

**BUREAU OF REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE
ANTI-BULLYING
INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES**



Welcome to Our Schools

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Background: Refugees and Bullying.....	3-8
New York State Dignity for All Students Act.....	8
Possible Warning Signs.....	9
When Bullying May Be a Civil Rights Violation.....	10
Handout: Strategies for Refugee Students.....	11
Handout: Here's What I Did!.....	12
Handout: Here's What I Did! (pictures only).....	13
Anti-Bullying Instructional Resources.....	14-23

BACKGROUND: REFUGEES AND BULLYING

What is considered “bullying”?

Any behavior that is deliberately intended to hurt, threaten, or frighten another person or group of people is considered bullying. It is usually unprovoked and persistent, often continuing for a long period of time. Bullying is not always visible to others and can be verbal, emotional, and physical in nature. Bullying may appear on the surface to be about anger and hostility, but it is based on the desire to have power and control over someone who is vulnerable.

Who are the targets of bullies?

Since bullying is about power and control, any student who appears to be vulnerable can be a target. Bullies tend to focus on students who are “different” in color, dress, race, behavior, mannerisms, size, physical appearance – and so forth. If the student tends to be timid, withdrawn, and/or anxious, then bullies will zero in on that student. The more the target is visibly affected by the bully, the more the bullying tends to escalate.

Refugee students can become prime targets of bullies because they are often different in appearance and behaviors, may not be able to express themselves clearly, and can appear shy and confused.

What is “verbal” bullying?

Bullying can be physical (hitting, punching, poking, tripping, etc.) but it can also be verbal teasing and harassment. Examples are name-calling, threatening comments, insults, teasing, and mocking – as well as nuisance phone calls, spreading rumors, and written texts, e-mails, photos (including "sexting"), and Facebook entries (referred to as "cyberbullying").

What is “emotional” bullying?

Emotional bullying can involve leaving a targeted student out of activities, openly ignoring a student (or including them only to torment and tease), or purposefully setting up a student to be embarrassed. Any type of bullying can result in students feeling alone and helpless, distraught, physically ill, or depressed.

Who are the bullies?

Bullies can be any students in the school, although the image is that bullies tend to be students who are physically bigger than other students and/or have social status in the school.

Bullies are seeking power and dominance. They like control of the situation. They may not be physically stronger, but feel stronger if they bully verbally or conduct anonymous cyberbullying.

But bullies are not born to bully. There is usually something happening in their personal lives that may cause bullies to take out their anxieties and anger on someone who is vulnerable. If they are struggling with school, have a difficult life at home, or are abused or bullied themselves, they may tend to unload their emotions by hurting someone else.

They may feel threatened if their status is tenuous, so they rally their peers to join them in hurting others. In turn, they get attention – even respect – because they appear to be powerful and in control. They appear to disregard rules and consequences.

It is important to remember that most students who bully are hurting. They do need to experience the consequences of their actions, but they also need specific strategies on how to handle their emotions in a more positive manner.

Students who bully do not automatically know how to change their behavior. They may not even understand the emotional damage that they are causing. In many cases they have never been taught how to treat others with kindness and respect.

They need guidance in how to maintain peer respect while eliminating the bullying. They need opportunities to share their emotions in a safe environment, through counseling and peer support groups. Educators can combine discipline with guidance so that the bullying stops.

What is unique about bullying and refugee students?

In some schools, refugee students are “easy” targets for bullies because refugees are often different in appearance and behavior. Cultural differences in dress, foods, family traditions, gender roles, and hygiene can cause some refugee students to be noticed and become targets.

Refugee students may not understand that they are being bullied. They may not understand verbal teasing and insults because of language comprehension issues. They may have had traumatic experiences in their home country and do not recognize that the hateful actions directed toward them are unacceptable in American schools.

As refugee students negotiate between two cultural worlds, they may conclude that bullying is a normal way of life in the United States.

In fact, they may tolerate bullying because they are used to being treated poorly in their home countries. Past experience may have taught them to stay invisible and not complain. As a result, they may silently tolerate harsh treatment from bullies.

