

School Bullying Webinar

JANUARY 11, 2017



CENTER FOR SAFE SCHOOLS



PARENTAL READINESS AND
EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

Agenda

- ▶ How to Recognize Bullying
- ▶ How to Report Bullying
- ▶ School Responsibilities
- ▶ How to Engage Your Community
- ▶ What Parents Can Do





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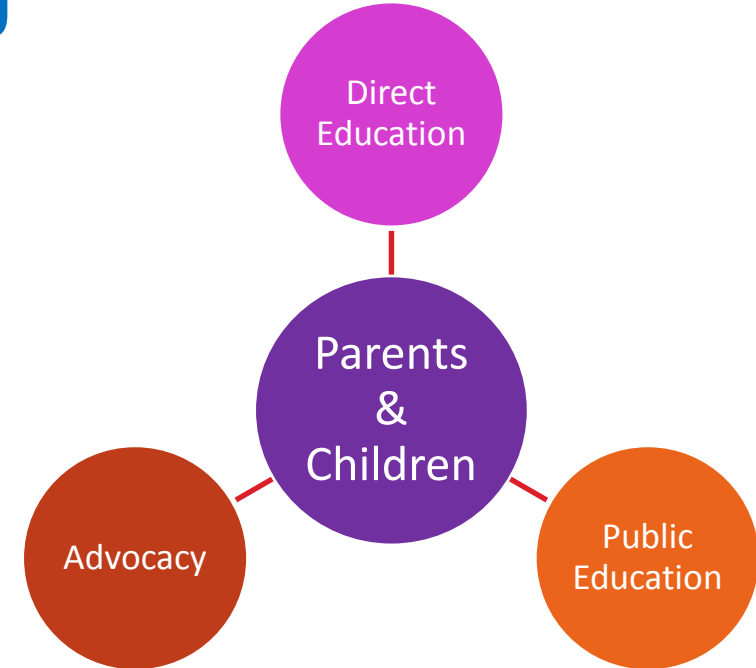
Who Are We?

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www.PREPparents.org

- Parent Advocacy guide
- Advocacy Workshops
- Free Education consultation
- Internet Resources



*This is helpful information, not legal advice. We try to be accurate, but rules can change.

