



Teacher's Guide
You Don't Have To Be Bullied
Grades 1-5

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, concerns about bullying and its role in school violence, depression and health concerns have grown. According to a study published in the November 2005 issue of the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, nearly one quarter of American elementary school children report that they have experienced bullying either as a target or a perpetrator.¹ Bullying is defined as any repeated negative activity or aggression intended to harm or bother someone who is perceived by peers as being less physically or psychologically powerful than the aggressor(s).² As noted in the above study, the prevalence of bullying among elementary school children is extensive. Associations between bullying and its effect on school attendance, academic achievement, disciplinary actions and self-reported feelings of sadness, safety and belonging indicate this as a serious, and often overlooked, issue.

The goal of the *You Don't Have To Be Bullied* activity book is to generate a dialogue about bullying, its effect on children, and ways to overcome bullying in school or on the playground. Through mazes, picture finds, and other coloring activities, children learn what to do if they are being bullied such as telling a trusted adult or surrounding themselves with friends.

You Don't Have To Be Bullied is an integral part of the AMA Alliance Stop America's Violence Everywhere (SAVE) initiative, which began in 1995 to combat the growing problem of violence in schools and communities nationwide. Today, more than 600 county and state Alliances participate in SAVE activities to teach children conflict resolution skills and educate the public about violence prevention. For more information about the SAVE program, contact the AMA Alliance at 312-464-4470 or by e-mail at AMAA@ama-assn.org.

ASSUMPTIONS

By working through this eight-page activity book, students share a positive experience with their peers, connect with a caring adult and learn that their classroom is a safe environment to talk about problems such as bullying. In fact, the book is well suited for the elementary classroom because it can be completed with the entire class at one time yet still allows individual thought. Through conflict resolution training, students strengthen certain skills such as listening, empathy, creative thinking, and understanding different perspectives.

¹ Glew, Gwen M., MD; Fan, Ming-Yu, PhD; Katon, Wayne, MD; Rivara, Frederick P., MD; Kernic, Mary A. PhD, MPH; Bullying, Psychosocial Adjustment, and Academic Performance in Elementary School. Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, 2005. Vol. 159, No. 11: 159: 1026-1031.

² Glew et al.

IMPLEMENTATION

In general, read or ask the children to read the words on each page. Involve the children in all of the activities and encourage them to talk about what is going on throughout the story. This guide contains an analysis of each page in the activity book and provides suggestions for ways in which to present the information to children.

Page 1

It is common for children who are bullied to fear school or consider it to be an unsafe or unhappy place. On this page, Keith is afraid to go to school but doesn't want to tell his mom. It is very important to let children know that they should tell an adult when something is bothering them. Let the children know that talking about the situation is the right thing to do and that they can start with their parents. Encourage the children to be honest about their feelings. Remind them that adults were once kids, too, so they know what it's like to be scared or have to deal with a bully. Once you discuss some of these key points, instruct the children to find the objects on the page.

Page 2

As the authors of the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine study point out, bullying can have a lifelong impact on a person. This impact can range from lower grades to an increased risk of suicide. Several studies have found that bullies and those bullied do poorer academically and are more likely to experience psychiatric problems such as depression and anxiety. In addition, bullying has also been associated with smoking, underage drinking and drug addiction. Here, Keith is so worried about the bully that he gives a wrong answer in class. The bully and his friend make fun of Keith but the rest of his classmates and his teachers support him. Facilitate a discussion with the children that focuses on each word balloon and why it is kind or mean. Invite the children to describe how they would respond if they were in class with Keith. Ask the children to color the word balloons that are kind and to cross out the mean word balloons.

Page 3

On this page there are six scenarios. Ask the children to help Keith choose the best places to play—places where he will feel safe. Among his choices (clockwise) are: a boy and a girl playing soccer, a girl playing on the swing set, a group of girls whispering in a mean-spirited way, a group of boys playing aggressively on the slide, a boy and a girl playing in the sandbox, and two boys fighting. It is often difficult for children who are being bullied to decide where to go. They are often loners and unsure of ways they can surround themselves with other children to stay safe. Discuss each scenario with the children. Ask the children where they would go if they were in this situation. Help the children determine which scenarios offer a safe haven.

Page 4

Although there are several places where Keith would feel safe, he chooses to go to the swing set to play with Tracy. While discussing this page with the children, be sure to remind them that everyone deserves to feel safe at school and on the playground. Also, discuss the importance of friendship and equality. Remind the children that everyone is different and that such differences make the world a more interesting place to live. Most children are willing to help other children—sometimes they just need a little encouragement. Ask the children to draw a picture of themselves on the playground with Tracy and Keith. Discuss the importance of being a good listener and friend. Promote attitudes in the peer group which support empathy for the victim and condemn aggression to reduce bullying.

Page 5

On this page, Joe, the bully, comes over to the swing set to push Keith off the swing. Bullying can take many forms including psychological and emotional (i.e. spreading rumors or excluding the person from conversations and activities), verbal (i.e. name-calling or threats), and physical (i.e. pushing or hitting). Students who engage in bullying behaviors seem to have a need to feel powerful and in control. Some children develop these habits because they have been victims of their parents' physical or verbal abuse. Students who are victims of bullying are typically anxious, insecure and cautious. Discuss these feelings with the children. Help them identify how Keith is feeling by finding the words in the clouds.

Page 6

Deciding the best course of action when being bullied can be difficult for most children. Here Keith is trying to figure out how to handle the situation. Discuss each possibility with the children. For instance, experts say that telling a trusted adult is one way to stop bullies, ignoring the bully sends a message that you are not afraid, and telling the bully that you don't like the way he is treating you may help him realize that what he is doing is hurtful.

Page 7

Let the children know that fighting is definitely not the right answer—it only validates the bully's actions. Bullies solve conflict through violence. Discuss all of the other options with the children. Keith chooses to tell a trusted adult.

Page 8

With Mr. Smith's help, Keith is no longer bullied by Joe. Mr. Smith reinforces to Joe that bullying is both unkind and mean, and that kind of behavior is not acceptable. Although they may never become friends, Keith no longer has to worry about going to school, going to the playground or not feeling safe. Discuss the outcome with the children. Remind them that when they see a classmate being bullied they should tell a caring adult—like you.

Where to Go For More Information on Bullying

1. www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov – the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sponsors this site to educate children and adults on how to identify, prevent and intervene with bullying in schools.
2. www.aafp.org – the American Academy of Family Physicians is a professional medical member organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the science and art of family medicine to ensure high-quality, cost-effective health care for patients.
3. www.aap.org – the American Academy of Pediatrics is a professional organization committed to the attainment of optimal physical, mental and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents and young adults.
4. www.csn.org – the Child Safety Network is a professional organization dedicated to making America a safer place for children to live.