These students may be used to fighting back to protect themselves or to save lives, so they continue to fight if they are bullied. They may be acting on instincts that were honed under harsh conditions in their home countries. They may lash out because they are distrustful, angry, or grieving. For some refugee students, bullying can trigger post-traumatic stress symptoms.

Refugee students can become bullies themselves, join groups of students who bully, or become members of gangs. They may feel as if they are part of a family or support group, even though that group is causing harm to other students.

Some refugee students maintain negative opinions that are learned in their home countries about other ethnic groups. These opinions are later translated into acts of bullying behavior in their American school.

It is important for educators to keep in mind that many refugee students already feel isolated and vulnerable. They may be the primary source of information and support for older family members who are struggling to adjust to a new country. They often cannot turn to parents and other adults within their family for guidance.

When they are experiencing bullying their choices seem to be that they can decide to put up with the bullying, fight back, initiate the bullying to seize control, or try to find someone they trust who can understand and protect them. Any of these choices can cause anxiety. Struggling with these decisions can inhibit their adjustment within the new school environment.

If refugee students wish to tell an adult about what is happening to them, they may not know what to do. They may not be aware of helpful resources, even if they have been reassured that teachers, a local refugee center, or a school guidance counselor can provide assistance.

If students have been told about what to do about bullying, they still may not trust the resources. They may be uncomfortable around a counselor they have not met before, or a school-based police officer. They will need to get to know them in a non-threatening setting. And like most children, refugee students fear that there will be negative consequences from peers if they report the actions of another student — particularly if they have learned in their home country that reporting can lead to drastic reprisals.

As a result the refugee students can become depressed and lose confidence. They can be hurt every day and never say a word about it.

It is a challenge for educators to simultaneously reassure new refugee students that they are safe in their new school — and then introduce information about bullying. But knowledge about bullying provides refugee students with the power to do something about it so that they can comfortably adapt to their new lives in an American school.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

If refugee students are bullied, then school becomes yet another hostile environment that they have to experience.

- ❑ Be aware of warning signs.
- ❑ Tell refugees that bullying is an exception and not tolerated.
- ❑ Tell refugee students what bullying looks like - and that they do not deserve to be bullied.
- ❑ Recognize that bullying can be based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex. Refugee students need the opportunity to talk about how they can maintain their cultural traditions and still feel comfortable in their school.
- ❑ Encourage refugee students to become involved in group activities, but stress that joining a gang is not considered a positive activity. (See Module 5 *So Much to Learn!* and Module 7 *Interest and Talents* for related activities.)
- ❑ Discuss with colleagues how refugee students can be informed and protected.
- ❑ Repeat anti-bullying messages in:
 - ◆ English instruction classes
 - ◆ School assemblies
 - ◆ Meetings with Refugee Resettlement Case Managers
 - ◆ Meetings with refugee families
 - ◆ Classroom presentations
 - ◆ Professional Development programs about refugees.
- ❑ Know the civil rights of refugees - and that bullying based on language or national origin is considered harassment.
- ❑ Establish systems for confidential reporting. Help refugee students identify a trusted adult in their lives.
- ❑ Reassure refugee students that authority figures are safe resources, including school police officers.
- ❑ Respond with sensitivity if a student reports bullying. Take it seriously, even if the incident seems minor.
- ❑ Strategize with the student and provide reassurance. If necessary, refer the student to a colleague who can advocate for the student and take steps to ensure they are safe.
- ❑ Discuss anti-bullying strategies that can be used before and after school with all refugee students.



NEW YORK STATE DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

The New York State Dignity for All Students Act (The Dignity Act) seeks to provide the State's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function. The Dignity Act took effect in July 2012.

All public elementary and secondary students have the right to attend school in a safe, welcoming, considerate and caring environment. The goal of the Dignity Act is to create a safe and supportive school climate where students can learn and focus, rather than fear being discriminated against and/or verbally and/or physically harassed. The Dignity Act relates to bullying because bullying is a form of harassment and discrimination.

Refugee students should benefit from the implementation of the Dignity Act because identified in the legislation are those who are subjected to intimidation or abuse based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

The New York State Education Department has established statewide work groups to address local and state policy, curriculum and instruction, professional development, and outreach related to the Dignity Act.