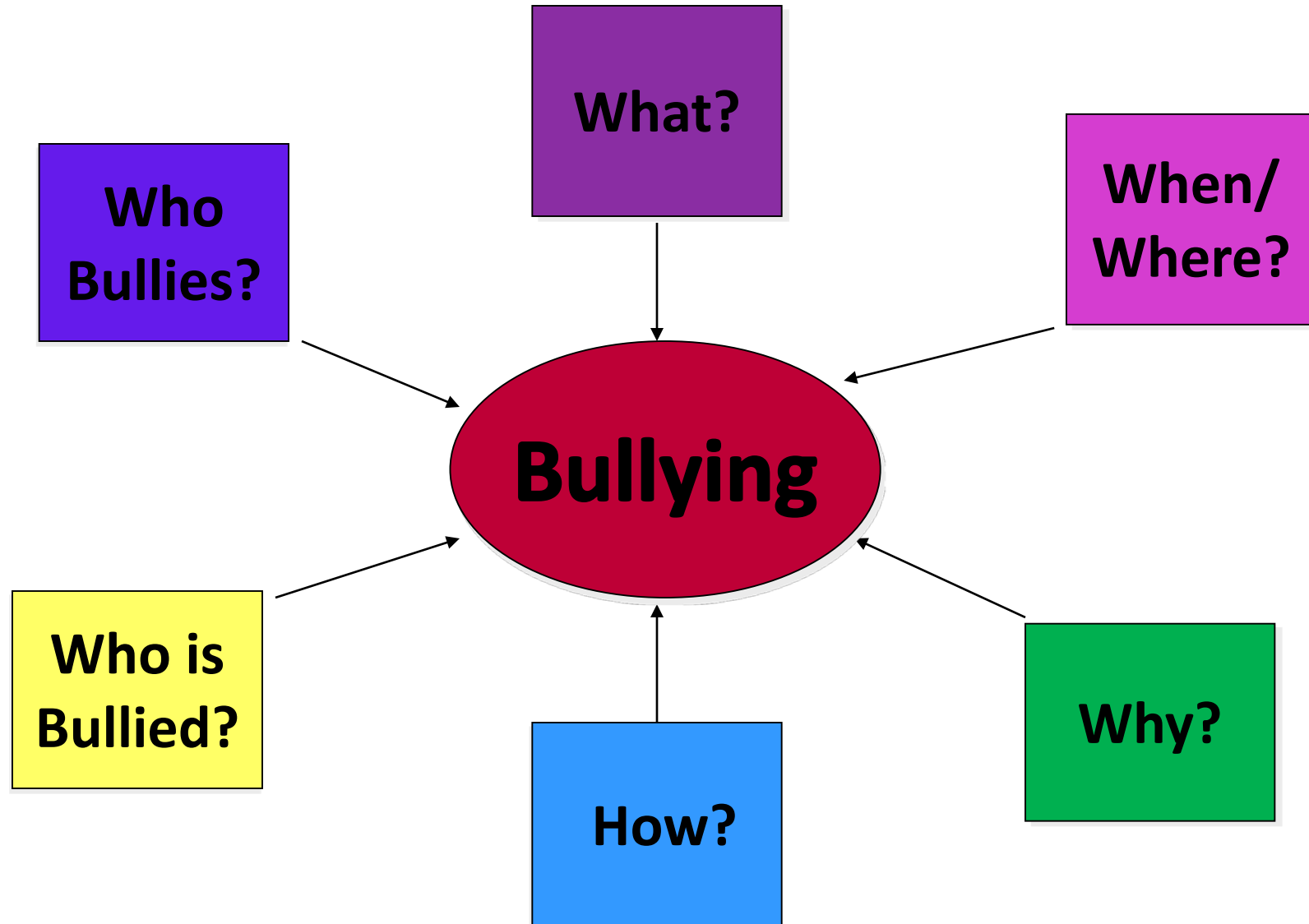
Center for Safe Schools

- ▶ The mission of the Center for Safe Schools is to provide schools with resources, training and technical assistance to create and maintain safe, productive learning environments.

CENTER FOR EDUCATION EQUITY

- ▶ Promoting excellence and equity in education to achieve social justice.

How to Recognize Bullying



Bullying

- ▶ Unwanted aggressive behavior(s)
- ▶ Observed or perceived power imbalance
- ▶ Repeated or likely to be repeated
- ▶ Inflict harm or distress



Source: Bullying Surveillance Among Youths, Uniform Definitions For Public Health and Recommended Data Elements, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014)

Types of bullying

▶ Direct bullying

- ▶ Hitting, kicking, shoving, spitting, taunting, teasing, degrading racial or sexual comments, threatening, obscene gesture.

