

Bullying Prevention in Schools, Juvenile Justice, and Other Youth Serving Agencies

Tribal Youth Resource Center Online Learning Event

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Agenda

Reflection

Defining bullying

Impacts of bullying

Contributing factors to bullying

Prevention and response strategies

Reflection

- Was bullying something you ever experienced?
- Did you ever get bullied, observe others be bullied, or did you ever bully others?
- How did those experiences affect you?
- How did adults respond? Did they know?



Defining Bullying

- Bullying occurs when a youth or group of youth target an individual repeatedly over time, using physical or psychological aggression to dominate the one being targeted
- Bullying is:
 - intentional
 - repeated
 - one-sided
 - involves the abuse of power

(Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2025; Committee for Children, 2005; Stopbullying.gov, 2024)



Types of Bullying

Direct – the instigator personally enacts bullying at the target

Physical – hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, property destruction, physical restraint, unwanted sexual physical contact

Verbal – taunting, teasing, name calling, degrading comments

Nonverbal – threatening gestures, obscene gestures, spatial invasion, staring

Relational – damaging reputations and relationships, isolating, ignoring

Indirect – the instigator gets someone else to engage in the bullying behavior against the target

Physical – getting another person to assault someone

Verbal/Relational – spreading rumors about a person but hiding that you are the source; cyber-bullying; writing derogatory comments publicly, posting embarrassing images

Nonverbal – deliberate exclusion from a group or an activity, silent treatment, dirty trick, taking possessions

(Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2025; Committee for Children, 2005; Stopbullying.gov, 2024)