For more information and instructional resources,
see the New York State Education Department website
dedicated to the implementation of the Dignity for All Students Act:
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact>

Information about the Dignity Act can also be found on
the website of the New York State Center for School Safety.
<http://nyscenterforschoolsafety.org/>

POSSIBLE WARNING SIGNS

There are many warning signs that could indicate that a student is experiencing bullying. Some of these signs are not obvious. Students are very good at hiding what is going on in their lives. Don't wait too long to look for patterns — trust your instincts if “something isn't right.”

Any of these signs could be indicators of adjustment to resettlement, problems in their personal lives, or bullying:

- damaged or missing clothing or other belongings
- lost items such as textbooks, electronics, clothing, jewelry
- unexplained injuries (or unbelievable explanations)
- complaints of headaches, stomachaches, or feeling sick
- trouble sleeping, frequent bad dreams
- changes in eating habits; very hungry after school because lunch was stolen
- less interest in friends and socializing
- fear of going to school or other activities
- less interest in schoolwork; grades slipping
- avoidance of specific places such as lockers or hallways
- hiding of text messages and computer activities

Some signs may not be as visible, but even one incident may be a clue to something more serious:

- appearing sad or anxious and trying to hide problems
- expressing concerns about measuring up
- feeling; expressing interest in becoming tougher
- making comments about suicide
- unusually angry
- starting to bully others

Bullying often happens to students who are considered “different” by their peers, especially if those students are withdrawn or anxious. Refugee students stand out because of their cultural background and language. They can be bullied because of the way that they dress, their family traditions, or simply because they are newcomers. Their insecurities can make them targets. Parents of refugee students may not be comfortable with the topic or know where to turn for help.

1. Establish a system for providing assistance to students if warning signs of bullying are detected.
2. Inform students how to recognize bullying and protect themselves.
3. Establish a system for students to safely report bullying.
4. Ask them to think about who could be a “trusted adult” they could confide in, should they see or experience bullying. Refugee students are often most comfortable with an English Language teacher, guidance counselor, or refugee center representative.

Sources: stopbullying.gov • <http://www.bullyfree.com> • <http://kidshealth.org>

WHEN BULLYING MAY BE A CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATION

Schools that receive federal funding (including colleges and universities) are required by federal law to address discrimination on a number of different personal characteristics. The statutes the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces include:

- ❑ Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin;
- ❑ Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex;
- ❑ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504); and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Title II). Section 504 and Title II prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability.

School districts may violate these civil rights statutes and the U.S. Department of Education's implementing regulations when peer harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, or disability is sufficiently serious that it creates a hostile environment and such harassment is encouraged, tolerated, not adequately addressed, or ignored by school employees.

While current law enforced by OCR do not protect against harassment based on religion or sexual orientation, they do include protection against harassment of members of religious groups based on shared ethnic characteristics as well as gender-based and sexual harassment of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals.

A school is responsible for addressing harassment incidents about which it knows or reasonably should have known.

- ❑ Participate in the webinar *Bullying and Civil rights: An Overview of School Districts' Federal Obligation to Respond to Harassment*
- ❑ Read the *Dear Colleague Letter* from Department of Education's Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
- ❑ Read more about when bullying is discriminatory harassment
- ❑ Learn about the OCR civil rights complaint process.

Sources:
stopbullying.gov
<http://www2.ed.gov>

SHARE WITH STUDENTS

ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL

PLAN AHEAD

Never walk home alone, and try to have your hands free. Plan your route, including where you can go for safety. Stay alert – this is not the time to listen to your iPod.

If you see the bully coming, change your route immediately. Do not try to tough it out.

STAND TALL

If you are confronted, you may want to cry or yell back, but bullies are hoping for a reaction. Don't show emotions, hold your head up, and keep on walking.

If you are in danger of getting hurt, run. Throw something to distract the bully, if you can. There is no good reason why you should stay and fight, unless you are cornered and have to protect yourself. Get out of there.



PRACTICE CALM WORDS

If you are being bullied, it is usually best to say nothing at all to the bully. Move on. If you must respond, act as if you don't care, keep moving, and say these words calmly:

“Whatever.”

“You are wasting my time. I'm out of here.”

“If you say so.”

“I have more important things to do. See ya.”