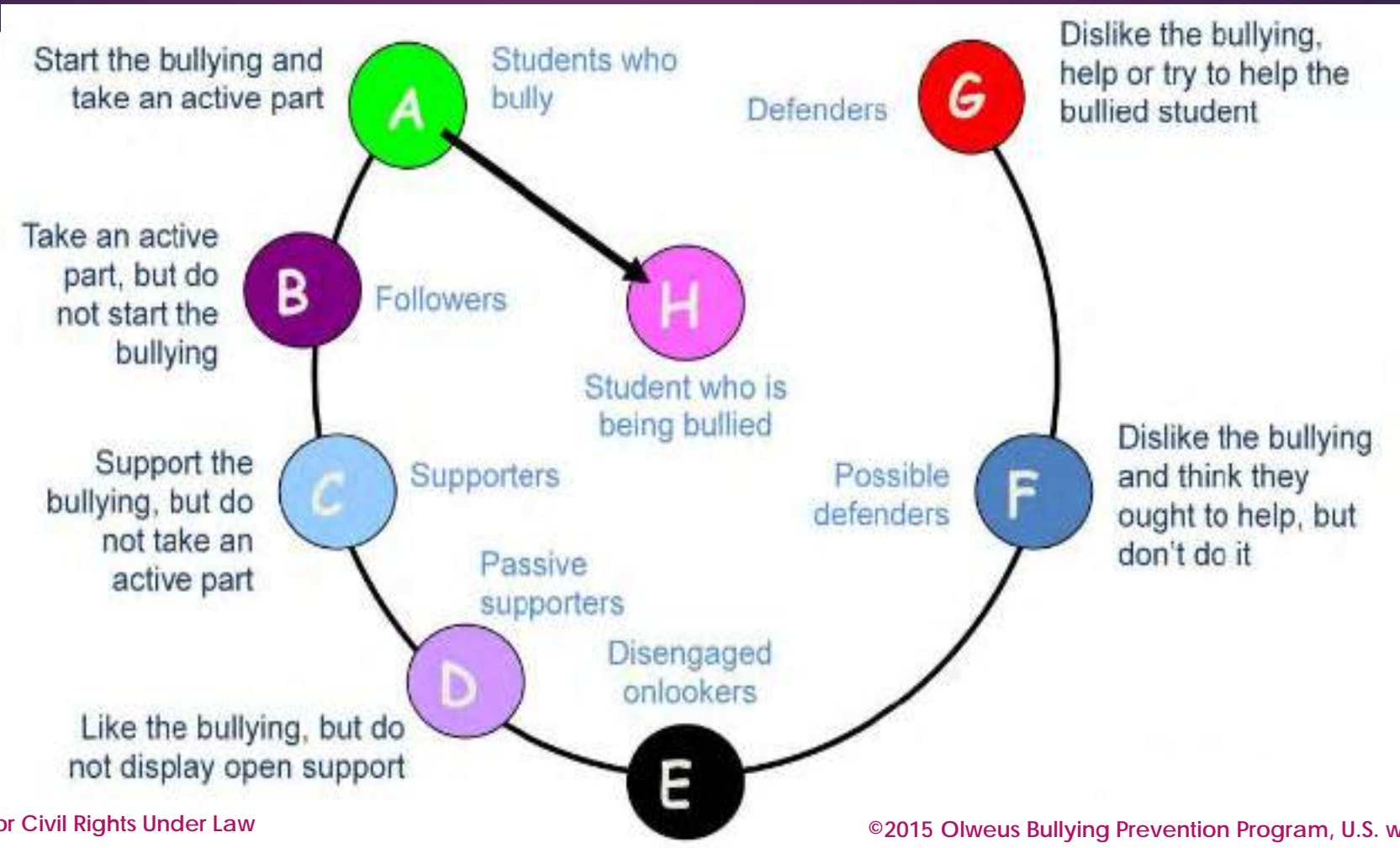
▶ Indirect bullying

- ▶ Getting another person to hurt someone, Spreading rumors, deliberate exclusion from a group or activity.

▶ Cyberbullying

- ▶ Use of technology to name-call, tease and/or insult, harass, threaten, intimidate, spread rumors and gossip, exclude targets from a group, rating sites.

What roles do children play in bullying situations?





BULLYING = PEER ABUSE

Impacts of bullying behavior

- ▶ Bullying affects children who are the *targets*, the *child who bullies* and the *bystander* who witnesses the bullying. Research indicates that impacts can follow children into adulthood.



What is/isn't bullying?

Myth

- ▶ Bullying is the same thing as conflict.

Reality

- ▶ Conflict involves antagonism among 2+ people.
Any two people can have a conflict.

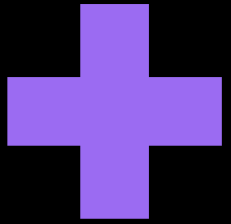
Bullying only occurs where there is a *power imbalance*.

Is it bullying?

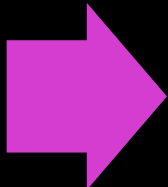
Rough Play	Real Fighting	Bullying
Usually friends; often repeated (same players)	Usually not friends; typically not repeated	Typically not friends; generally repeated
Balance of power	Power relatively equal	Unequal power
No intent to harm	Intentional harm doing	Intentional harm doing
Affect is friendly; positive, mutual	Affect negative; aggressive, tense, hostile affect	Affect negative; aggressive & differs for victim and aggressor

Schools' Responsibilities

Bullying



Protected Class



Duty to Intervene

Schools Have a Duty to Protect Students from Harassment

- ▶ Severe, pervasive and offensive
- ▶ Denial of educational benefits
- ▶ Actual knowledge/ notice
- ▶ Deliberate indifference:
 - ▶ Failure to respond
 - ▶ Unreasonable response



Protected classes

- ▶ Race
- ▶ Color
- ▶ National Origin
- ▶ Religion
- ▶ Gender
- ▶ Disability



Civil Rights Statutes

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- Federal Statutes
 - Titles IV and VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
 - Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
 - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
 - Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
 - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- State Statutes



When Harassment Occurs, Schools Should:

- ▶ End the harassment
- ▶ Eliminate any hostile environment
- ▶ Prevent harassment from happening again
- ▶ Prevent retaliation against the targeted student(s)

How to Report Bullying

If your child is bullied at school

Informal Complaint Options

- ▶ Talk with your child.
- ▶ Document ongoing bullying - Keep records of everything!
- ▶ Find out if your district has an anti-bullying policy.
- ▶ Meet with your child's teacher.
- ▶ Seek guidance counselors.
- ▶ Follow up with: Principal, Superintendent, or School Board.



