Bullying: What is it to you?

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2012 FOTA Conference

Objectives

1. Define bullying under Florida Statutes
2. Identify types of bullying
3. Describe interventions to address bullying
4. Identify strategies for prevention of bullying
5. Share resources on bullying
What is Bullying?

• The US Department of Health & Human Services defines bullying as:
  – “unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose” http://www.stopbullying.gov

According to Florida Statutes

• Bullying is systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students and may involve:
  1. Teasing;
  2. Social exclusion;
  3. Threat;
  4. Intimidation;
  5. Stalking;
  6. Physical violence;
  7. Theft;
  8. Sexual, religious, or racial harassment;
  9. Public humiliation; or
  10. Destruction of property.
Types of Bullying

- **Verbal** – teasing, name-calling, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, threatening to cause harm
- **Social** - leaving someone out on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors about someone, embarrassing someone in public
- **Physical** - hitting/kicking/pinching, spitting, tripping/pushing, taking or breaking someone’s things, making mean or rude hand gestures [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)

Cyberbullying is...

- “Bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites”
- Examples of cyberbullying include “mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles” [www.stopbullying.gov](http://www.stopbullying.gov)
When Bullying Becomes Harassment

- Under federal civil rights laws, harassment is unwelcome conduct based on a protected class (race, national origin, color, sex, age, disability, religion) that is severe, pervasive, or persistent and creates a hostile environment
  www.stopbullying.gov/

Bullying Statistics for 2010

- One in seven students in grades kindergarten through 12th grade is either a bully or has been a victim of bullying
- Sometimes a teen or child who has been bullied eventually becomes the bully as a way to retaliate
- Revenge for bullying is one of the main causes for school shootings
- Over half, about 56 percent, of all students have witnesses a bullying crime take place while at school
Bullying Statistics for 2010

• A reported 15 percent of all students who don't show up for school report it to being out of fear of being bullied while at school
• There are about 71 percent of students that report bullying as an on-going problem
• Along that same vein, about one out of every 10 students drops out or changes schools because of repeated bullying
• One out of every 20 students has seen a student with a gun at school

Bullying Statistics for 2010

• Some of the top years for bullying include 4th through 8th graders in which 90 percent were reported as victims of some kind of bullying
• Other recent bullying statistics reveal that 54 percent of students reported that witnessing physical abuse at home can lead to violence in school.
• Among students of all ages, homicide perpetrators were found to be twice as likely as homicide victims to have been bullied previously by their peers.
• There are about 282,000 students that are reportedly attacked in high schools throughout the nation each month
Groups at Risk

- Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender (LGBT) Youth
- Youth with disabilities or other special health needs
- Race, ethnicity, and national origin
- Religion and faith

How to Stop Bullying?

- Intervene immediately. It is okay to get another adult to help
- Separate the kids involved
- Make sure everyone is safe
- Meet any immediate medical or mental health needs
- Stay calm. Reassure the kids involved, including bystanders
- Model respectful behavior when you intervene (www.stopbullying.gov)
Common Mistakes

• Don’t ignore it. Don’t think kids can work it out without adult help.
• Don’t immediately try to sort out the facts.
• Don’t force other kids to say publicly what they saw.
• Don’t question the children involved in front of other kids.
• Don’t talk to the kids involved together, only separately.
• Don’t make the kids involved apologize or patch up relations on the spot (www.stopbullying.gov)

Prevention at School

Occupational therapy can have a crucial role in the school setting by:
• assessing bullying
• engaging parents and youth
• setting policies and rules
• building a safe environment
• educating about bullying
Working in the Community

Occupational therapy can assist agencies to:
• identify partners such as mental health specialists, law enforcement officers, neighborhood associations, service groups, faith-based organizations, and businesses.
• identify what types of bullying community members see and discuss developing targeted solutions.
• involve youth in leadership roles in bullying prevention.

References

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