

Let's Talk About...

Gender Based Bullying: What Educators Can Do

What is Bullying?

An act of intentionally inflicting injury or discomfort upon another person (through physical contact, through words or in other ways) repeatedly and over time for the purpose of intimidation and/or control.

What is Gender Based Bullying?

- Homophobic teasing: Negative attitudes and behaviors directed toward individuals who identify as or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender.
- Using gendered language to call someone weak or scared.

How Can You Talk to Young People About Bullying in an Effective Way?

As you probably know, simply telling a young person NOT to do something isn't an effective way to change behavior.

- Have open and honest conversations.
- Ask open ended questions:
 - What do you mean when you say that?
 - Do you know what that word really means?
 - How do you feel when you hear people say those things?

Create a Safe and Supportive Environment

In general, schools can:

- Establish a culture of inclusion and respect that welcomes all students. Reward students when they show thoughtfulness and respect for peers, adults, and the school. The Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Technical Assistance Center can help.
- Make sure students interact safely. Monitor bullying "hot spots" in and around the building. Students may be at higher risk of bullying in settings where there is little or no adult monitoring or supervision, such as bathrooms, playgrounds, and the cafeteria.

- Enlist the help of all school staff. All staff can keep an eye out for bullying. They also help set the tone at school. Teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria staff, office staff, librarians, school nurses, and others see and influence students every day. Messages reach kids best when they come from many different adults who talk about and show respect and inclusion. Train school staff to prevent bullying.
- Set a tone of respect in the classroom. This means managing student behavior in the classroom well. Well-managed classrooms are the least likely to have bullying. (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2013)

Manage Classrooms to Prevent Bullying

Teachers can consider these ways to promote the respect, positive relations, and order that helps prevent bullying in the classroom:

- Create ground rules: Develop rules with students so they set their own climate of respect and responsibility.
- Model the use positive terms, like what to do, rather than what not to do.
- Support school-wide rules.
- Reinforce the rules.
- Be a role model and follow the rules yourself. Show students respect and encourage them to be successful.
- Make expectations clear. Keep your requests simple, direct, and specific.
- Reward good behavior. Try to affirm good behavior four to five times for every one criticism of bad behavior.
- Use one-on-one feedback, and do not publicly reprimand.
- Help students correct their behaviors. Help them understand violating the rules results in consequences: "I know you can stop [negative action] and go back to [positive action]. If you choose to continue, then [consequence]."