Difference Between Conflict and Bullying

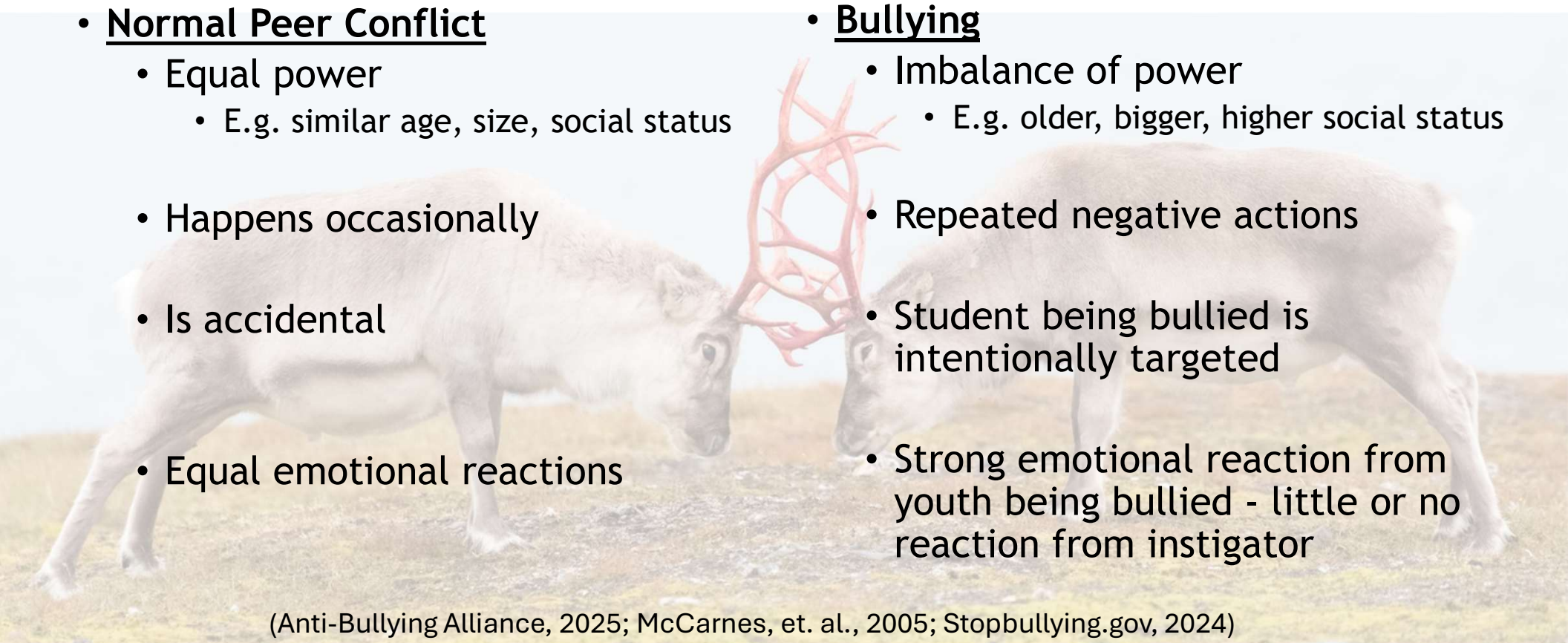
- Normal Peer Conflict

- Equal power
 - E.g. similar age, size, social status
- Happens occasionally
- Is accidental
- Equal emotional reactions

- Bullying

- Imbalance of power
 - E.g. older, bigger, higher social status
- Repeated negative actions
- Student being bullied is intentionally targeted
- Strong emotional reaction from youth being bullied - little or no reaction from instigator

(Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2025; McCarnes, et. al., 2005; Stopbullying.gov, 2024)



Difference Between Conflict and Bullying cont'd

- Normal Peer Conflict

- Instigator is not seeking power, attention, or material things
- Instigator is remorseful and takes responsibility
- Makes effort to solve the problem

- Bullying

- Instigator is seeking power, control, or material things
- Instigator is not remorseful-blames victim
- No effort to solve problem

(Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2025; McCarnes, et. al., 2005; Stopbullying.gov, 2024)

Bullying Statistics

- 1 out of 5 (19.2%) students reported being bullied (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024)
- In a multi-national study 30.5% of adolescents reported being bullied (Biswas, T., et.al., 2020)
- 26.1% of middle school students (peak of bullying) and 14.6% of high school students reported being bullied (StopBullying.gov, 2025)
- 100% of students reported experiencing, witnessing, or being aware of bullying (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024)
- American Indian/Indigenous students reported higher rates of bullying compared to other racial groups (Campbell & Smalling, 2013)
- Youth at risk for being involved in the juvenile justice system are more at risk of engaging in bullying compared to their peers not involved in the JJ system (Peguero & Hong, 2020)



Bullying and Related Roles

- Bullying is a “group phenomenon” – not just a problem between 2 kids
- Those who bully
- Those who are bullied
- Those who witness bullying
- Avoid labeling (bullies, victims, bystanders)

(American Psychoanalytic Association, 2015; Committee for Children, 2005; Stopbullying.gov, 2024)



Signs that Someone is Being Bullied

- Unexplained injury or illness
- Lost or damaged items (books, clothes, electronics)
- Frequent somatic symptoms (headaches, stomachaches, sleep issues, nightmares)
- Changes in appetite (not eating, binge eating)
- Avoidance of school or social situations
- Lowered self-esteem
- Self-destructive behaviors (running away, harming self, talking about suicide)
- Not all youth being bullied show signs

(Stopbullying.gov, 2024)



Signs that Someone is Bullying

- Gets into physical or verbal fights
- Have friends who bully others
- Increasingly aggressive
- Sent to principal or detention frequently
- Unexplained extra money or belongings
- Blame others for problems
- Don't accept responsibility for actions
- Competitive and worry about reputation/popularity

(Stopbullying.gov, 2024)

