THE WILD WILD WEB
A student’s guide to preventing cyber bullying

PROGRAM & DISCUSSION GUIDE

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Introduction

Cyber bullying is a controllable problem that must be addressed by schools in order to prepare students to thrive in today’s electronic society.

Bullying is a serious problem that is now extending beyond the classroom and playground into the ubiquitous cyber space.

Because the concept of cyber bullying is rather new many schools and families have been slow to adopt policies and guidelines to prevent it.

*The Wild Wild Web - A Student’s Guide to Preventing Cyber Bullying* provides a critical tool to educators, counselors and law enforcement officials to begin engaging young people on the subject of online harassment.

- It establishes a common sense code of conduct for the web.
- It empowers students - whether bully, victim or bystander - to stop the cycle of harassment.
- While entertaining the viewer, it sparks a starting point for discussion and thought.
- It offers concrete solutions and techniques for protecting oneself from becoming the object of a cyber bully while diffusing a potentially dangerous situation.

*THE WILD WILD WEB* shows students that cyber bullying is not OK and there are ways to deal with the problem safely and skillfully.

**Did you know?**

- Young people today are the first generation having to deal with the cyber bully.
- Most kids don’t tell. In a cyber bullying situation kids don’t dare to report the incident. They think adults will overreact and cut off online access.
- Over 40% of kids say they’ve been bullied while online. 1-in-4 has had it happen more than once.
- Having a system in place where kids can confidentially report to adults is crucial.
- Most kids think of themselves as neither bullies nor targets, but bystanders. Bystanders have power. They can actually fuel or stop a dangerous scenario.
- Cyber bullying is intertwined with issues like Internet safety, security, free speech, and tolerance.
- Cyber bullying can be more devastating than traditional schoolyard bullying because it can follow the young person everywhere, even home.
- Kids who are cyber bullied are nearly twice as likely to commit suicide as the general population.
Objectives

STUDENTS WILL:

- Define bullying
- Discuss Cyber Bullying
- Learn about the damaging effects of Cyber Bullying
- Discover techniques for controlling Cyber Bullying by viewing and discussing THE WILD WILD WEB
- Anonymously respond to questions related to bullying
- Create and list strategies to protect against and prevent online bullying

Planning

Review the materials completely and view the video before showing it in class.

SUGGESTED TIME ALLOWANCE: 1-2 class periods

PLAN ON:

- 10 – 20 minutes for pre-screening discussion
- 25 minutes for viewing the video
- 20+ minutes for review and post screening discussion and activities.

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:

- pens/pencils/markers
- classroom board
- paper
- THE WILD WILD WEB DVD
- computers with internet access (optional)

This video, discussion guide and lesson plan are simply a starting point in opening up the discussion about bullying and cyber bullying. The most important takeaway is that nobody has the right to belittle or harass anyone in person or over cyber space.

Make it clear that talking about bullying is OK and speaking with you is a safe opportunity.
What is the definition of bullying?

A lot of young people have a good idea of what bullying is because they see it every day!

Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself.

1. Usually, bullying happens over and over.
2. Punching, shoving, and other acts that hurt people physically
3. Spreading bad rumors about people
4. Keeping certain people out of a “group”
5. Teasing people in a mean way
6. Getting certain people to “gang up” on others

Bullying can also happen online or electronically. Cyber bullying is when children or teens bully each other using the Internet, mobile phones or other cyber technology. This can include:

1. Sending mean text, email, or instant messages
2. Posting nasty pictures or messages about others in blogs or on Web sites
3. Using someone else’s user name to spread rumors or lies about someone

Before Showing the Video

1. Ask students to create a definition of bullying:
   a. What is bullying?
   b. What does it mean to be bullied?
   c. Who does bullying typically involve?
   d. Why do you think people bully other people?
      i. Do you think bullies might be bullied at home?
      ii. What motivates someone to bully—what do they get out of it?
      iii. (Teacher) It is common for bullies to be victims themselves of bullying either in the home or elsewhere. They are most likely looking for acceptance and power.
      iv. How does knowing this change your idea of bullying? Does it change the effect bullying has on victims?
      v. Does it affect your view on the role of the bystander?
   e. Where does bullying happen?
f. Is there more than one way to be bullied?

g. What forms can bullying take?

h. Can you imagine any scenarios in which someone might bully you even if you can’t see them in person?

