

Sticks and Stones

DEFEATING
THE CULTURE OF
BULLYING AND
REDISCOVERING
THE POWER
OF CHARACTER
AND EMPATHY

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A RESOURCE GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

BROUGHT TO YOU BY EMILY BAZELON, AUTHOR OF

STICKS AND STONES: Defeating the Culture of Bullying and Rediscovering the Power of Character and Empathy


I put together this resource list as I did the reporting for my book, taking notes as I went on the many promising programs, books, films, and organizations I learned about along the way. The list isn't comprehensive so much as a work in progress: I add to it as I learn about new ventures. It's a series of entry points to the field of bullying prevention—which continues to grow. I hope this list will serve as a valuable jumping off point for your needs.
—Emily

MOVIES/VIDEOS

- **Radio Rookies: Sexual Cyberbullying a high school student reporter** interviews other students about “slut shaming” online— teens using the Internet to bully each other by sharing sexually explicit material. <http://www.wnyc.org/shows/rookies/articles/radio-rookies/2012/dec/28/sexual-cyberbullying-modern-day-letter/>
- **Bullied: Teen Stories from Generation PRX** Produced by two Hartford, Conn., teenagers for other teenagers, this audio show explores the stories of bullied students from Alaska to Connecticut. <http://generation.prx.org/bullied>
- **Bullied: A Student, a School and a Case That Made History** a thoughtful documentary about Jamie Nabozny, the first student to successfully sue his school district over anti-gay harassment. Excellent for classroom discussions with middle school and high school students. <http://www.tolerance.org/bullied>
- **It's Elementary** The film organization Groundspark offers practical ideas for how to talk with kids about gay people.
- **Respect for All** Another Groundspark film, challenging stereotypes and help students think about prejudice, bullying, and violence. <http://groundspark.org/>
- **Richardson High School Video** A short clip by an assistant principal in Dallas who talks about his experience with bullying as a teenager and his brush with suicide. <http://www.dallasnews.com/video/bc?bcid=1569859431001>
- **Stories of Us** An Australian project that has expanded to the United States, featuring unscribed films about bullying, made by students, for students.


BOOKS

- **Bullying Prevention and Intervention: Realistic Strategies for Schools** by Susan Swearer, Dorothy Espelage, and Scott Napolitano. Strategies for educators, on how to deal with bullying from the ground up. A helpful guide for schools.

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- ***Schools Where Everyone Belongs*** by Stan Davis. Guidelines for school-wide bullying prevention, drawing on the writer's decades of experience as a school counselor and consultant. Davis is one of the most thoughtful voices in the bullying prevention world and this is full of helpful ideas for educators.
 - ***Bullying in North American Schools*** edited by Dorothy Espelage and Susan Swearer. Documenting bullying cultures in schools across the country, the authors synthesize research data and present adaptable programs for combating bullying.
 - ***Bullying Beyond the Schoolyard: Preventing and Responding to Cyberbullying*** by Sameer Hinduja and Justin Patchin. Focusing on the Internet, the authors explain why it can invite and magnify bullying. Aimed at equipping teachers and parents to deal with online harassment of students.
 - ***Homophobic Bullying*** by Ian Rivers. A theory of harassment based on sexual identity, that draws on psychology, sociology, anthropology, and ethnology.
 - ***Classrooms and Courtrooms: Facing Sexual Harassment in K-12 Schools*** by Nan Stein. Summaries of the key legal cases about sexual harassment, data from major surveys, and testimony from boys and girls about their experiences, good and bad, of turning to school authorities for help.
 - ***Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats: Responding to the Challenge of Online Social Aggression, Threats & Distress*** written by Nancy Willard and edited by Karen Steiner. A detailed guide for dealing with varying forms of cyberbullying, with sample incident report forms, Internet use policies, and fact-sheets.

