Take A Stand: Prevention of Bullying

9-10 YEAR OLDS - Instructional Guide Day 5

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**Objectives**

To acknowledge that adults have problems.

To acknowledge that they sometimes take their problems out on their children

To introduce the concept of words that hurt

To give permission to tell someone when they're being hurt

To discuss the importance of truthfulness and thoroughness when telling

To discuss resources for getting help and teach children how to tell effectively

### **Teacher-Directed Discussion and Role-play**

**How many of you recognized times when you had been a bully, or were unkind to someone or made someone else feel bad?**

**Did you apologize or do anything to make up for your behavior?**

**How did you feel after that?**

**How do you think the other person felt?**

**RP** Role-play examples from the group when they were a bully and then apologized.

**Hurtful Words**

**Do grown-ups ever hurt you with their words?**

**Just because an adult gets upset and says things that aren't very nice, that doesn't make what they say true.**

**What if someone says to you,** (say this loudly, like you mean it) **"You're the most stupid kid I’ve ever been around." Or “I can’t stand you!” Does that hurt?**

**Where do you feel that in your body?**

**What feelings do you have?**

**What response do you feel like making?**

**Now I have an exercise that will help you learn not to take what people say inside, to not let people’s words hurt you.**

*NOTE: Choose a child with pretty good ego strength for this next exercise. Say the following and throw either nerf balls or pieces of paper as you say the words so they hit the child. Say these phrases like you mean it so the full impact is felt. As shocking as it is, the point of this exercise is to teach children not to internalize hurtful things that are said to them. This exercise makes real the adage “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never hurt me.”*

**STEP 1:** (use a pretty secure child) **I have three pieces of paper (or nerf balls). I want you to pretend that these are the words I am saying and to let them hit you.**

**“You are so stupid!” “You never do anything right!” “I hate you!”**

**Was that pretty shocking? Was it hurtful?**

**Is it true about you? Of course not.**

**Who has the problem here, you or the adult? The adult does and she is taking her problem out on you.**

**There’s no reason for you to take that into yourself. So this time I want you to:**

* **Step aside as you see the words and paper coming and**
* **At the same time say “That’s not true about me.” inside your head when I say the hurtful words.**

**Step 2:** Teacher: Again throw the papers or balls and say, **“You’re an idiot?” “You never get anything right!” “I wish you belonged to someone else!”**

**How does that feel? How is it different?**

**Did the words hurt you that time?**

Note: If they did the child is still letting the hurtful words in, try having them say, “That’s not true about me.” out loud first and then silently.

**Step 3: Now, if someone was really angry, they wouldn’t want to see you stepping aside, so this time just see the words coming toward you and then taking a big detour around you. At the same time say to yourself “That’s not true about me.”**

Teacher: This time just say the words without throwing anything. **"You can't get anything right." "You're hopeless, you’ll never learn this."**

**Did you let it in?**

**So you really do have a choice about whether you let hurtful things people say into your self or not. This same thing works with things kids say to you. You have a choice.**

**RP** *Note: Have a child who is particularly sensitive to what other kids say to him or her come up. You start saying things so the child can practice disregarding them. Then have 6 children line up and say things so the child can experience not caring what they say and not being aggravated by it. Do this with several children who need to learn this skill. This is particularly effective with bullies who believe they are set off by what people say to them. They too can learn to ignore other people’s taunts.*

**Adult Verbal Bullying**

**Everyone experiences unkind words from time to time and this skill is for knowing how to handle the occasional insult. For some kids, however, this happens all the time and it can be really hard not to take it in.**

**If someone hurts you with his or her words, and it happens to you a lot, you should tell someone about that.**

**If someone says unkind and hurtful things to you on a regular basis, they need to get some help with their problems. It’s not about you; it’s about the person saying the unkind things.**

**You need to keep telling yourself “That’s not true about me” and you need to get another adult to help.**

**When you need adult help, who would you go to?** List them

**Who else could you talk to if you were having a problem?** Really brainstorm and make this an expansive list.

**Telling and Getting Help Effectively**

**RP I need someone to help me.**

**Pretend I’m your coach, and I’m physically mean to you? I slap you and hit you on the back of the head** (pretend to do this in the role-play) **whenever you don’t do things exactly as he wants you to.**

**You want to tell your dad. Now pretend I am your dad. What would you say and do if he was watching television?** Role-play getting attention and telling. It is important to tell the whole story so dad has all the facts.

NOTE: It’s important that children learn how to effectively get attention when they need help. Often parents, teachers or other adults are too busy or preoccupied to really listen to what children have to say. Role-playing helps children learn appropriate ways to get attention when they need it.

Role-play the steps of getting someone’s attention

NOTE: Role-playing this is fun and involves several steps. Allow them to do all the things they normally do that are ineffective so they can see how funny they are before you introduce steps 2 – 6.

1. **Try to get someone’s attention: talking when they’re doing something else, pulling on the persons clothes, putting your face in their face. All of these are more annoying than effective.**
2. **Getting someone’s attention: that means the person stops what he or she is doing and looks at the child.**
3. **Practice saying what actually needs to be said using three elements of communication**
4. **Practice having the person understand and do something about the problem.**
5. **Also practice having the person not be interested or not help.**
6. **Then, practice having the child go and tell someone else.**

**RP I need someone else to help me now.**

**What if your sitter is always rude and ignores you? You feel like he hates you and hates being there. You want to tell your mom, but she's always in a rush and doesn’t listen very well. Pretend I am your mom and show me what you would do?**

**RP I need another person.**

**What if your aunt is always putting you down, telling you "you're just lazy and good for nothing?" Who would you tell?**

**Pretend I am the person you would tell and show us what you would say and do.**

**What if I say, "Oh, she's always talked that way, just ignore her.”? Would you tell someone else? Who?**

**If you tell an adult who doesn’t understand or help you with a problem, who else could you tell?**

**RP Who has another example we could role-play. Remember no names.**

Practice as time allows with their examples.

**Discussion: Do you need to be careful that you tell the whole story and that you are absolutely truthful when you are telling about something that has happened to you? Why?**

**What could be the consequences of making something up or exaggerating your situation?**

**Other Resources for Help**

**Can the school help with problems at home?**

*Most young people think school problems are for school and home problems are for home. They rarely think of overlapping their resources*.

**Can the adults you live with help with problems at school or at the neighbors?**

**Are you old enough to be responsible for asking for help?**

**I think so. How many of you think so?**

**Conclusion**

**We’ve had really good discussions about being a community that is willing to** **treat people with greater respect and we’ve agreed not to tolerate bullying. Your job now is to keep that promise, to continue to pay attention to what is happening in our community and to take responsibility for what you say and do. Stand up if you’re willing to continue that process for the rest of this year and on into next year.**

**Thank you, I promise to help you keep that promise.**

**Activity**

Make a list of all the grown-ups that could help you with a problem including their telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

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