2. Record students’ responses on the board.

3. Then provide students with a definition of bullying, such as one that includes cyber bullying that is found in this Discussion Guide. Read the definition aloud and compare it to the students’ definition on the board.

4. Then ask:

   a. Have you ever heard the term “cyber bullying”?

   b. Create a box in the center of the classroom board and surround it with behaviors that might be considered cyber bullying. Once you have established a definition write it in the box.

   c. Had you considered these types of interactions to be a form of bullying?

   d. Why or why not?

This activity allows kids to begin a discussion about bullies and bullying. It opens up the idea to discussion and allows kids to express their ideas about what bullying is.

It also asks them to think of the reasons why someone might become a bully and what bullying might be.

Tips

*Kids who have been bullied are probably not going to volunteer any scenarios which involved being bullied so keeping the conversation a bit more general will probably make everyone feel safer. You may want to provide a confidential avenue for kids to approach you—in person or even over e-mail to discuss any bullying they have experienced or are experiencing now.*
After Seeing the Video

Review the Code of the Web

Ask students to recall the three rules of the Code of the Web

1. **If you wouldn’t say it to their face, don’t say it in cyber space.**

   The supposed anonymity of the Internet does not give you license to harass, threaten or disrespect others. Bullying can start with one mean thing said online and can quickly spread and explode into a tragic scenario. Don’t begin the fire by starting a spark of meanness.

2. **Break the chain, Stop the pain**

   Bully, victim, and bystander. Each has the opportunity and responsibility to break the chain of harassment. Bystanders, especially, play a critical role in defusing conflict. Don’t write, forward or even open hateful mail. If you don’t pass it on it can’t spread.

3. **Tell someone**

   If you or someone you know is being harassed online, TELL SOMEONE. Tell a trusted adult and keep telling until the adult takes action. Bullying is not OK, and you do not have to accept it.

**Tips**

- **Let the film sink in** - Don’t jump into a discussion the moment the film ends. Watch the music video/credits at the end and let that time be a simmering period. If you can, let the kids breathe, chat and recover themselves before expecting them to express themselves intelligibly.

- **Put the questions out there** - When you are asking questions, you want to spark a discussion. Let kids come to their own answers. Ignite the conversation, rather than trying to control it.

- **Allow quiet** - Nobody likes to hear the crickets chirping after a question, but a little silence is OK. Sometimes people need a little time to get to where they want to speak.

- **Let the conversation flow** - Don’t worry about asking all the questions as written or in the order they are given. They’re conversation starters and that’s their function. Go with the flow.

- **Make connections between comments** - Try to find a link between an answer and the next question. By connecting people’s comments to the questions, you’ll help build momentum.

- **Occasionally direct questions toward quiet people** - You don’t want to put anyone on the spot, but you want everyone to know their opinions are valued.

- **Rein in tangents** - A little off topic conversation is fine, but you also want to respect the forum. Recognize tangents and gently bring the discussion back to the film topic.
Questions to Discuss

1. Do you think that social networking sites, such as MySpace or Facebook, encourage students to express and spread negative comments?

2. Do you think that people believe what they see or read online?

3. How far do you think is “too far” in terms of cruelty, ridicule, etc. of another student online? How about in person? Is there a difference? Why or why not?

4. What do you think the difference is between cyber bullying and simply expressing an opinion?

5. What’s the difference between bullying someone and “just kidding” them? How do you know if something is funny or just plain mean? Who decides? Do you think the incident that affected Paul Branch was intended to be funny or mean? Why? Can you come up with a scenario that was intended to amuse instead of hurt? What’s the difference?

6. What should schools and parents be doing to help prevent bullying?

7. Why should you report bullying to adults?

8. Why do students often not tell teachers or parents about bullying?

9. How do low self-esteem and depression, make the effects of bullying even worse?

Rate the Film

One good way to begin discussion on the film and help people summarize their opinions is to ask each person to rate the video on a scale of one to five. Since kids may feel reluctant to express opinions on their own you might ask them to simultaneously raise their hands holding up the number of fingers they would use to rate the video.

Online Chat

If your classroom has access to computers, you may want to engage the students in an online forum to answer questions.

Though they require set-up prior to class, web sites such as http://www.nicenet.org and http://pbwiki.com/ provide forums for online collaboration and conversation.

After establishing rules of respect and appropriate posting, and reminding them NOT to post anything too personal, monitor students as they answer questions, read answers by other students and add comments.
Anonymous Conversation

Pass out the following discussion questions about bullying and cyber bullying and explain that students will be responding in writing anonymously. Tell them not to put their names on the pages.