ORGANIZATIONS AND PROGRAMS

- **Bully Busters** is a step-by-step program for reducing bullying through the joint efforts of students, teachers and parents. The organization has also developed a teen mentoring program: <http://www.bully-busters.com/>
- **Bullyproofing Your School** a program run in conjunction with the National Center for School Engagement, is designed to battle bullying through the creation of the "caring majority"—a group of students who ensure that their school is a safe place: <http://www.schoolengagement.org/index.cfm/Bully%20Proof%20Your%20School>
- **The Committee for Children** works to create safe environments for children. The organization has designed two curricula, Second Step and Steps to Respect, which aim to prevent bullying by strengthening the bonds between adults and children in schools. Research has shown that Steps to Respect can reduce the acceptance of bullying and aggression among participating students. (More in Chapter 7). <http://www.cfchildren.org/>
- **Espelage Against Bullying** the website for Dorothy Espelage's research team, describes her projects and provides resources about prevention programs and related scholarship. <http://www.espelageagainstbullying.com/>
- **GLSEN** the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, works with schools and the public to educate about the dangers of homophobia, and to develop school climates in which diversity is celebrated. <http://www.glsen.org/>
- **H&H Publishing** provides an online bully survey to help school personnel create data-based decision-making models for bullying prevention and intervention. http://www.hhpublishing.com/_assessments/BULLY-SURVEY/index.html

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- **KiVa** is a research-based anti-bullying program developed in Finland. The program has a universal component that reaches all students at a school, as well as targeted interventions for students who bully or are victimized. <http://www.kivakoulu.fi/there-is-no-bullying-in-kiva-school>
 - **The Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center** at Bridgewater State University conducts violence and bullying prevention programs and research for the state of Massachusetts: <http://webhost.bridgew.edu/marc/>
 - **The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program** founded in Norway, works with schools on three levels—the campus, the classroom, and the individual. In the United States, the federally funded Blueprints for Violence Prevention assessed more than 900 programs for juveniles, and chose Olweus as one of only a dozen proved to be effective, the only program specifically directed at bullying. <http://www.violencepreventionworks.org/public/index.page>
 - **Peaceful Schools** aims to stop school violence by training students and adults in mediation and conflict resolution. www.backoffbully.com
 - **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)** is a framework for improving school discipline. Research has shown that PBIS can reduce the rate of office referrals, suspensions and expulsions, and bullying. (More in Chapter 8.) <http://www.pbis.org/>
 - **Roots of Empathy** is a Canadian program that brings babies into classrooms, with their parents, to teach kids about infant development and caring for others. Students who have participated have shown less aggressive behavior, more acts of kindness, and better understanding of babies and their emotions. www.rootsofempathy.org
 - **The Suicide Prevention Resource Center** offers training, materials, and other assistance to suicide-prevention practitioners and others in the field. The center helps college and university staffs, health care providers, and professionals in social services with technical assistance, toolkits, and research summaries. <http://www.sprc.org/>
 - **Target Bullying: Best Practices in Bullying Prevention and Intervention** the website for Susan Swearer's research team, provides resources and suggestions to help school personnel think about best practices in bullying prevention and intervention. <http://targetbully.com/>
 - **The Youth Voice Project** asks students about their perceptions of the best strategies for reducing bullying and harassment in school. More than 13,000 teenagers in 31 schools have taken the Youth Voice Project survey; the goal is to use students' responses to determine the most helpful interventions. <http://www.youthvoiceproject.com/>
 - **CASEL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning** is an umbrella group for social and emotional learning programs, which are designed to help children learn to recognize and manage their emotions, handle challenging situations, and calm themselves when they're angry. Many of the programs have been evaluated and shown positive effects. One example is RULER, a research-based approach developed at Yale for teaching five key emotional literacy skills.



A Q&A WITH EMILY

Dan Olweus, a Scandinavian psychologist who launched the field of studying bullying, came up with a good definition in 1969. He limits bullying to verbal or physical aggression that occurs repeatedly and involves a power differential—one or more children lording their status over another. That definition is still standard among academics.

It seems like every week, there is a bullying story in the news. Is this because bullying has become more prevalent, or because we are more aware of it?

