



***Staff Training on Aggressive  
Acts by Students***

***(Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation & Cyber-Bullying)***

***Santiam Canyon School District***

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## ***What is Bullying?***

**A person is bullied when he/she is exposed to intentional negative actions on the part of one or more students. Bullying is when someone repeatedly and on purpose says or does mean or hurtful things to another person who has a hard time defending himself or herself. Bullying is a form of abuse in which the abuser repeatedly uses physical, emotional, intellectual or social power to harm, frighten, coerce, control or exclude another person. The victim perceives himself or herself as less powerful and suffers physical, emotional and social pain.**



## ***What is Harassment?***

**A person is harassed when he/she perceives or actually experiences discomfort with identity issues in regard to race, color, national origin gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion or other identifying characteristics. Harassment is a legal term used to describe persistent and unwanted attention, abuse or mistreatment based on the perception of the victim who is targeted because he or she possesses an attribute (race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, etc.) The harasser most often holds some power over the victim – but not always. Harassment is the use of bullying behavior to wear down a victim over time.**





## ***What is Intimidation?***

**A person is intimidated when he/she is subjected to intentional action that seriously threatens and induces a sense of fear and/or inferiority. Intimidation is the use of perceived or actual power to create a sense of fear in the victim. It is the tool with which the bully or harasser harms their victim. It may be overt – like physical domination. Or it may be covert – like rumors spread that damage the victim’s social standing.**



## ***What is Cyber-Bullying?***

**Threats or other offensive behavior sent online to a victim or sent or posted online about the victim for others to see is cyber-bullying. Cyber-bullying can range from embarrassing or cruel rumors to threats, harassment, negative comments, digital photos, or stalking through emails, web pages, text, and IM (instant messaging). Cyber-Bullying is the use of electronic media to intimidate, harass or otherwise bully a victim. It often uses the anonymous nature of social networking sites or text messages to cause fear and panic in complete strangers. But it may also be done by any two people who have an actual – or virtual – connection.**

## ***What do each of these acts have in common?***

**They are different names for aggressive acts or behaviors that are becoming more prevalent in society and are very present in our schools. Each may include:**

- **Physical aggression: hitting, kicking, pushing, choking, punching;**
- **Verbal aggression: threatening, taunting, teasing, hate speech;**
- **Social exclusion.**
- **Sexual aggression: staring, unwanted comments, groping, rape;**



**As you can see these behaviors take on many forms, and it is done by both girls and boys. John Van Dreal, a nationally recognized school safety expert has identified two basic kinds of aggression; REACTIVE and TARGETED. These behaviors all fall under the TARGETED kind of aggression. A U.S. study shows that 17 percent of all students reported having been bullied "sometimes" or more often within a school term. This amounts to almost one in five students. And, for every case reported to school officials, there are many more school bullying situations in which bullied students suffer in silence.**

## ***What affects do these behaviors have on learning?***

- **Lost classroom learning time**
- **Poor learning and academic performance**
- **Students who dislike school and are afraid to attend**
- **More health problems among students**
- **A fearful and disrespectful environment**
- **When behaviors go unaddressed, a perception that teachers and staff have little control, don't care**
- **When behaviors go unaddressed, these students perceive a lack of care on the part of their school community their helplessness provides the ingredient that can turn their ANGER into RAGE. This may lead to an OUTBURST OF REACTIVE AGGRESSION.**





## ***How do I identify students who are dealing with these types of attacks?***



**As a teacher or other staff member, you may suspect that a child is a victim of an aggressive act. If you are not quite sure, review these common signs to help you recognize if aggressive acts are occurring. The child may:**

- **Have torn, damaged, or missing pieces of clothing, books, or other belongings**
- **Have unexplained cuts, bruises, and scratches from fighting**
- **Have few, if any, friends with whom he or she spends time**
- **Seem afraid of going to school, walking to and from school, riding the school bus, or taking part in organized activities with peers (such as clubs or sports)**
- **Take a long, "illogical" route when walking to or from school**
- **Lose interest in school work or suddenly begin to do poorly in school**
- **Appear sad, moody, teary, or depressed when he or she comes home**
- **Complain frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or other physical problems**
- **Have trouble sleeping or frequent bad dreams**
- **Experience a loss of appetite**
- **Appear anxious and suffer from low self-esteem**
- **Say disparaging things about self – this is called, "identifying with the aggressor."**

## ***How can I support targets of these aggressive acts?***



- **Mentor them and connect with them.** The single most important factor in keeping kids safe and out of the “at risk” category is to show them that there is at least one adult who takes a real interest in their well-being.
- **Increase supervision to protect them from future verbal and physical aggression and make sure adults welcome and act on their reports of future bad treatment.**
- **Help them develop an answer to the question: "Why did he/she do that to me?"** The answer should not be one that encourages them to blame themselves. One such answer is "Some people like being mean to others."
- **Involve them in expressive education/therapy where they can act, write, draw, and talk about their experiences.**
- **Help them get support from others with similar histories.**
- **Help them connect with a network of peer support and friendship.**
- ***Most importantly*, create a school environment where targeted aggression is not tolerated – by staff, by students – by ANYONE.**



