

CONSCIOUS PARENTING: IDENTIFYING, UNDERSTANDING & DEALING WITH BULLYING: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

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*(Adapted from a product of the Human Rights Law Clinic of the
Hugh Wooding Law School).*



BEFORE WE BEGIN, KEEP IN MIND...

THE 5 HUMAN VALUES

(SRI SATHYA SAI BABA)

“Human values are innate qualities” – Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sathya Sai Education is based on five human values:

❖ Truth,

❖ Right Conduct,

❖ Peace,

❖ Love,

❖ Nonviolence.

Drawing out these five inherent human values develops good character.

Anti-Bullying touches and concerns ALL 5 human values. It is important as parents practising conscious parenting, we teach our children these concepts / values and help them practice that in their daily interactions.



BULLYING IN CONTEXT

- Whatever form bullying takes “the emotional, psychological and mental well-being of all victims is severely compromised”. (R. Sharma-Maharaj, (2012) *“Bullying-Here we go Again,” Daily Express Newspaper*).
- Trinidad & Tobago, the Minister of Education Anthony Garcia noted that the “suffering of victims of school bullying is immense. The silent suffering creates a school climate of social injustice.” (R. Deosaran, (2015) *“Government Schools and Bullying,” Newsday Newspaper*).
- If bullying in the schools is not dealt with immediately it may become “fashionable and permissive.” (R. Deosaran, (2015) *“Government Schools and Bullying,” Newsday Newspaper*).



SECTION 1: WHAT IS BULLYING & WHAT ARE BULLYING BEHAVIOURS?

WHAT IS BULLYING?

BULLYING IS AGGRESSIVE
BEHAVIOUR CHARACTERIZED BY:

- (1) HOSTILE INTENT
- (2) IMBALANCE OF POWER, AND
- (3) REPETITION OVER A PERIOD OF
TIME. (JUVONEN & GRAHAM (2014).



BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

- Verbal
- Physical
- Relational / Social / Psychological
- Cyber-Bullying
- Baiting
- Banter
- False Friendships



BULLYING BEHAVIOURS EXPLAINED

(adapted from "The Diana Award Anti-Bullying Campaign UK)

- **Verbal bullying** - is usually attacking or upsetting somebody in the form of speech. Examples: name-calling, intimidating, mocking and making hurtful comments
- **Physical bullying** - is usually clear and is unwanted physical harm. Examples: hitting, spitting and pushing a person
- **Relational / Social / Psychological bullying** - can take on a less obvious form that you wouldn't directly see or hear. Examples: spreading rumours or lying about someone, leaving someone out of a group on purpose, hiding, stealing or damaging someone property.



BULLYING BEHAVIOURS EXPLAINED CONT'D

- **Cyber-bullying** -takes place via the use of devices such as- computers (including tablets), game consoles and mobile phones. Examples: offensive texts, uploading pictures that could harm a person's reputation or cause harm, sharing damaging information about a person in a public forum, lying and starting/spreading rumours about someone.



BULLYING BEHAVIOURS EXPLAINED CONT'D

- **Baiting** - A provocative act used to solicit an angry, aggressive or emotional response from another individual. eg. can be used to bully someone to get 'a rise' out of them and it can be used to antagonise those who might be bullying others to get them to bully. Sometimes baiting is used secretly to try and get a person to explode in a rage or react negatively/loudly so that they get in to trouble. (*Anti-Bullying Alliance, Division of the National Children's Bureau, England and Wales*).



