

FOR FAMILIES

.....the link between the need and the solution

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FOR Families is a community service offered through the City of Irvine for those who live or work in Irvine.



Bullying

By Deborah Brunn, MS, MFT
Supervisor of the FOR Families Program

We all enter the world with fairly simple needs: to be protected, to be nurtured, to be loved unconditionally, and to belong.
-Louise Hart

Chances are that many of us can recall an unpleasant experience of being the victim of bullying or have witnessed others being teased or “bullied” during the elementary, middle, or high school years. Bullying is characterized by:

- A desire to frighten or inflict harm on others
- Assuming a position of power over others or “ganging up”
- Continual occurrences of physical or verbal aggression
- Lack of regard for the feelings of the victims

Bullying is abuse that is usually recurrent over time and can have detrimental effects on victims. Types of bullying include psychological/emotional, verbal, and/or physical. Some examples of bullying include:

- Spreading rumors about the victim
- Excluding the victim from social groups
- Verbal insults or poking fun at the victim’s physical attributes or behaviors
- Making embarrassing requests of the victim
- Taking money or personal property
- Kicking, hitting, pushing, or tripping

Bullying seems to be a fairly prevalent occurrence within elementary and junior high school-aged children. According to a 2004 KidsHealth

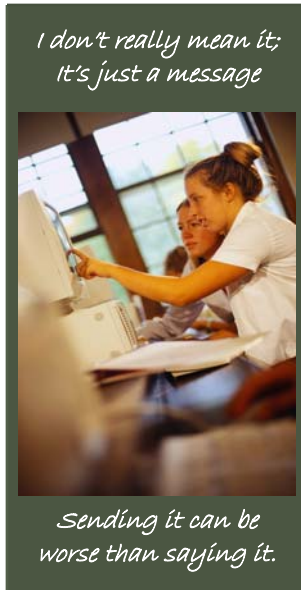
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KidsPoll, 86% of more than 1,200 boys and girls ages 9 to 13 who were polled said they have seen someone else being bullied, 48% said they've been bullied, and 42% admitted to bullying other kids at least once in a while (www.kidshealth.org, 2004). For parents and educators, it is vital to recognize the seriousness of bullying and take constructive action to reduce and/or eliminate this damaging behavior.

Cyberbullying

One of the newer trends emerging due to the advancement of the electronic age is cyberbullying. Sending mean-hearted text messages or instant messages, using camera phones intended to manipulate, creating degrading websites, or encouraging others to become involved in posting demeaning comments online are only some of the ways bullies are embarrassing and humiliating their victims. As a result, bullying no longer occurs simply at the schoolyard; kids are now being victimized in the privacy of their own homes.



What to watch for: Symptoms and signs that your child may be a victim of bullying:

- Ambivalence or refusal to attend school; may pretend to be sick or make up other excuses
- Seems depressed, passive, or withdraws from family members
- Has difficulty sleeping or complains of fatigue
- Asks for extra lunch money
- Poor grades or loss of interest in school or activities
- May ask to carry a weapon for protection
- Appears to have unexplained bruises, scratches, or other injuries
- Frequent feelings of sadness or crying; exhibits stress
- Recurrent complaints of stomach pain or headaches

If your child struggles with any of the above symptoms and signs, be sure to talk with your child, your child's teacher, the school principal, and also discuss these issues with his or her doctor as needed. Consider talking with your child's School Resource Officer or DARE Officer (see page 3 for contact information), take advantage of school counseling services, or visit a local mental health professional.