Sample Letter of Concern

(Your Name)

(Your Address)

(Your city, state, and zip code)

(Date)

Dear (principal name/teacher name),

I am writing to you as the parent of (child's name), a student at (school name), who is experiencing bullying/discrimination/harassment by fellow students. Attached is a documentation of incidents that have occurred so far. I hope that by bringing this to the administration's attention, we can begin a dialogue for how to address these issues and create a safer space for all students to learn.

Best,

(Your Name)

(Phone Number or Email Address)

Example: Keeping Records

- ▶ Incident #1 – Student X knocked Michael’s lunch box out of his hand and kicked it down the hallway
- ▶ Date: Thursday, February 4, 2016
- ▶ Time: During lunch (approx. 11:30 a.m.)
- ▶ Location: In the lunch line right outside of the cafeteria
- ▶ Witnesses: Mrs. Clark (teacher), Mr. James (cafeteria worker), unidentified students in Mrs. Clark’s class
- ▶ Report to administrators: Reported to Mrs. Clark and Mrs. Rivera (principal) right after incident on February 4
- ▶ Administrator response: Mrs. Rivera called Student X’s parents

If the School is Not Doing Enough

Contact:

- ▶ School superintendent
- ▶ State Department of Education
- ▶ U.S. Department of Education, [Office for Civil Rights](#)
- ▶ U.S. Department of Justice, [Civil Rights Division](#)

Sample letter to school

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Your Address

Your Phone Number

Date

Principal's Name

Name of Your Child's School

School Address

Dear Principal_____:

I am the parent of _____, whose date of birth is _____. My child was bullied at school. I am therefore requesting an investigation and a prompt response from the school district to ensure that the bullying will stop. The bullying occurred on [insert date(s) of bullying] at [insert time(s) of bullying]. The bullying took place in [insert where the bullying happened]. The bullying involved [insert detailed description of the bullying, including the name(s) of those student(s) who were bullying your child]. Witnesses of the bullying included [insert the names of anyone who saw your child being bullied]. I request that the school interview all persons who were involved in or who witnessed the bullying. After the investigation, please intervene with the students responsible for the bullying in order to ensure that the bullying stops. For more information on how to prevent bullying at school, please visit www.stopbullying.gov. Should you have any questions about this request, please contact me at [insert your phone number(s) and/or email address]. Thank you. Sincerely,

© Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Your Name

Complaint is Founded – Now What?

Schools should work to:

- ▶ End harassment
- ▶ Eliminate hostile environment
- ▶ Prevent additional harassment
- ▶ Prevent retaliation



What Can Parents Do?

As a parent, what do I do if...

- ▶ I think my child is being bullied?
 - ▶ Talk with your child as calmly as possible.
 - ▶ Ask: Who, what, when, where, how, and how often?
 - ▶ Document: Have your child start to journal about incidents as objectively as possible.
 - ▶ Discuss: Strategies to keep child safe at school.
 - ▶ Develop: A safety plan for your child with the school.

Talking with your child's school

- ▶ Try to be objective about your child's role in school.
 - ▶ Is it possible that your child is actually the bully and is experiencing retaliation?
 - ▶ Is it possible that your child is experiencing conflict vs. bullying?
 - ▶ Does your child need you to listen, and listen again before you leap to action?

Talking with your child's school (continued)

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- ▶ Set up a meeting to discuss the issue. Start with your child's teacher and move up from there.
- ▶ Bring your child's documentation and examples of bullying incidents
- ▶ Be as calm and as unemotional as possible.
- ▶ Have clear expectations:
 - ▶ You would like the situation investigated
 - ▶ You would like to hear back from the school regarding their findings and their plan to address the issue within an agreed upon timeframe (2 weeks)
 - ▶ You would like the school to increase surveillance of the identified students/situations

Talking with your child's school (continued)

- ▶ Understand that you will NOT be able to hear how the “other child” was disciplined.
- ▶ Understand that the teacher/counselor/administrator you want to speak with or see may not be available at the moment of your call/visit – they may have to call you back later in the day.
- ▶ Keep your focus on what needs to be done to keep your child safe at school.
- ▶ Follow-up with the school and your child as to recurrence or success of initiatives.
- ▶ Expect that your concerns and requests will be kept confidential and that your child will not be put into a position of “discussing the issue” with the aggressor, or exposed as a “snitch.”
- ▶ If things are improving for your child, tell the school. They need to hear positive outcomes as well as negative.