BULLYING BEHAVIOURS EXPLAINED CONT'D

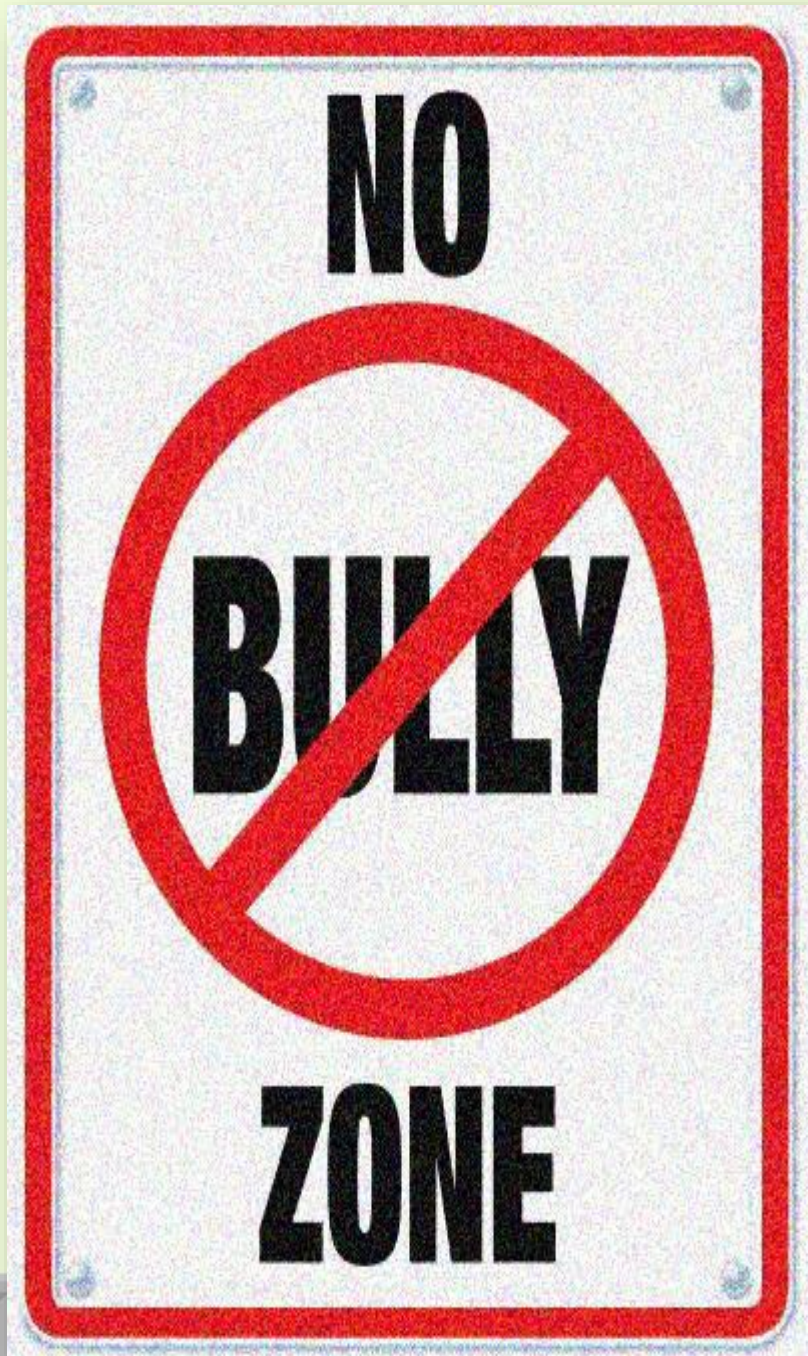
- **Banter or Bullying** - the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks.

However, all offensive, threatening, violent and abusive language and behaviour is always unacceptable, whatever your role. (*Anti-Bullying Alliance, Division of the National Children's Bureau, England and Wales*).

- **False Friendships** - where someone pretends to be your friend or is your “friend” sometimes but actually uses their power to abuse / bully you. (*Anti-*

Bullying Alliance, Division of the National Children's Bureau, England and
Wales).





SECTION 2:

WHY DO CHILDREN BULLY?

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS MY CHILD IS
BEING BULLIED?

WHAT TO DO IF MY CHILD IS A BULLY?

HOW DOES BULLYING AFFECT MY CHILD?



Understanding why children bully:

(Advice provided by Child Mind Institute Inc. of New York)

- The child wants to fit in with a group of friends who are picking on one classmate.
- The child is getting bullied at home or at school and is trying to regain a sense of power by acting aggressively toward others.
- The child is looking for attention from teachers, parents, or classmates, and hasn't been successful getting it other ways.
- The child is by nature more assertive and impulsive than their peers.
- The child may have a tendency to perceive the behaviour of other children as hostile, even when it is not.

The child does not fully grasp how their behavior is making the victim feel. This is particularly true of younger children.



SIGNS A CHILD IS BEING BULLIED:

(adapted from "The Diana Award Anti-Bullying Campaign UK)

- Appearing upset after using the computer or mobile phone
- Spending a lot of time alone in their room
- Changes in your child's attitude or behaviour, perhaps appearing sad, moody, aggressive or anxious
- Becoming more withdrawn, quiet and nervous in larger groups of people
- Avoiding (online) school, making excuses or claiming they are unwell
- Lack of interest in social events or activities they normally enjoy
- Experiencing a drop in grades, teachers feeding back they are struggling more in class or not socialising with normal peer group as much
- Physical indications such as cuts, bruises or damaged possessions and clothing
- Some young people may have violent and verbal outbursts, as they can feel powerless at school but in the safety of their own home feel that they can take back some of the lost power.