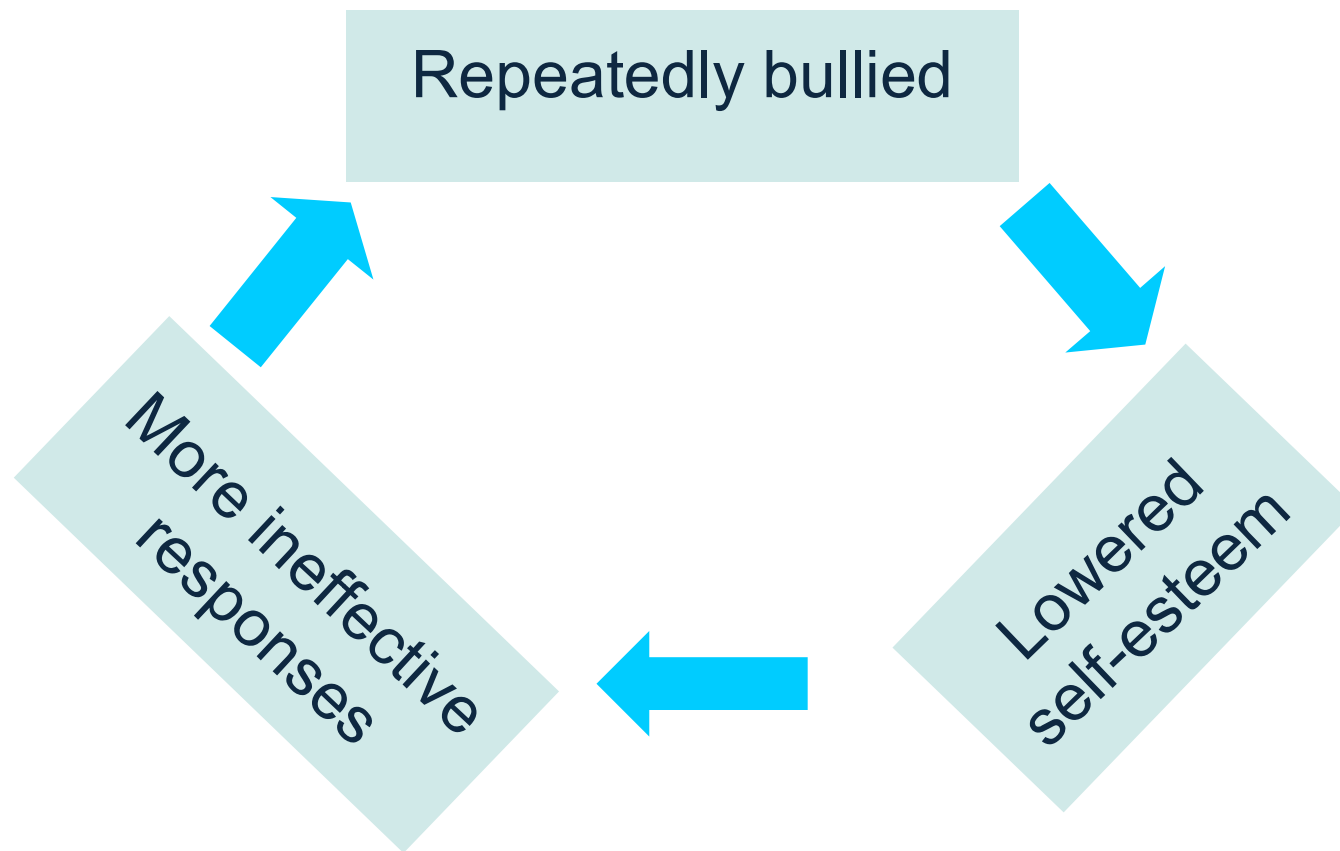


What Perpetuates Bullying?

- Youth very often don't tell
 - Worried they will seem weak or as a tattletale
 - Worried they will be punished
 - Afraid of backlash/getting hurt
 - May feel no one cares or understands
 - Fear rejection of friends
 - Worried adults may make it worse – and sometimes they do
- Adults don't know it's happening

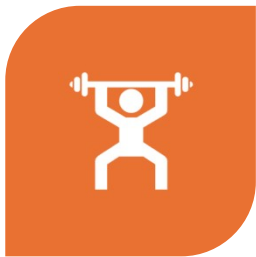
(Committee for Children, 2005; Stopbullying.gov, 2024)

The “Vicious Cycle” of Victimization



(American Psychoanalytic Association, 2015; Garrity, et. al., 2000)

Impacts on Those Who Are Bullied



PHYSICAL



EMOTIONAL



ACADEMIC



BEHAVIORAL

(Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2025; Committee for Children, 2005; Stopbullying.gov, 2024)



Impacts on Those Who Bully

- Externalizing problems (conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder)
- Internalizing problems (anxiety)
- Academic problems
- Peer victimization
- School dropout
- Negative peer reputation
- Substance use
- 5 X more likely to engage in criminal activity
- Struggle to maintain healthy relationships

(Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2025; Committee for Children, 2005; Stopbullying.gov, 2024)