Bullying isn't really on the rise, according to the studies that have tracked it over the past 25 years. But recent stories about bullying have gotten a ton of national attention and raised our antennae. So have laws that increasingly require schools to address bullying. Also, bullying does feel more pervasive for a lot of kids when it happens, because it often extends to the Web, which they can access 24/7. Going home from school used to be a respite for kids who were being targeted. That's often no longer true. And now that bullying happens on social networking sites and in text messages, it is more lasting, more visible, more viral. That's how the problem has morphed over the last decade.

Is there a crisis of bullying in the nation's schools?

Bullying is definitely not an epidemic, as you sometimes hear. And increasingly, schools are trying to address it. But they're not having uniform success, of course, and some of their efforts tend to be ineffectual, like one-time assemblies, or straitjacketed, like zero-tolerance policies.

What are the most common perceptions parents and educators have about bullying?

I hear parents complain about schools that aren't doing enough and I hear principals complain about regulations that bury them in paperwork. There are some good programs for addressing bullying, which I write about in my book, but they take real work. Across the country, dealing with bullying is very much a work in progress.


What do you say to educators and adults who say bullying is just "kids being kids"?

It's not! The vast majority of kids do not bully. And the ongoing cruelty that bullying involves can do serious damage. This is not a problem to be shrugged off—that's just nuts.

OK, but at the same time, is much of what gets talked about as bullying in the media in fact better described as general meanness? Do you see an important distinction there?

Yes. The Olweus definition is helpful precisely because it's limiting—it makes clear that two-way, mutual conflict is not bullying. At the same time, when bullying is going on, it's a form of mistreatment that kids often find very upsetting and that links up with serious problems like mental health problems and low academic performance. That's true for both bullies and targets. So, the bullying label is one we should use sparingly, because when it applies, it has real significance.

The first step to addressing bullying is to get a handle on it. Do a survey. Talk to your staff and to students and parents. Figure out your overall priorities for improving behavior and how bullying prevention fits in. Most schools have the money and the bandwidth for one good intervention that addresses behavior and character building, so it's crucial to figure out what would most benefit the students.



Once you're clear about that, pick one approach, or one set of coordinated programs, and stick with them.

What are your thoughts on dealing with groups who are most likely to be targeted for bullying, like the disabled and LGBT youth, or religious minorities like Muslims?

These kids often need dedicated and concerted help gaining acceptance. Sometimes, that means challenging people's assumptions and prejudices. For example, one of the best things a school can do to prevent anti-gay harassment—which remains disturbingly common—is to start a Gay-Straight Alliance. Studies show that LGBT students at schools with these groups tend to experience less victimization, skip school less often, and feel a greater sense of belonging. More than 4,000 schools across the country have opened GSA chapters, which is a great start, but we need more—in middle schools as well as high schools. We also need more groups that promote respect for religious minorities or for disabled students.

Sum up the smartest things parents, teachers, and principals are doing about bullying.

This isn't an exhaustive list, and as I mentioned, some schools are best served by programs that address social and emotional learning, or school climate, or character building more broadly. But to answer the question: I like the anti-bullying approach that's part of Positive Behavioral and Interventions Supports (bad name, I know, PBIS for short). PBIS is a framework for improving school discipline, and research has shown it can reduce the rate of office referrals, suspensions and expulsions, and bullying.

The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program, founded in Norway, works with schools on three levels—the campus, the classroom, and the individual student. In the United States, the federally funded Blueprints for Violence Prevention assessed more than 900 programs for juveniles and chose Olweus as one of only a dozen proved to be effective, and the only program specifically directed at bullying.

Second Step and Steps to Respect, two programs from the Committee for Children in Seattle, aim to prevent bullying by strengthening the bonds between adults and children in schools. Research has shown that Steps to Respect can reduce the acceptance of bullying and aggression among participating students.

Bullyproofing Your School, a program run in conjunction with the National Center for School Engagement, is designed to battle bullying through the creation of the "caring majority"—a group of students who ensure that their school is a safe place.

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