Go through each question aloud and allow students to write their answers.

Collect and shuffle all the papers, then randomly select responses and read them aloud.

QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the positive benefits of using the social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace?
2. How do you and your friends use texting, IMing, e-mail and networking sites?
3. Is it easier to communicate through technology than it is face-to-face? Why? Why not?
4. Do you communicate differently, or act differently in virtual settings? Why or why not?
5. Have you ever noticed that someone has been bullied online?
6. Why do people bully each other?
7. Have you ever been a target of a bully?
8. Have you ever passed along information that you wouldn’t have said out loud?
9. Why do you think bullying happens?
10. What makes someone a bully? What do you think motivates a bully to make fun of someone?
11. Is cruelty ever OK?
12. Do you think YouTube, networking sites and IM-ing makes bullying easier to do? Does it make the problem worse?
13. Do you think it’s easier to get away with bullying someone online than it is in other areas?
14. What can you do if you are the target of a bully?
15. What can you do as a bystander?
16. Say one of your friends was involved in a situation like the one with Paul Branch. What would you have done if someone sent you an invitation to “hate”. How could you have stopped the abuse? What if it was directed to you? How would you handle it?

Provide time for students to answer questions. In a future class, provide time for students to reflect on other students writing and add comments.
Interdisciplinary

Language Arts - Create a bullying situation from the three different points of view—Bully, victim and bystander.

1. As the bully, have students create a mean spirited attack on someone and write out a fake IM.
2. As the victim, write how they would feel and respond to such an attack.
3. And as a bystander have them write what they would do in the situation. After writing the attack, ask them to write how each person could break the chain.

Performing Arts - Using the three points of view created in the previous exercise have students role play a confrontation among bully, victim and bystanders.

Language Arts, Social Studies and Mathematics - Have students prepare an anonymous questionnaire about bullying. Possible questions:

1. Have you ever been the victim of cyber bullying?
2. Have you ever been a cyber bully?
3. Have you ever passed along information that might hurt someone?
4. Have you ever involved a grown-up?

Have students analyze results and create bar graphs or pie charts to represent their results.

Social Studies - Many states have laws related to bullying in schools. Ask students to discover whether or not there are bullying prevention laws in your state? What are they? If there are none in place, what should they be and why? Who should the laws apply to?

Language Arts - Have students find out whether or not there are policies or programs in place at their school to address bullying or cyber bullying. Have them write a paragraph about what the policies are and then another paragraph about whether or not they are successful and why or why not. Have them come up with suggestions that might be effective.

American History – Have students interview a parent, grandparent, teacher or guardian about what bullying was like when they were younger. How was it similar and different? Have students explore how technology has changed problems facing students today. Have them write an essay about what they found.

Technology and Computer Sciences - IP addresses are unique addresses assigned to a computer when a person accesses or logs on to the Internet. They can be used to trace internet posts, even unsigned, seemingly anonymous posts. Have students research and define the term “IP address” and how they are assigned. Ask students to go online and find out how investigators use IP addresses to track down the origin of an apparent anonymous posting? Have students research and define what a screen grab is and then write out a step-by-step procedure for capturing the content of a computer screen as if they were teaching a class.
Health Standard 7 - Knows how to maintain and promote personal health.

Benchmarks: Knows personal health strengths and risks (e.g., results of a personal health assessment); Knows how positive health practices and appropriate health care can help to reduce health risks; Knows strategies and skills that are used to attain personal health goals

Behavioral Studies Standard 2 – Understands various meanings of social group, general implications of group membership, and different ways that groups function.

Benchmark: Understands that a large society may be made up of many groups, and these groups may contain many distinctly different subcultures (e.g., associated with region, ethnic origin, social class, interests, values) 18

Behavioral Studies Standard 4 – Understands conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions.

Benchmark: Understands how role, status, and social class may affect interactions of individuals and social groups

Language Arts Standard 1 – Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

Benchmarks: Uses content, style, and structure (e.g., formal or informal language, genre, organization) appropriate for specific audiences (e.g., public, private) and purposes (e.g., to entertain, to influence, to inform); Writes persuasive compositions; Writes compositions that address problems/solutions

Language Arts Standard 8 – Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.

Benchmarks: Plays a variety of roles in group discussions; Asks questions to seek elaboration and clarification of ideas; Uses strategies to enhance listening comprehension