## ***How do I identify students who are committing these types of attacks?***

**Recognizing the characteristics of students with the potential to be targets of aggressive acts will also help you create a safe classroom and a safe school for students. Keeping an eye out for students with these characteristics may help you prevent or allow you to intervene as early as possible:**

- **Positive attitude toward violence and the use of violent means**
- **Strong need to dominate and subdue other students and get their own way**
- **May be impulsive, aggressive, or easily angered**
- **Lack of empathy toward students who are bullied**
- **Defiance and aggression toward adults, including teachers and parents**
- **Involvement in other antisocial or rule-breaking activities such as vandalism, delinquency, and substance abuse**
- **Physical strength in boys-greater than that of other boys in general and the students they bully in particular**
- **More likely to report owning a gun for risky reasons, such as to gain respect or to frighten others**



# ***How can I Create a Safe Classroom?***



**Providing safe classroom environments is an important part of the mission to reduce aggressive acts. Students need to see and recognize that teachers and staff are in control and that they care about their students. As you work to create safe and respectful classrooms and improve classroom management, it helps to know how to recognize aggressive acts and understand its many shapes and forms.**

- **Develop, post, and discuss rules and sanctions related to aggressive acts.**
- **Treat students and each other with warmth and respect. Demonstrate positive interest and involvement in your students.**
- **Establish yourself as a clear and visible authority with responsibility for making the school experience safe and positive.**
- **Reward students for positive, inclusive behavior.**
- **Take immediate action when an aggressive act is observed and consistently use nonphysical, non-hostile negative consequences when rules are broken.**
- **Listen to parents and students who report an aggressive act in your classroom. Quickly and effectively resolve the issue to avoid perpetuation of these behaviors.**
- **Notify parents of all involved students when an incident occurs, and resolve the problem expeditiously, according to discipline plans at school.**
- **Refer students affected by an aggressive act to school counseling or mental health staff, if needed.**
- **Protect students who are targeted with a safety plan.**
- **Hold class meetings during which students can talk about aggressive acts and peer relations.**
- **Provide information to parents about aggressive behaviors and encourage their involvement and support in addressing these types of issues.**

## ***How can I Create a Safe Playground?***



- **Develop and discuss rules and sanctions related playground behavior.**
- **Post a problem-solving process and coach students through resolving their own conflicts as much as possible. (The PBS curriculum has a splendid problem solving process in poster form.)**
- **Establish clear rules and consequences for playground activities and games.**
- **Treat students and each other with warmth and respect.**
- **Demonstrate positive interest and involvement in your students.**
- **Establish yourself as a clear and visible authority with responsibility for making the school experience safe and positive.**
- **Be visible and on the move, don't make a pattern of staying in one spot.**
- **Keep close to, or an eye on any possible violator.**







### ***What Doesn't Work?***

**A big part of empowerment is creating an environment in which the student's peers will not tolerate ANYONE being bullied. As students who have been victimized see that the majority of their peers care about them, they will be less likely to suffer in silence. And as more and more kids stand up to targeted aggression, the aggressors must find another way to gain social and personal value. Interventions that are unlikely to work are asking the target to solve the problem; just as in our social reaction to other forms of abuse, we have all tried to get the victims to act differently to solve the problem. We have trained victims to be assertive; blend in; ignore it; pretend they're not bothered by what they are doing or saying ("Sticks and stones?"). The problem with these approaches used in isolation, no matter how good our intentions in using them, is that they displace responsibility for stopping bullying from us to the victims. If these approaches do not work and they rarely do, the victim is left with a sense of failure.**





## ***To Summarize!***

- **Develop, post, and discuss rules and sanctions related to aggressive acts.**
- **Listen to parents and students who report an aggressive act in your classroom. Quickly and effectively resolve the issue to avoid perpetuation of these behaviors.**
- **Do not downplay or ignore any perceived incident.**
- **Notify parents of all involved students when an incident occurs, and resolve the problem expeditiously, according to discipline plans at school.**
- **Refer students affected by an aggressive act to school counseling or mental health staff, if needed.**
- **Take immediate action when an aggressive act is observed and consistently use nonphysical, non-hostile negative consequences when rules are broken.**
- **Treat students and each other with warmth and respect.**
- **Protect students who are targeted with a safety plan.**
- **Work with other staff and administration to identify students with aggressive tendencies and monitor them during unstructured times.**
- **And of course, report any serious threat of violence to your building administrator for further investigation and response.**