DON'T GET PHYSICAL

Keep hands down, don't hit or kick unless you have to defend yourself — and only if you were physically attacked first. There is no good reason to stay and fight. Be smart and get out of there.

TELL A TRUSTED ADULT

Bullying can quickly get worse. If you see or experience bullying, talk to an adult. Think about who you would talk to if you ever need help.

If you are afraid that a bully will find out you told, then ask the adult to help you figure out what to do to protect yourself.

REPORT CYBERBULLYING

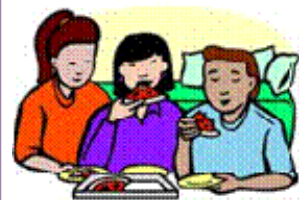
If bullying is online, don't respond. Keep the evidence and tell an adult immediately.

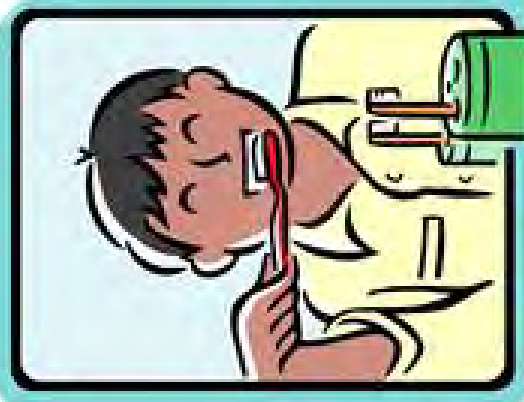
DON'T BULLY

Just because it happened to you doesn't mean that you should bully someone else. You know that it hurts to be bullied. Think about how you can help other kids to be safe.

HERE'S WHAT I DID! TIPS FROM REFUGEE STUDENTS

- ❑ Soccer! I joined a team right away. I made friends and my team protects me. Find a sport or club that you can join. It may take time to feel comfortable, but you will be glad that you did it.
- ❑ I make sure that I wash every day and wear deodorant. My clothes are clean, my teeth are brushed, and I keep my head up and smile. Some kids are not sure how to talk to me at first but I make sure that I look friendly, and it works!
- ❑ I signed up for the school play. I had no idea what was going on at first, but I got to paint scenery and helped pull the curtain. I was busy and surrounded by other people, so I felt safe. It was fun!
- ❑ When I was being bullied I didn't want to tell anyone what was happening to me. It just kept getting worse. Finally I said something to my tutor. It was hard to do, but I'm safer now and the kid has stopped bullying me and other kids, too.
- ❑ My guidance counselor gave me a student "buddy" to show me around. I was nervous at first, but I always know that I can go to my buddy with questions. He helps me with my English and comes with me when I need to talk to teachers. The other kids like my buddy so they are nice to me, too. Ask for a buddy who can look out for you — it definitely works for me.
- ❑ I organized kids from the Refugee Center to walk home with me. It feels good to stick together. We change our route and our schedule so bullies can't wait for us.





ANTI-BULLYING INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

The following resources have been selected for educators to use when discussing the topic of bullying with refugee students. All of the resources have been screened for content and accessibility. Educators should still check to ensure that the content is relevant for students. In some cases, the website provides background information for educators and parents only. Websites that contain materials in languages other than English have been identified.

On occasion, a website will describe a schoolwide program consisting of publications, speakers, or assembly activities. Only those with a strong track record of success, particularly in addressing refugee students as targets, have been included in this list. Educators are advised to look at the *Bullying Prevention Resource Guide — Best Practices* for specific evidence-based guidelines on how to select and implement a schoolwide anti-bullying program.

<http://bullyingprevention.org/index.cfm/ID/2/Best-Practices/>

Another valuable source for screening school or districtwide programs is *Misdirections in Bullying Prevention and Intervention*, prepared by Stop Bullying Now! of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

http://www.education.com/reference/article/Ref_Misdirections/

NEW YORK STATE RESOURCES

The New York State Education Department has developed a clearinghouse dedicated to The Dignity Act, including a Fact Sheet, brochure, and slide show for educators.

