



# To Battle Bullying We Must Build Bridges

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*presented by*  
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# Bridge-Building Requires a Shared Vocabulary

## **So What Is Bullying?**

Bullying is generally defined as an intentional act that causes harm to others, and may involve verbal harassment, verbal or non-verbal threats, physical assault, stalking, or other methods of coercion such as manipulation, blackmail, or extortion.

It is aggressive behavior that intends to hurt, threaten or frighten another person. An imbalance of power between the aggressor and the victim is often involved.

Under Texas law, conduct is considered *bullying* if that conduct:

- 1) exploits an imbalance of power between the student perpetrator and the student victim through written or verbal expression or physical conduct; and
- 2) interferes with a student's education or substantially disrupts the operation of a school.

## **Rude Behavior** generally means:

Saying or doing something that hurts someone else without bad intent.

Acting in a manner that is offensively impolite or ill-mannered.

## **Mean Behavior** generally refers to:

Purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone once (or maybe twice).

Being intentionally unkind, spiteful, or unfair.

# Why do definitions matter?

- Because when “bullying” is used casually, its impact is diminished.

KELLER CITIZEN

JULY 20, 2016 4:48 PM

## Keller trustee resigns for health reasons, calls superintendent a bully

### **CONSERVATIVES SLAM 'CORPORATE BULLIES' FOR PRESSURING VETO ON GEORGIA'S RELIGIOUS FREEDOM BILL**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SEPTEMBER 23, 2015 5:36 PM

## Land office bullies

As a member of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, I am deeply hurt by the bullying of the General Land Office against my organization.

### **Patrick Bullies School ISD Over Transgender Policy**

The Post's View

## Donald Trump, bully in chief

## Why do definitions matter?

- Because when “bullying” is used imprecisely, it builds barriers rather than bridges.

# Case Study: “Theodore”



## Why do definitions matter?

- Because when “bullying” is defined too broadly, our understanding is muddled.

# A Multilevel Examination of Peer Victimization and Bullying Preventions in Schools

Seokjin Jeong and Byung Hyun Lee

Here's what made the headlines:

*Study finds youth **more** likely to be bullied at schools  
with anti-bullying programs!*

## Really?

In this study, bullying is defined as:

- calling names or teasing
- getting left out of things
- hitting/kicking/pushing
  - telling lies about you
- making sexual jokes to you

# What Kinds of Bridges Do We Need to Battle Bullying?

Passing laws and providing training are necessary, but not sufficient, to prevent bullying.

We need bridges between  
home and school.

- Improve communication channels between staff and parents.
- Be sure everyone is using the same words the same way.
- Understand that children's behavior varies from setting to setting.
- Believe that both sides want a learning environment which is safe and productive.

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community and school.

- Take off the bias goggles:
  - “School staff don’t care and can’t be trusted!”
  - “Therapists always take the kid’s side and magnify problems!”
- Recognize that bullying doesn’t only occur in schools  
(it can happen wherever youth gather)
- Anti-bullying messages are more powerful to kids when delivered by a variety of adults--  
not just teachers and parents
- Coordinate existing resources



# What Kinds of Bridges Do We Need to Battle Bullying?

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We need bridges between kids.

Proceedings of the National Academy of Science • January 19, 2016  
Elizabeth Levy Palucka, Hana Shepherd, and Peter M. Aronow

## Changing climates of conflict: A social network experiment in 56 schools

To identify the most influential students, students individually nominated the top 10 students at their school who they chose to spend time with, either in or outside of school, or face to face or online.

Those students launched various anti-bullying campaigns, including one that involved them posting photos to Instagram using the hashtag "#iRespect," and another during which they gifted brightly colored rubber wrist bands to students they saw intervening in a conflict.

Over the course of the 2012-2013 school year, 56 New Jersey middle schools saw a 30 percent reduction in student conflict.



# 'Ingenious' System Helps Teacher Spot Kids in Trouble

Students submit wish lists on seating, but it's not what they think: Momastery blogger



By **John Johnson**, Newser Staff  
Posted Jan 30, 2014 1:51 PM CST



 **37 comments**



(Shutterstock)

(NEWSER) – Momastery blogger Glennon Doyle Melton writes of an "ingenious" strategy one of her kid's teachers has used for years—every week since Columbine, in fact. On Fridays, the teacher asks each student to give her a list of four classmates with whom they'd like to sit and to name one kid who has been an "exceptional classroom citizen." The idea isn't to create a new seating chart or a hokey award, however. She pores over the lists looking for lonely kids,

those who never get mentioned or who can't come up with four friends.

"She's identifying the little ones who are falling through the cracks of the class's social life," writes Melton. "She is discovering whose gifts are going unnoticed by their peers. And she's pinning down—right away—who's being bullied and who is doing the bullying." After Columbine, the teacher seized upon the idea that violence often springs from "disconnection" and has made it her business to try to identify and fix the problem early. "What a way to spend a life: looking for patterns of love and loneliness," writes Melton. "Stepping in, every single day—and altering the trajectory of our world." Click for the [full column](#).

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