even if bullying is bound to happen, that does not mean we are powerless to deal with it.</em></td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Adults should insist that victims work out problems with bullying by themselves. <em>By definition, there is a large power gap between bullies and victims. To expect a victim to overcome this power difference without help is not reasonable. Victims need adult help.</em></td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Children can learn skills and attitudes that help protect them against bullying. <em>Children can learn assertiveness skills, friendship skills, and other strategies that help them avoid being bullied and deal with bullying when it occurs. Bullies tend to bypass kids who have good social skills and high confidence.</em></td>
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not always with strong justification." [162] opressed that victims invariably feel often, but change? and also turn in the feelings of being the perpetrator and remember that they can... We should monitor the emotional reactions of

Emotional

Indifference

Behavioral

Physical

Victim Responses

Social/Verbal

Physical

Bully Actions

Creative Response to Conflict


repetition + an unjust use of power + endemic engagement by the aggressor (and a

bulling involves a desire to hurt + hurtful action + a power imbalance + (typicaly)
What’s Going On?

Teasing and bullying are not exactly the same thing.
• Bullying is meant to hurt. People who bully are more powerful than the ones who are bullied. Bullying usually occurs repeatedly over time and escalates in severity.

• Teasing can be friendly or mean. Sometimes it is hard to tell the difference. You might tease someone in a friendly way and unintentionally hurt them.

Read each example below. Mark each one:

FT = Friendly Teasing, MT = mean teasing, B = Bullying, and ? = Don’t Know.

_____ 1. Sam got a new haircut. Now Laurie calls him “peach fuzz” and rubs his head every chance she gets.

_____ 2. Every day at lunch, Mike comes looking for Jason. He grabs Jason’s sandwich, takes a bite, and walks away.

_____ 3. Paul is afraid to walk home after school because Roger always waits for him at the corner. Roger calls Paul names, threatens him, and sometimes grabs his books or his backpack.

_____ 4. Kim told everybody in the class that Annie is disgusting and that they should ignore her. Now nobody will talk to Annie or have anything to do with her.

_____ 5. Every day, Amy and Nicole call Sean on the phone five or six times. Sometimes they giggle and hang up; other times they whisper Sean’s name over and over.

_____ 6. Vonnie goes to speech class to work on speaking more distinctly. Yolanda and Iris make fun of Vonnie’s speech. They imitate the way she talks, call her “stupid” and “dummy,” and hold their noses when she comes near them.

_____ 7. When Ellen started playing the drums, Joe started calling her “Drummer Girl.”

_____ 8. Tim is in second grade. Zack and Brian are fifth graders. Every morning, they sit behind Tim on the school bus and tell him about the awful things they will do to him if they see him in school.

_____ 9. Ed and Cary like to chase girls on the playground and flip their skirts.

_____ 10. Zack doesn’t care for sports and his friends are girls. Lately several boys have started calling him Barbie.

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BULLIES AND VICTIMS

Qualities of Bullies
The outstanding quality of bullies is aggressiveness—towards peers, teachers, parents, siblings, etc. Bullies tend to have a positive attitude towards violence. They also are impulsive, and act on a strong need to dominate others. They have little empathy with their victims.

Contrary to a commonly held deficit model of bullying, bullies in general are not anxious and insecure under a "tough" surface. They do not suffer from low self-esteem. Their choice of behavior does not result from a lack of social skills.

Male bullies tend to be bigger and stronger than most of their peers. Bullies, male and female, may be high in the social "pecking order" and exert considerable influence among their peers.

Qualities of Victims
Victims tend to be anxious, insecure, cautious, sensitive, and quiet. When attacked, they cry or withdraw. They tend to hold a negative view of themselves and their situation, and they often feel stupid, ashamed, and unattractive. Often, victims are isolated at school, and may not have even one good friend. They tend to be physically weaker than other children.

The above qualities characterize the passive, withdrawn victim, which is the prevalent type. There is another type, the provocative victim, in whom anxious and aggressive behaviors combine. This type of victim may be seen by other children as a pest and a nuisance.

The Consequences of Being a Bully
The pattern of bullying behavior may extend into adult life, causing problems in later work and personal relationships. Bullies are at increased risk for criminal behavior and alcohol abuse.

The Consequences of Being a Victim
The immediate effects of bullying on the victim can be devastating. Many victims report feeling lonely and abandoned. Anxiety and stress can interfere with every aspect of the victim's life. Victims can become depressed, even suicidal.

The long-term effects of bullying for the victim are not clearly defined. Some studies suggest that the "anguish and isolation" that students suffer can affect them long after they leave school (Hazler, Hoover, and Oliver, 1993).

Being Assertive

Assertive behavior enables you to express ideas, needs, and feelings in a positive way. This makes it possible to refuse a request or demand without putting down the other person, or getting angry or confrontational. Assertiveness skills help you do what's best for you and still keep your friends.

Assertive behavior is neither passive nor aggressive. Here are passive, aggressive, and assertive responses to the same request:

Request
Shawn: Hey Lee, how about coming over tonight and helping me with my science project? I'm really stuck.

Responses
Lee (passive): Well... I'm awfully busy... but yeah, I guess so.
Lee (aggressive): I can't believe you're asking me for help! You know I'm up to my neck in work. Do you really expect me to drop everything just for you?
Lee (assertive): Shawn, I've got all I can handle doing my own work. I just can't do it.

But suppose Shawn persists. It's not easy to refuse when someone turns on the pressure. Here are five strategies that can help.

1. Offer an alternative.
   Say what you are willing to do. Then it's up to the other person to take it or leave it.
   Lee: I can't come over tonight. But if you want to get together at lunch, we can talk about your project and maybe I can give you some ideas.
   Shawn: Lunch? That's the only time I can hang out with my friends.
   Lee: Well, that's the only time I can do it.