What parents can do:

- Have an awareness of sudden changes in your child's behaviors
- Be sure to talk with your child about what is bothering him or her; refrain from reacting in anger or despair so your child does not feel he or she has let you down
- Provide active listening (good eye contact and posture facing your child) and be sure to validate your child's concerns; he or she likely feels embarrassed, afraid, and humiliated
- Encourage your child to tell you, their teacher, or a trusted adult about the bullying
- Educate children about use of the Internet: never to give out email or cell phone numbers freely
- Develop problem-solving strategies with your child which will help raise self-esteem and boost coping skills
- Teach your child that retaliation will only compound the bullying and make the situation worse; it draws more attention to fuel the bully's fire
- Educate yourself about your child's school anti-bullying policies

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COMMUNITY SERVICES Fall Class Offerings

Parenting

Navigating the Teenage Years

Are you frustrated with increasing conflict and deteriorating communication with your teenager? Parents will learn a new approach to resolving problems, how feelings and interactions influence communication, and how to recognize pitfalls and workable alternatives.

Inst: Debra Solseng, MFT, RPT-S.

Location: Turtle Rock Community Park

#41467 W 7pm-8:30pm Nov 1-15 \$50

Parenting the Defiant Child

Increase family harmony and build a better relationship with your child age 12 or younger. Come learn the causes of defiant behavior and techniques created to increase child's compliance.

Inst: Debra Solseng, MFT, RPT-S.

Location: Turtle Rock Community Park

#41468 W 7pm-8:30pm Oct 4-18 \$50

Setting Limits

Is getting the behavior you want from your kids a problem? Are you fluctuating between laying down the law one minute and being a doormat the next? Learn the tools and techniques necessary to get the behavior you want from your kids. Learn how to set and enforce clear and effective boundaries, how to apply appropriate consequences and how to deal with power struggles. Inst: Trecia Davis, MA.

Location: Tustin Area Senior Center

#40195 W 7pm-8:30pm Oct 18-25 \$40

To register or to find information
on additional
classes offered through
the City of Irvine go to:

www.IrvineQuickReg.org

Or call

Program Registration
(949) 724-6610

Redirecting Children's Behavior

Having trouble with your kids aged 2-12? Feel frustrated and discouraged and want to be able to enjoy your children more? This powerful parenting course will improve your family life. Learn techniques for dealing with your children, recognize four types of misbehavior, discipline without punishment, set natural and logical consequences, and much more! \$35 materials fee due at class.

Inst: Trecia Davis, MA, a mother of three. No class 11/22.

Location: Tustin Area Senior Center

#40196 W 7pm-9:30pm Nov 1-Dec 6 \$115

#40197 W 7pm-9:30pm Nov 1-Dec 6 (couple) \$190

Where to Turn
For Information and
Assistance About Bullying

Irvine Unified School District

To review the Board of Education's policy
regarding harassment and hate-violence

[http://www.iusd.k12.ca.us/bdpolicy/
policies/5145_6.htm](http://www.iusd.k12.ca.us/bdpolicy/policies/5145_6.htm)

Irvine Family Resource Center

Provides family and student counseling services
for Irvine Unified School District students
(949) 936-7950

California Department of Education

Search "bullying"

www.cde.ca.gov

Irvine Police Department

School Resource Officers—Middle/High School

Officer Tom Goodbrand (949) 724-7050

University HS & Rancho San Joaquin Middle School

Officer Dale Lawrence (949) 724-7125

Woodbridge HS & Lakeside Middle School

Officer Kevin Von Luft (949) 724-7181

Northwood HS & Sierra Vista Middle School

Officer David Tran (949) 724-7098

Creekside HS & South Lake Middle School

Officer Rolf Parkes (949) 724-7126

Irvine HS & Venado Middle School

Officer Michael Tu (949) 724-7184

Beckman HS

DARE—Elementary Schools

Sgt. Engen (949) 724-7023

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Why bully?

The bully's primary goal is to feel power over another child and assume control. Bullies do not have insight in recognizing that their behavior is hurtful and crushing to the victim. Rather, bullies thrive off of their victim's emotional reactions.

Many bullies may be influenced by peer pressure, or may be coping with family problems and take out their aggression on other children.