As a parent, what do I do if...

I fear my child is a bully?

- ▶ Observe their interactions with other students.
- ▶ Discuss bullying and set clear rules at home.
- ▶ Provide consequences for bullying.
- ▶ Work with school staff.
- ▶ Model the behavior you expect from your child.

As a parent, what do I do if...

My child observes bullying?

- ▶ Positive communication is key.
- ▶ Use the “bullying circle” in discussing your child’s experience with bullying at school.
 - ▶ What is your child’s relationship to the bully and target?
 - ▶ What do their friends do/think about bullying?
 - ▶ What do they think they should do?
- ▶ Reflect on your child’s feelings and what issues may be influencing the choices of bystanders.
- ▶ Brainstorm a range of helpful bystander responses.

As a parent, what do I do if...

- ▶ My child observes bullying? (continued)
 - ▶ Discuss potential outcomes to different responses and have your child identify a positive action he/she is willing to try.
 - ▶ Listen for escalating negative behaviors or increasingly violent behaviors against one child and report it to the school.

Bottom line for parents

- ▶ If bullying was something that children could handle on their own, the behavior wouldn't occur.
- ▶ Children need adults to help them with bullying if they are the bully, the target, or the bystander.
- ▶ Bystander behavior change is the strongest impetus for change in school climate, so help your child become a change agent in their school.

Benefits of Parent and Youth Engagement

When parents and youth are involved in solutions:

- ▶ Students feel safer and can focus on learning.
- ▶ Parents worry less.
- ▶ Teachers can focus on their work.
- ▶ Schools can develop more responsive solutions because students are more likely to see or hear about bullying than adults.
- ▶ School climate improves because students are engaged in taking action to stop bullying.
- ▶ Parents can support schools' messages about bullying at home.

Scenario #1

Hala is a fourth grader who is Muslim. She wears a hijab (head covering) to school as does her younger sister and cousin who also go to the school. When she was younger, kids asked Hala questions about her hijab, the food she ate and her religion. But lately, they try to pull off the scarf at recess, telling her she shouldn't wear it, calling her a terrorist and making fun of the food she eats. She has started to throw her lunch out rather than deal with the bullying.

1. How is Hala being bullied?
2. What part of her identity is being targeted?
3. How do you think Hala feels?
4. What actions can be taken by Hala, bystanders, teacher or school?
5. What should Hala's parents do?

Engaging the Community



Why Engage the Community?

1. Involve community members in school anti-bullying efforts
2. Develop partnerships with community members to support your program
3. Help spread anti-bullying messages and principles of best practice throughout the community



Communities Support Prevention Efforts

- Parent Teacher Organization (PTO or PTA)
- City Council, Chamber of Commerce, County Commissioners
- Domestic Violence and Victim Services
- Juvenile Justice/Law Enforcement
- Family & Child Welfare Organizations
- Business Community
- Civic Organizations (e.g. Kiwanis, Rotary, Junior League)
- Local foundations
- Local Press (Newspaper, TV, Radio)



Spreading the Anti-Bullying Message into the Community

- Community sports leagues
- After-school programs
- Scouting, 4-H, other youth programs
- Faith-based organizations
- Juvenile justice groups
- Summer camps



Remember...

- ▶ Stopping bullying takes a team effort.
- ▶ You play a critical position on the team.
- ▶ Change happens in small increments but can have positive long-term impact for us all!



Scenario #2

Carlos is a tenth grader. He and his family recently moved to your school from the Dominican Republic. He receives ELL support and while he can speak some English, he is not comfortable communicating in English. The other students make fun of Carlos because of his accent and grammatical errors. A group of boys calls Carlos names and tell him that they can't wait for him to be deported. Recently, the boys trip Carlos when he passes them in the halls.

1. How is Carlos being bullied?
2. What part of his identity is being targeted?
3. How do you think Carlos feels?
4. What actions can be taken by Carlos, bystanders, teacher or school?
5. What should Carlos' parents do?

Problems at school? Questions about special education, school discipline, English Learner, and discrimination issues?

Talk with an educational advocate today!



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Thank you for participating in today's webinar!

Please take a moment to fill out our brief survey:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/J6YSDTJ>