

Bully Behavior

INTRODUCTION

We need to be technical with our definition of bullying because bullying is a legal matter. Bullying is defined by *Wikipedia* as “aggressive behavior characterized by:

1.hostile intent, 2.imbalance of power, and 3.repeated over time.”

A *single* disturbance needs a name then. We'll use “SUKA” (long u) - a “Single Un-Kind Act”. Both have the possibility of being very serious, and in those cases, should involve serious repercussions, but we need to use the correct vocabulary when addressing them.

In *Peace Coach* we will also use the phrase “bully behavior” instead of “bully” as often as possible to separate the “action” from the “person”.

It is also important to clarify for students that bully behavior is not just physical.

It can also be:

* **verbal** (and often verbal can be even more harmful than physical).

* **technological** – done by cell phone or computer

(Peace Coach advises not getting “smart” phones for grade-school children. They might take 2 steps forward (educational, calling for rides) but 10 steps back (explicit songs, photos, websites, cheating, narcissism, bullying, lack of social skills and physical activity, etc...)

* **relational** – using persons and relationships to inflict harm.

* **sports related** – excluding and demeaning others.



It's important to note that it is *not* how the initiator INTENDED the interaction that counts (“I was just kidding”), but how the receiver FELT it. If the receiver felt harmed, the initiator must refrain from doing it again.

It is obvious that we need to help the person *being* bullied in these circumstances. But we also need to help the person *doing* the bullying, as well. Both individuals are at risk. And neither are quick, easy fixes. But our efforts can be worth it. Not only is bullying a legal matter, it can also be a deadly matter. Lives can be saved by our actions.

Bullying is never right, but we can learn a lesson from Jesus by how he treated those who made these kinds of mistakes. He separated the person from the actions and he always gave them an opportunity to change. In Matthew 5:43 “Love your enemies ... If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?” In Luke 15:3 He told the parable of the Good Shepherd who left a flock of 99 to go after one lost sheep. In Acts 9:1-22, Saul, is converted to Paul.