What to do if your child is the bully or participates in bullying behavior:

- Talk with your child about their behavior; explain that other children are being hurt and that the behavior will not be tolerated
- Discuss the consequences of their behavior but refrain from responding in anger
- Be aware and seek assistance to change negative communication patterns among family members in your home such as frequent arguing, yelling, or acts of physical aggression
- Keep in close contact with your child's school; discuss the behavior with the teacher and make every effort to resolve the problem
- Establish a pattern to regularly ask your child about their day in school



- Acknowledge your child with praise, support, and encouragement when he or she is treating others with gentleness and kindness
- Teach your child about appropriate behavior when interacting with others, discuss your expectations, and be a model of acceptable behavior
- Consider attending a community parenting class for additional suggestions

To discuss bullying or other related concerns, please contact the FOR Families staff and make an appointment for a confidential consultation. Staff assist those who live or work in the City of Irvine and may be reached at: (949) 724-6650

References:

KidsHealth KidsPoll (2004). Bullying and Your Child
<http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/behavior/bullies.html>

About the newsletter author:

Deborah Brunn, FOR Families Program Specialist, graduated with her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Ecology from UC Irvine and with her Master of Science Degree in Counseling from Cal State Fullerton. She is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist experienced in counseling children, chronically mentally ill adults, and providing professional consultations to persons with dementia and their families. Deborah currently resides with her husband in Irvine and has been a resident since 1971. *Deborah may be contacted by phone at (949) 724-6650 or via e-mail at dbrunn@cityofirvine.org.*

In celebrating the City of Irvine's Anniversary here are 35 things to be thankful for :



Nature

Irvine's bike, walking, & hiking trails
 Scenic lakes
 Towering mountains
 Majestic live oak trees in
 Limestone Canyon
 The long shadows of winter
 Azure blue skies
 Cooling ocean breezes
 A great view of snowcapped mountains
 Flowers, flowers, and more flowers
 Drops of rain
 Autumn leaves
 Irvine's beautiful parks

Home & Family

The sweet innocence of children
 Grandparents who give great hugs
 Mom's warm apple pie
 Dad's knee to cry on
 Holiday festivities

Animals

Puppies who love us
 Cats and kittens that think your lap is
 the best place to nap
 Birds whose songs uplift your spirit



People

Our service men and women
 Loyal friends
 A good storyteller
 Dedicated doctors & nurses
 Supportive co-workers
 Family-friendly businesses

Experiences

Our freedom
 Great food
 Safe neighborhoods
 Health & wellness
 Diversity in our community
 The love of family
 Peace & serenity
 Enrichment of our lives through the arts
 A good night's sleep

"Each of us faces the challenge to live our lives in such a way that others will be thankful for our contributions. We do this, not for the sake of receiving thanks, but rather for the sake of the goodness we bring into the world."

About FOR Families

The FOR Families Program provides short-term support and information to families and individuals living or working in Irvine who need assistance identifying and accessing needed services and resources. The FOR Families staff offers **free, confidential consultations** to determine community members' needs and develops action plans to help meet those needs.

Some of the issues FOR Families addresses include:

- relationship difficulties
- separation and divorce
- substance abuse concerns
- parenting issues
- stress and depression
- financial and legal issues

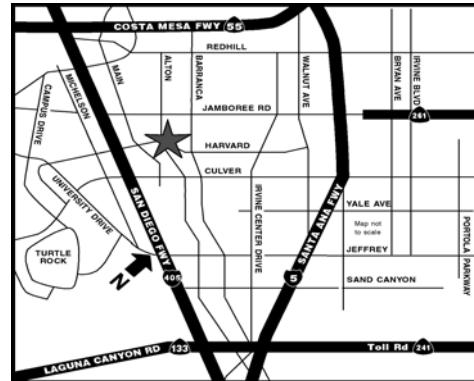
FOR Families will assist with creative problem-solving, resource linkage, and referrals for counseling.

Hours: 9-5 Monday - Thursday and alternate Fridays

Phone: (949) 724-6650

Fax (949) 724-6608

www.irvineforfamilies.org



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