SIGNS A CHILD IS A BULLY:

- Gets into physical or verbal fights
- Has friends who bully others
- Is increasingly aggressive
- Gets sent to the principal's office or to detention frequently
- Has unexplained extra money or new belongings
- Blames others for their problems
- Doesn't accept responsibility for their actions
- is competitive and worry about their reputation or popularity



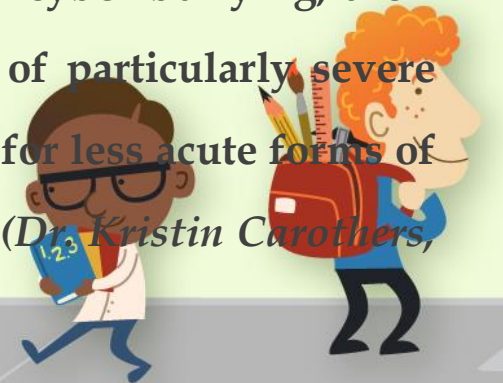
WHAT DO IF MY CHILD IS A BULLY?

(Advice provided by Child Mind Institute Inc. of New York)

- Communicate: Talking through the situation with your child can help you understand why the social aggression is happening, and what steps need to be taken in order to stop it.
- Cope Ahead: Tailor your response to the specific challenges that your child faces in her social interactions. Have lots of different solutions to various issues that are likely to come up, and give clear examples about how you expect your child to respond. Frame it as friendship behaviour, rather than, 'Don't be a bully.' Kids respond better to being told what to do than what not to do. *(Dr. Jamie Howard, director of the Stress and Resilience Program at the Child Mind Institute).*
- Encouraging your child to take the perspective of the person who is being bullied can be another helpful way to cope ahead. Ask your child: "Can you think of a time when you felt left out or sad because somebody wasn't being nice to you? That feeling you had is the same feeling your classmate is having because you aren't being nice to them."



- **Look Inward:** Children who are exposed to aggressive or unkind interactions at home are likely to repeat those behaviours at school. “It’s important for parents to think about how their behaviours might influence their kids – the way they speak to their children, the way they speak to their spouses, the way they handle anger – and to be realistic about whether or not this might be something that’s been modelled for the child,” (Dr. Kristin Carothers, *Clinical Psychologist*.)
- It is possible that bullying takes place in your home, and that you are not even aware of it. Do members of your family engage in yelling, name-calling, or putdowns? Do your children pick on one another, or hit each other? If so, it is important to start fostering a positive home environment, where members of the family treat one another with kindness and respect.
- **Provide Meaningful Consequences:** Punishments for bullying behaviour can be effective, but they should be meaningful and limited in scope. If, for example, you find out that your child is engaging in cyber bullying, their actions should be met with an immediate loss of Internet or phone privileges. In the case of particularly severe offenses, revoke the privileges for the foreseeable future, and seek the help of a therapist. But for less acute forms of bullying, the child should be able to earn their privileges back over the course of a few days. (Dr. Kristin Carothers, *Clinical Psychologist*.)



- **Make it Right** - Once your child has regained their privileges and is calm, explain that they made a mistake that needs to be fixed. Help your child take responsibility for their actions and develop respect and empathy for others - Help your child understand how their behaviour affects others - for example 'Would you like someone to do that to you?' or 'How do you think that made the other person feel?'
- Ensure your child apologizes in person, in a letter, via email, a phone call and so on – but repairs can take many different forms. (*Dr. Jamie Howard, director of the Stress and Resilience Program at the Child Mind Institute*)
- **Monitor the Situation** - If another parent approaches you about your child's bullying, notify teachers right away so they can be on the lookout for problematic behaviour. Follow up with teachers on a regular basis and give plenty of labelled praise when your child is being a good friend.



- **Seek help** - If you are continually working on building friendship skills with your child and the bullying does not stop, professional intervention may be needed. Your child might need a therapist's help to work through underlying issues.
- **Stay connected** - In some ways the most important action you can take is to build an open channel of communication with your child about their day-to-day life that will put you in a better position to recognize signs of bullying and trouble. *(Dr. Kristin Carothers, Clinical Psychologist.)*



WHAT TO DO IF MY CHILD IS BEING BULLIED?

- Listen and reassure them that coming to you was the right thing to do. Try and establish the facts. It can be helpful to keep a diary of events to share with the school or college.
- Assure them that the bullying is not their fault and that they have family that will support them. Reassure them that you will not take any action without discussing it with them first.
- Don't encourage retaliation to bullying - such as violent actions. It's important for children to avoid hitting or punching an abusive peer. Reacting that way has negative and unpredictable results- they may be hurt even further and find that they are labelled as the problem. Rather suggest that they walk away and seek help. Instead, teach them the S.T.O.P method, teach them how to use their words instead of their fists to defend themselves, teach them about the Buddy system, teach them to talk to a teacher and / or adult, among other methods.



- Find out what your child wants to happen next. Help to identify the choices open to them; the potential next steps to take; and the skills they may have to help solve the problems.
- Encourage your child to get involved in activities that build their confidence and esteem and help them to form friendships outside of school (or wherever the bullying is taking place).
- Discuss the situation with your child's teacher or principal - or the lead adult wherever the bullying is taking place. Every child has a right to a safe environment in which to learn and play. Schools must have a behaviour policy which sets out the measures that will be taken to prevent all forms of bullying between pupils.