2. Use the broken record technique.
   Repeat, over and over, what you've already said.
   Shawn: Come on, I thought you were my friend!
   Lee: I am your friend, but I can't help you.
   Shawn: Lee, I'm in big trouble here.
   Lee: I'm really sorry, but I just can't do it.

3. Use humor.
   Lighten up. It can help you over a rough spot.
   Shawn: Come on, Lee, help me out here.

4. Send an “I” message about the pressure.
   Talk about what's going on. Say how you feel about the pressure.
   Shawn: Lee, come on, I can't do it without you.
   Lee: Please stop with the guilt. I told you I can't—and it really bothers me when you pressure me.

5. Walk away.
   If the person just won't give up, refuse to talk about it any more.
   Shawn: I can't believe you're doing this to me.
   Lee: Shawn, forget it—I'm not going to talk about it any more. [Lee walks away.]

Remember—You Have Four Important Rights:
- the right to act in your own best interest
- the right to make a request
- the right to refuse a request
- the right to change your mind
Skills Practice: Assertive Responses

Scenario 1
At the assembly, you put your jacket on an aisle seat and leave to talk to your friend. When you come back, your jacket is on the floor and Pat is in your seat.

aggressive response:

passive response:

assertive response:

Scenario 2
You have a candy bar. Jesse, a big, tough-looking kid, says “Give me that!”

aggressive response:

passive response:

assertive response:

Scenario 3
You are on line at the water fountain. Chris pushes past you to get a drink.

aggressive response:

passive response:

assertive response:

Scenario 4
On the playground, Mattie says in a loud voice, “Ooh, there’s that new kid! Did you ever see an outfit like that? Or hair like that!” The new kid looks hurt.

aggressive response:

passive response:

assertive response:

Scenario 5
Saundra told you she saw Amy with your boyfriend. You see Amy by the lockers.

aggressive response:

passive response:

assertive response:

Scenario 6
As you are running in the school yard, Ronnie grabs at your jacket sleeve. The jacket rips at the shoulder seam.

aggressive response:

passive response:

assertive response:
Some Things to Do about Bullying

For each thing, put a check in the box to show you read it and you understand.

1. If someone threatens to hurt you—
   □ Walk Away.
   Walk calmly but quickly. Don’t look back—just keep going.
   □ Get Help.
   If you think they really will hurt you, tell an adult, like a teacher or a parent. Nobody should be allowed to hurt you.

2. If someone really does hurt you—
   □ Get Help.
   Don’t be embarrassed. You have a right to not be hurt. Tell an adult.

3. If somebody calls you names or makes fun of you or teases you a lot—
   □ Say How You Feel.
   Say you don’t like it. Tell them not to do it. Speak up loud and clear. Look them in the eye.
   □ Laugh It Off.
   Make a joke about it and walk away. Sometimes the bully is just waiting to see how upset he or she can make you. If you don’t act upset, the bully might stop.
   □ Get Your Friends to Help.
   There is power in numbers. Let the bully (or bullies) know that you all don’t like what they are doing and that you want it to stop.
   □ Get an Adult to Help.
   Put down and teasing can hurt just as much as hitting—sometimes more. If someone is giving you a really hard time, tell a teacher or a parent.

4. If you feel lonely and left out and you don’t have any friends—
   □ Try to Approach Others.
   Do you wait to be asked to play? Are you afraid to talk to other kids? Could you take a chance and try to join some other kids?
   □ Ask for Help.
   A parent, teacher, an older brother or sister, or a someone your age can help you learn how to make and keep friends.

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Creative Responses to Bullying
Bibliography


Olweus, Dan (1993). Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.


Websites Related to Bias, Hate Crimes, Bullying

Bias, Hate Crimes

www.tolerance.org
Southern Poverty Law Center
Offers a wealth of information, resources, curriculum materials.

http://www.hate-crime.net
Lambda GLBT Community Services
A network for documenting hate crimes and providing support to victims.

http://www.apa.org/pubinfo/hate
American Psychological Association
“Hate Crimes: An Age-Old Foe in Modern Dress”—an overview, with extensive bibliography.

http://www.aaiusa.org/Tragedy/racism.html
Arab American Institute
Information about bias acts in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks in the U.S.

http://www.adc.org/education/advice.htm
“Advice to Educators from the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.” Many other articles are listed on the home page.

Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)
Resources including article “Addressing Homophobic Behavior in the Classroom.”

http://www.pbs.org/americarespects/educators.html
Public Broadcasting System
“America Responds: Lesson Plans” for grades K-12, on a variety of topics including history and culture of Afghanistan.

Bullying

http://familyeducation.com/article/0,1120,3-9245,00.html
Learning Network
Article entitled “Bully-Proof Your Kids.”

Education Information Resource Center (ERIC)
Brochure entitled “What Should Parents and Teachers Know About Bullying?”

http://www.ncpc.org/10adu3.htm
National Crime Prevention Council
Article entitled “Bullies: A Serious Problem for Kids.”

http://www.allkids.org/Epstein/Articles/Bullies.html
All Children’s Hospital

Commonwealth Dept. of Education, Training, and Youth Affairs (Australian site)
Article entitled “Bullying: Information for Parents.”

http://www.weinholds.org/bullyingmain.htm
The Colorado Institute for Conflict Resolution and Creative Leadership
Article entitled “Bullying: The Tip of the Iceberg” addresses causes of, and responses to, bullying.

http://www.lfcc.on.ca/bully.htm
London Family Court Clinic (Canadian site)
Article entitled “Information on Bullying for Parents and Teachers.”