<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact> • <http://www.facebook.com/dignityact>

The New York State Center for School Safety serves as a clearinghouse for schools, families, communities, and government agencies, and has a number of valuable resources for educators. The Please Stand Up! program for middle and high school students focuses on bystander behavior.

www.nyscenterforschoolsafety.org

Individual classes and schools have developed their own anti-bullying instructional activities such as an excellent video created by the Glendaal Elementary School, Scotia-Glenville Central School District.

How to Unmake a Bully

<http://bit.ly/o2ev6o>

ABC's of Bullying

http://pathwayscourses.samhsa.gov/bully/bully_intro_pg1.htm

- Online course for educators provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Bully Free

<http://www.bullyfree.com3>

- Districtwide anti-bullying program
- Contains a series of “tip sheets” for bullied students and other free resources
- Products such as curriculum, lesson plans (K-12), books, posters, bulletin board ideas available
- Good-Bye Bully Machine picture book available for engaging young students and reluctant readers in a story about dismantling an imposing bullying machine

Bully Police

www.bullypolice.org

- Grassroots watchdog organization started by parents
- Contains review of NYS legislation pertaining to bullying in schools
- Provides information about the Bully Police Squad (speakers, videos)
- Contains anti-bullying videos (should be screened)

Bully Project

- Documentary feature-length film available on the Bully Project website (<http://thebullyproject.com/>)
- Screening necessary because of the realistic nature of the stories

Bully-Proofing Your School (BPYS)

<http://www.schoolengagement.org>

- ❑ Created by the National Center for School Engagement, the comprehensive BPYS program focuses on school climate, bystander behavior, and creating caring school communities.

Bullycide in America

<http://www.bullycide.org/CurriculumGuide.html>

- ❑ Guide for educators containing key points, sharing of personal experiences, and classroom discussions based on individual real-life stories
- ❑ Contains music video for students on bullying and suicide prevention

Bullying. No Way!

<http://www.bullyingnoway.com.au/ideasbox/schools/>

- ❑ Australian program for safe and inclusive schooling for refugee students that stresses a gradual inclusion policy, schoolwide awareness projects, buddy systems, and community partnerships — well-recognized model for school districts

Bullying Prevention Curriculum

<http://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/pdf/bullyingprogram.pdf>

- ❑ Created by the State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for grades 3-5 and 6-8
- ❑ Particularly useful because up-to-date issues in cyberbullying and multicultural issues are included

Bullying: We Can All Help Stop It

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/bullying.pdf>

- Publications available in 22 languages that educators can share with parents
- Prepared by the Ontario, Canada Ministry of Education — a useful tool for teachers and administrators

Bullying.org

www.bullying.org

- Website contains an extensive list of resources contributed by groups all over the world
- Lesson plans, videos, handouts, speakers, school programs, etc. are in the section “Helpful Resources”

Challenge Day

<http://www.challengeday.org/mtv/>

- A compelling experiential program for teens as shown on MTV’s docu-series *If You Really Knew Me*
- Website contains outstanding videos geared to teens that show how the program works and firsthand observation of student participants
- A discussion guide is also on the website

Cyberbullying

<http://www.bullying.co.uk/advice/stay-cyber-safe-our-advice-and-tips-0>

- Excellent internet safety tips from a website developed in the United Kingdom, relevant to all students
- This site also includes advice for someone being bullied on Facebook or by cell phone.

Cyberbullying Research Center

<http://www.cyberbullying.us>

- ❑ Provides up-to-date information on the extent, causes, and consequences of cyberbullying among adolescents
- ❑ Contains Bullying and Cyberbullying Laws Fact Sheet; Identification, Prevention, and Response Fact Sheet
- ❑ Background information for educators on cell phones in school, sexting, partnering with parents, and student anti-bullying efforts, as well as current events in the topic of cyberbullying; keynote presentations and staff development programs provided

Don't Laugh at Me (DLAM)

<http://www.operationrespect.org>

- ❑ Created by Peter Yarrow (of the folk group Peter, Paul, and Mary) for dissemination to educators, DLAM resources consist of music, videos, assemblies, and free curriculum guides.
- ❑ Information about professional development workshops is provided in the Operation Respect website.

