**The Effects of Bullying on Mental Health**

By Alice Bodda

“Bullying in my mind is when someone in a position of power, whether physical or emotional, exerts that power over someone in a lesser position and in a constant and consistent manner over a period of time,” Ms. Hernandez explained when she defined bullying. She believes that bullying happens due to a range of reasons however she most commonly sees it happen when someone feels insecure about themself. The bully “...wants to feel control and may lash out for that reason” explains Ms. Hernandez.

A victim of bullying develops symptoms of depression or anxiety. Ms. Hernandez says that “many students who experience bullying struggle with mental health due to the persistent and cruel nature bullying can have. Students tend to have other areas of their life impacted including extra curricular activities, friendships, and academics.” Bullying can affect someone for many years. Even after the bullying ends, there are triggers that may remind them of how they felt when they were a victim, causing the symptoms to come back.

Ms. Hernandez recommends that if you are in a bad mental state as a result of bullying, you should “seek support from parents, teachers or a therapist.” She goes on to describe how, “positive self talk can be an important part of healing after experiencing bullying in order to help the victim know that they are worth it and that they are important.”

Ms. Hernandez explains that BISB has “...not had a large problem with bullying...” and that “most students here tend to be great advocates for positivity…” BISB has a strict anti-bullying policy and enforces anti-bullying measures to students from a young age. They have had anti-bullying days in the past to promote an atmosphere of acceptance, trying to stomp out the threat of bullying.

If you are being bullied, Ms. Hernandez wants you to know that it is okay to “seek help from a trusted adult.”

“We try our best to keep students from feeling targeted but it makes it difficult to help if we do not know. Teachers are always willing to listen to student feedback about this so please reach out!”