

# Bullying IS a Problem

By Elora Estes

Bullying. This one word brings a variety of different emotions to the table. The most common ones are fear, anger and sadness. The victims are filled with fear and sadness and anger--anger at the bully, anger towards everyone who doesn't do anything and anger at the people who don't know. The parent and their so called "friends" are angry and sad because that is their baby and their friend being bullied. It's sad that they are so helpless and you can't do anything, because you have tried everything. The bully feels anger too, but sometimes sadness from their personal life. The bully has a problem that they can't deal with themselves, they may be insecure or depressed and seeing that they aren't the only one hurting this way makes them feel better. Bullying is a big deal; it leads to serious things, such as drug-use and self-harm. For the bully it can lead to greater abuse towards others. This needs to stop; too many lives are lost everyday from depression a bully caused. Too many kids are afraid to go to school in fear of being harmed or humiliated again.

Bullying is one of the leading causes for depression and self-harm. According to the National Voices for Equality and Education Enlightenment (NVEE), "suicide and self-harm rates caused from bullying from ages 10-14 have gone up 50% in the last decade." This isn't fair to families of the victims. Families are losing family members because another kid is insecure or has family issues and decided to act out towards another kid. There are programs to teach how to "stand up" to bullies. The programs that prevent it before it happens are minimal; there are more programs that stop it once it's already happening.

There are Anti-bullying projects, but they don't come soon enough. Anti-bullying projects should start with second graders, continue until fourth, then change in fifth and on. Projects should become more serious as students go up from fifth and have harsher consequences for the people who bully kids. For the first offense it can be a call to the office and a kind of

warning; the bully can apologize to the victim and move on. For the second offense, maybe in house suspension including a call home to inform the parents what's going on would be fitting. Their third offense should be met with suspension and in some more serious cases, expulsion. Though most bullying is extreme, some cases are more intense than others and those need the more serious consequences.

A big part of bullying targets the LGBTQTA community. A study from NVEE shows in 2005, kids were often bullied because of appearance, but the second leading cause was sexual orientation or gender expression. The study states that "9 out of 10 LGBTQTA students say they were verbally harassed because they are gay." LGBTQTA youth are more likely to think about suicide than heterosexual teens.

According to Make Beats Not Beat Downs, "fifty-six percent of kids have witnessed bullying at school." Most of them don't do anything; these are referred to as sheep. Sheep see it happening and don't do anything. **WHY?** Why would a student see something as horrible as this happening and not do anything? Not to say sheep should try to give the bully "a taste of their own medicine;" they will end up with the same fate as the victim. But witnesses should at least tell someone or inform a trusted adult on what's going on. Some kids are too scared to tell an adult. Some want to do something, but their fear of getting bullied is greater than their want to help.

Some people don't agree that bullying is an issue. They tell the kids to stand up and stop being a coward. Most of them don't see the extent of the issue and what it leads to. They tell them to inform a teacher but when they do, they are told they are over-reporting. They say it's not that bad and to get over it then tell some story about how hard it was in their day.

Even when students and children do as advised and tell an adult, the adult usually makes an excuse and says they're too busy to go tell someone else or even take care of the issue themselves. Adults constantly advise children to inform an adult, but the more they do, the more the adults are saying that they are over telling or "over reacting." Adults need to assess the

situation and take action from there because honestly a lot of the time kids are telling for a real reason. If it's a real problem it may never be taken care of.

In the end, bullying needs to stop everywhere. It's a terrible, life-threatening problem that leads to misguided anger, or even deep depression and suicide. It isn't fair and isn't in any way beneficial to ANYONE. Just remember the old saying, "what comes around goes back around."