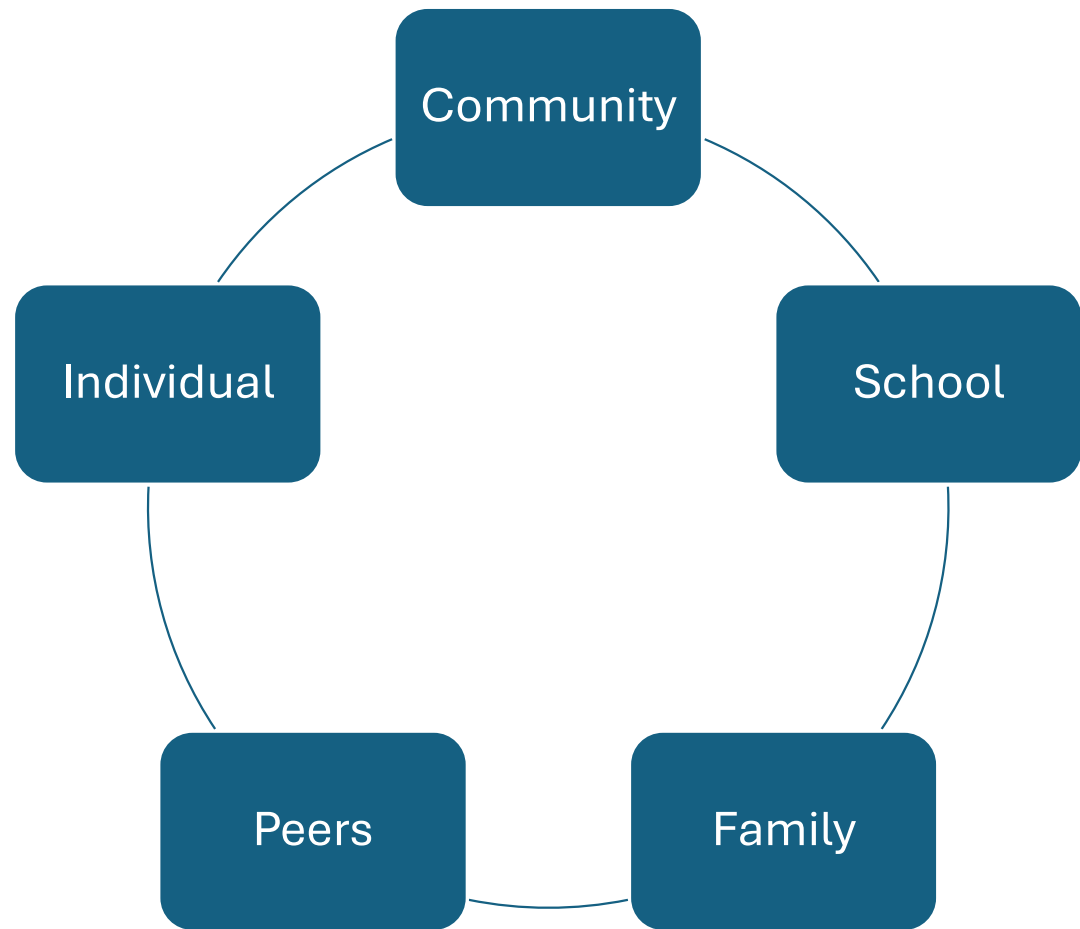
Impacts on Those Who Witness Bullying

- May feel helpless, anxious and depressed
- May feel guilt for not helping
- May feel anger at self and/or perpetrator
- Fear being next one targeted
- Fearful at school
- Attention on avoiding bullying over focusing on academics

(Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2025; Committee for Children, 2005; Stopbullying.gov, 2024)



What Factors Contribute to Bullying?



(National Academy of Sciences, 2016)

Bullying and Juvenile Justice Settings

- Youth involved in JJ systems are more at risk for engaging in bullying (Peguero & Hong, 2020)
- Youth detained in juvenile correctional facilities are at serious risk for bullying and peer victimization based on affiliation with others engaging in these behaviors (Peguero & Hong, 2020)
- Bullying prevention education can help deter youth from engaging in bullying behaviors
- Supporting youth with underlying issues that may be driving bullying behaviors can reduce bullying behaviors
- Prevention is key!
- JJ programs can provide bullying prevention education and mental health supports and/or collaborate with other programs that offer it as part of case planning

Think About Your Own Settings

Whether a school, a juvenile justice program, or other youth serving agency...

- Does bullying occur?
- What does it look like?
- How do you know it's happening?
- What does your program do to prevent and respond to bullying?
- Is it working?

What Can Youth Serving Agencies Do to Prevent and Respond to Bullying?