EFFECTS OF BULLYING:

KIDS WHO ARE BULLIED ARE MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE:

(Adapted from <https://www.stopbullying.gov> a federal government website managed by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services).

- Depression and anxiety, increased feelings of sadness and loneliness, changes in sleep and eating patterns, and loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy. These issues may persist into adulthood.
- Health complaints
- Decreased academic achievement and school participation. More likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school.



EFFECTS OF BULLYING CONT'D

(Adapted from <https://www.stopbullying.gov> a federal government website managed by the U.S Department of Health and Human Services).

Kids who bully others can also engage in violent and other risky behaviours into adulthood. Kids who bully are more likely to:

- Abuse alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults
- Get into fights, vandalize property, and drop out of school
- Engage in criminal activity as adults
- Be abusive toward their romantic partners, spouses, or children as adults



SECTION 3:

CONSCIOUS PARENTING

AM I BULLYING MY CHILD?

**HOW CAN I REGULATE MY BEHAVIOUR AS A
PARENT AND CHECK MYSELF?**



DISCIPLINE OR BULLYING?

(Advice from Job and Family Services, U.S.A)

Discipline is probably excessive if:

- **Child is physically injured, including bruising, broken skin, swelling or a situation that requires medical attention;**
- **Punishment is meant to instil fear rather than to educate the child;**
- **Caretaker, whether a parent, guardian or school official, loses control;**
- **Action is inappropriate for the child's age;**
- **Action results from a caretaker's unreasonable demands or expectations for the child**



CHARACTER TRAITS OF BULLYING / ABUSIVE PARENTS:

Bullying / Abusive adults may share some general characteristics, such as:

- Lacks knowledge or understanding of a child's developmental needs and children to meet emotional or physical needs;
- Strict disciplinarian who is rigid, compulsive, authoritative or demanding
- Unrealistic expectations or standards for him/herself and children
- Is isolated, with little or no support from family, friends, neighbours and other social groups
- Shows poor self-concept and considers themselves unlovable, worthless, or bad
- Resents or fears authority
- Acts in a hostile and aggressive manner
- Shows cruel or sadistic behaviour



BULLYING BEHAVIOURS OF PARENTS:

(Adapted from Ronit Baras, International Parenting and Happiness Coach, Family Matters Practical Parenting).

There are two forms of parent bullying: i.e. Physical, Emotional -

Parents' physical bullying:

- Physical bullying is an act of physical aggression that causes injury.
- Beating, Hitting, Kicking, Throwing the child,
- Denial of food,
- Preventing the child from going to the toilet or washing,
- Making the child to do what the parent wants by physical force,
- Use of objects to cause pain, like belting or burning the skin with cigarettes or a hot iron,
- Sexual abuse - any kind of sexual act between an adult and child, including revealing genitals, exhibiting pornography, telling sexual stories, forcing a child to touch adult genitals, sexual intercourse, penetration, rape and child prostitution



Parents' emotional bullying:

- Emotional bullying is harder to detect and can be done by aggressive or passive-aggressive behaviour that creates humiliation and/or fear.
- Name calling, Sarcasm, Shouting
- Using foul language, Insults (especially in public)
- Creating competitions between siblings and Favouritism towards one child
- Negative gender-related comments (you play like a girl!)
- Negative remarks about preferences and skills
- Unreasonably strict rules and Controlling the child's every movement
- Telling the child it would be better if they were not born or that the parent does not want him or her
- Prevention of social interaction (with friends, other partner, grandparents)
- Continuous criticism, Ignoring and neglecting the child
- Unfair punishment and Uncompromising perfectionism

HOW CAN I AS A PARENT REGULATE MY BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS MY CHILD SO THAT IT IS NOT BULLYING BEHAVIOUR?

As a parent, ask yourself:

- Do I feel good about this exchange?
- Is there an important lesson that I imparted?
- Does my child know that I love him or her?
- Is there mutual respect, or fear?
- Am I behaving in a way that I want my child to emulate?
- Am I practising the 5 human values when dealing with my child?



Remember, in dealing with a bullied and / bullying child:

- Be calm, loving and patient
- Create a trusting environment
- Reinforce values of respect, kindness, empathy, honesty etc.
- Check yourself and your behaviours
- Ask questions

• Take appropriate action / action proportionate to situation when needed



SECTION 4: RESOURCES

- https://www.gavinpublishers.com/assets/articles_pdf/1550213544new_article_pdf1600959856.pdf
- <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>
- <https://www.stopbullying.gov/>
- <https://www.fatherly.com/parenting/what-is-the-difference-between-discipline-and-abuse/>



<https://childmind.org/article/what-to-do-if-your-child-is-bullying/>



SECTION 5: QUESTIONS???



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