Eyes on Bullying

<http://www.eyesonbullying.org/pdfs/toolkit.pdf>

- ❑ Excellent free downloadable toolkit for educators on preventing bullying aimed at young children
- ❑ Includes thorough background information as well as activities and tips for students (including an excellent page on bullying actions and victim responses)

MARC Curricula and Games

<http://webhost.bridgew.edu/marc/index.html>

- ❑ The Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center provides programs and curricula on bullying prevention, cyberbullying, and school violence

NY Times Topics

<http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/04/13/reader-idea-a-student-driven-bullying-curriculum/>

- ❑ Using articles in the New York Times, a middle school teacher has created a successful student-run anti-bullying curriculum.

One World-Our World

<http://www.1wow.org/>

- ❑ Educational kit and assembly opportunity focusing on multi-cultural appreciation and conflict resolution
 - Prepared and presented by former Peace Corps volunteers
 - Includes follow-up classroom activities and instructional materials

Out on a Limb – A Guide to Getting Along

- ❑ Basic introduction to conflict prevention and resolution for grades 2-4 or ESL
 - Interactive video with audio designed for young students
 - Handout entitled “The World in My Eyes” and activity on perceptions
 - Prepared by the University of Illinois Extension
 - Available on a CD

PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center

<http://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources>

- Created by parents of children with disabilities, the PACER website is loaded with free classroom toolkits, information handouts, and educational activities related to bullying
- Spanish and Somali translations

Refugee Children in the U.S. Schools Toolkit

- A series of toolkits created by BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services)
- Includes Tool 4: Refugee and Immigrant Youth and Bullying in School, with information about causes of bullying, the impact of school demographics and climate, newcomers as targets (including bullying by other refugee students, cultural considerations, and best practices)
- An essential tool for all educators, not just those working directly with refugee students

Safe School Ambassadors

<http://www.community-matters.org/>

- School climate assessment tool
- Safe School Ambassadors program guide, created by Community Matters, an organization designed to stop school bullying and violence and empower young people to be effective peacemakers. (Profiled on The Today Show)

Savvy Cyber Kids

www.savvycyberkids.org

- Organization dedicated to educating young children about safety on the internet
- Contains publications, including a cyber bully awareness, prevention, and response curriculum targeted toward pre-school and primary level entitled *Cyber Kids at Home: The Defeat of the Cyber Bully*
- Activity sheets available for downloading

Steps to Respect

<http://www.cfchildren.org/>

- ❑ The Steps to Respect Bullying Prevention Program developed by the Committee for Children
- ❑ Contains sample lessons, including excellent activities about bystanders and taking responsibility
- ❑ Webinars also offered for educators

Stop Bullying

stopbullying.gov

- ❑ Sections for Kids, Teens, Young Adults, Parents, Educators, Community
 - What is Bullying?
 - Recognize the Warning Signs/Risk Factors
 - How Do I Get Help?
 - When Bullying May Become a Civil Rights Violation
 - Cyberbullying (online and texting)
 - Includes webisodes for students

- ❑ Contains a Youth Leader's Toolkit: Stop Bullying Now – Take a Stand, Lend a Hand

http://www.stopbullying.gov/teens/stand_against_bullying/youth_leader_toolkit.pdf

Stories of Us

<http://www.storiesofus.com>

- ❑ Audios and videos that are very realistic, showing how students bully each other, often in the guise of teasing and “joking around”
- ❑ Describes the Promoting Positive Peer Relationships program with curriculum resources

Taking the Bully by the Horns!

<http://kathynoll.wordpress.com>

- Award-winning book and workbook for children and instructors with practical strategies and role-playing activities
- Workshops and videos available

Teens Health: Dealing With Bullying

http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/problems/bullies.html

- Background information on bullying
- Bullying survival tips
 - What If You're the Bully?
 - Steps to Stop Bullying in Schools
 - Surviving Cyberbullying
 - How Can I Stop Bullying?
- Spanish version provided
- Audio of articles provided
- Links to additional sites – click on Who Can Help?

The Unity Project

<http://www.unityproject.org>

- A resilience learning project that partners with after school programs for middle and high school students
- Focus is on empowering youth to transform challenges into opportunities for personal growth and united action
- Students form Action Teams to make changes in their schools

US Department of Education – Office for Civil Rights

<http://ww2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201010.pdf>

- ❑ Detailed description of Civil Rights legislation pertaining to school district responsibilities