

We Can Stop Bullying

This topic sheet explores disabled people's experiences of being bullied when they were at school and thinks about what we can all do together to prevent these experiences being repeated for all school children today.



Being Teased

"After dinner had finished we had to walk around in pairs. Everyone had a partner except me, I was left on my own. I wore glasses, they were NHS ones, and I looked like Harry Potter wearing my round wire framed spectacles. At that time if you wore NHS glasses you would get teased. They all teased me for being poor. In pairs, we had to go into the dining room and set the tables ready for the next morning, I think we did it every day of the week. So we did that, and that was fine. It was quite a shock as in the pairs they were spotting each other's mistakes and arguing about what was right or wrong. As I was on my own and had no one to point out the mistakes I had made, I got called thick, and teased terribly later. This was my first night. It was a very upsetting experience.

Philip (born 1959) <http://bit.ly/1soa7PP>

'Slow Learner'

"One of the things that I felt was wrong, everyone knew at school what group we were in. Because we had this A, B, C, D gradings, everyone knew we were the 'dunce' group, the 'slow learners', and school for me was painful, because kids can be cruel and going through school I ended up fighting a lot because I was teased a lot about being a 'slow learner'"

Clenton (born 1964) <http://bit.ly/1IUrMK4>

No Respect

"I didn't like the private school at all, I mean there was always bullies there. I mean the sixth formers or the higher uppers, they were nasty, pushing you around and whacking you round the head with rulers and kicking and punching and all that. They were prefects as well and they should have known better, know to treat people with respect but they just didn't. I remember I was sitting on the wall, one minute I was sitting on there, and there was nothing behind, it was just steps and he just pushed me off and I ended up bashing my head on the steps and no one came. None of the teachers came to see if they were okay, they just let you just lie there"

Elliot (born 1969) <http://bit.ly/1iGDud5>

No Support

"They did nothing whatsoever. There was a dinner lady in the playground or whatever she was called, on duty and she watched these girls, every playtime they circled me and chanted and sang. Punchinella was one of the songs. I can't remember it, but they just chanted and said things to me and I withdrew from my body and went up, which is a very bad thing to learn to do and I just thought, 'Well you can't affect me, you can't get to me, I'm not going to let you get to me'. And mum came to the school one time and said, 'Can I speak to all the classes because I want to kind of talk to them about what's happening' and she did and she told all the children in each class about the teasing and to stop it, but it made no difference whatsoever"

Ann (born 1944) <http://bit.ly/1ICW13m>

Bullying Each Other

"In terms of relationships with other kids, oh god we used to bully each other like mad. Oh there was definitely a hierarchy of impairment and disability there, you know, certainly we bullied each other like mad at school 'cause there wasn't anything else to do and it's the only thing that I suppose used to help us feel good about ourselves. You know, bully somebody else and make someone else feel bad and you kind of feel better yourself. So there was a lot of bullying that went on, quite nasty bullying, which was not helped by the fact that the head teacher used to always take the mickey out of the kids and therefore that kind of went throughout the whole school. We did go to a local youth club up in Liverpool once a week, you know, to help us be integrated but a lot of the kids would tease us 'cause we were known as the 'Spazos' from the special school, so there was no opportunities for relationships there"

Simone (born 1969) <http://bit.ly/1oFMWPK>

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Discussion and Activity Ideas

Teachers please be aware: These activities may affect some children more than others and may raise painful memories/emotions. It is important to deal with this sensitively, with a 'whole school' approach and not to make assumptions about who potential 'victims' or 'perpetrators' may be.

What is Bullying?

Class Discussion: Play Philip, Clenton, Ann, Simone and Elliot's clips to the class. First ask the children to think about ways in which people are bullied, i.e. verbal; physical; mental/emotional; cyber. Then ask the children to think about why people might get bullied, i.e. because of difference (explore in what way - disability, gender, race etc); jealousy; vulnerability (explore in what way - small, quiet, isolated). After this part, it's also important to stress that anyone can be a target of bullying.

Art Activity: Ask the children, individually or in pairs, to create an anti-bullying poster using some of the themes or examples they have explored in the discussion.

How Does it Feel?

This is an opportunity to explore the impact of bullying, helping to develop empathy and understanding.

Group Activity: Divide the class into four groups. Give each group a copy of either Philip, Clenton, Ann or Elliot's quote (photocopied from front). Ask the groups to imagine they are the person whose quote they have. Give each group 3 pieces of paper, titled 'What [name] might think' - 'How [name] might feel' - 'What [name] might do' and ask them to brainstorm ideas together and fill in each page.

Writing Activity: After the group activity, ask the children individually to write an imagined diary entry from the person they have just thought about, or a letter to the person/people who bullied them. Choose a selection of children to read theirs out to the class.

Class Discussion: Ask the children for ideas about what might have made a difference to the person's experience. What would they do if this was a child in their class now?

Why Does Somebody Bully?

Class Discussion: Play Simone's clip to the class. Why did the children bully each other? Ask the children to think about some more reasons why people might bully others (visit: <http://bit.ly/1yiq5eX> for examples). This should help to shift the idea of victim/perpetrator and develop awareness and understanding of all those who are involved in bullying incidents. Ask if anyone has witnessed bullying. What happened? How did they feel? Did they feel able to do anything? (visit: <http://bit.ly/1u68Psh> for a 'bullying roles' activity) Ask the class: 'What might we do as a class to support each other not to bully?'

Writing Activity: Using letters created from the 'How does it feel?' activity, ask the children to imagine themselves as the 'bully' and write replies. Choose a selection of children to read theirs out to the class.

What Can We Do?

This is your opportunity to ensure that all children know what to do if they are bullied or see somebody being bullied. What is the school policy? Who should they tell? Where else could they go?

Visit <http://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk> for useful links and info on Anti-Bullying Week - **17-21 November**

www.howwasschool.org.uk

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336 Brixton Road, London, SW9 7AA Tel: 020 7737 6030
Company No: 5988026 Charity No: 1124424



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Other Resources

Find more resources
at the Anti-Bullying
Alliance website:
www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/send-programme

Curriculum Areas

PSHE
Citizenship
History
Literacy
Art
SEAL Outcomes