- Build safe environments where bullying is not tolerated
- Build bonds of caring
- Provide education
 - Identifying bullying
 - Understanding impacts
 - Strategies for prevention
 - Strategies for response
 - how to handle reports

(Committee for Children, 2005; Stopbullying.gov, 2024; NCSSLE, 2018; Sugai, et.al., 2011)



What Can Youth Serving Agencies Do to Prevent and Respond to Bullying?

Engage in assessment and climate surveys

- Adults often don't know it's happening

Create clear anti-bullying policies and procedures, example:

- Clearly define bullying behavior
- Describe prevention efforts (including training for staff)
- Identify a procedure for reporting bullying
- Identify procedures for responding to reports
- Describe range of consequences for bullying
- Identify referral process to mental health and/or social supports

(Committee for Children, 2005; Stopbullying.gov, 2024)



What Can Youth Serving Agencies Do to Prevent and Respond to Bullying?

- Define and teach clear behavioral expectations
- Teach preventative social skills (empathy, assertiveness, problem-solving, self-regulation)
- Teach youth intervention and reporting strategies
- Educate staff about how to handle reports

(Committee for Children, 2005; Stopbullying.gov, 2024; Diamanti, K., 2018; Sugain, et.al., 2011)



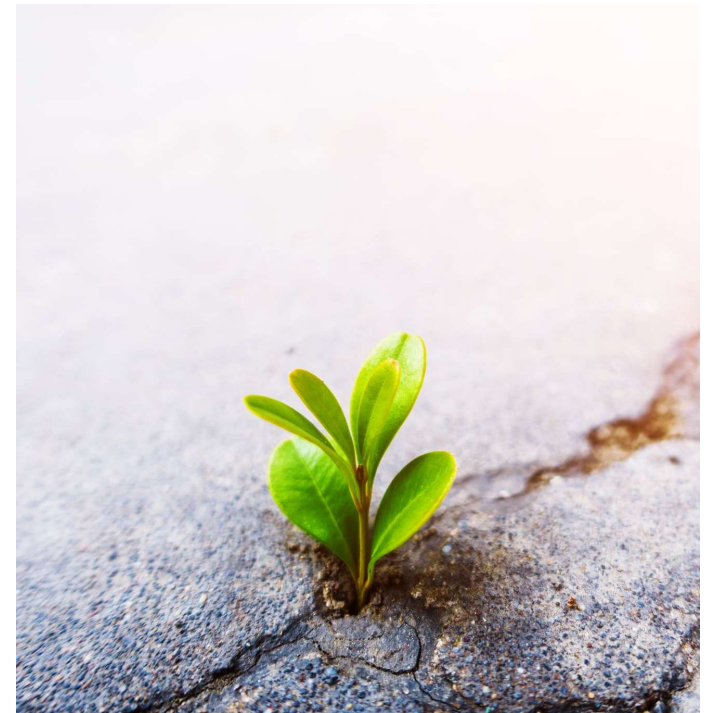
What Can Youth Serving Agencies Do to Prevent and Respond to Bullying?

- Increase supervision
- Identify and administer consequences that teach and support problem-solving
 - Educational
- Provide individual coaching to child bullied and child bullying
- Referral for mental health supports

(Committee for Children, 2005; Stopbullying.gov, 2024; Diamanti, K., 2018; Sugain, et.al., 2011)

Strengthen Protective Factors that Build Resilience

- **Relationships**: safe, stable, supportive, trusting
- **Connection to culture and community**: a sense of belonging to people, places, community, culture, something larger than ourselves
- **Coping skills**: self-regulation and executive functioning
- **A sense of mastery and self strength**: a belief that we can overcome difficulties, accomplish things, have control, have self-esteem



(National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2015; Henson, et. al., 2017)

Together....

- Build bonds of caring
- Create safe spaces where youth feel they will be protected
- Step in, intervene, don't ignore
- Eyes wide open
- Teach youth skills
- Promote resilience building
- Be a hero



Contact Information

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Resources

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>
- Olweus Bullying Prevention Program: clemsonolweus.org
- Positive Action: www.positiveaction.net/bullying-prevention-curriculum-programs
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: www.pbis.org
- Second Step: A Violence Prevention Curriculum: www.secondstop.org
- StopBullying.gov: www.stopbullying.gov
- Sweetgrass Method of Bullying Prevention for Native American Youth
<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/kicjir/vol3/iss1/1/>

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