

**YOU CAN HANDLE  
THEM ALL**  
***Bullying  
and  
Cyberbullying***  
Special Edition

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*Note:* The behaviors in this book are *not* labels for students. They are simply descriptions of the behaviors provided to facilitate identification and an understanding of how to handle discipline concerns effectively, stay in control of the situation, and teach students self-discipline. You should never use such labels when talking to—or about—children! Doing so could create many new problems and seriously damage the teacher-student relationship.

# INTRODUCTION

Nearly 30% of the nation's school children report being the targets of bullying (Brown, 2011). Students who are bullied suffer from a host of academic, social, physical, and emotional issues and can be left with scars that last a lifetime. Although the causes and effects of bullying have been studied for decades, extinguishing bullying behavior is not that easy. Without recognizing bullying as a different form of aggression than run-of-the-mill playground disputes, educators may struggle to respond appropriately.

## Familiar Problem, New Challenges

Although bullying is not a new issue for schools, the proliferation of social media has broadened the impact of bullying on students' lives. First, technology has made bullying more anonymous. Rumors and hurtful comments go viral quickly. Second, socially-connected bullies target peers who are unlikely to be defended. Since a growing number of attacks are happening outside the school's reach, aggressors are less inclined to own up to their actions. Finally, many incidents fall below the radar of adults. Not only are adults less technologically savvy, students worry if harassment is reported, they may lose their own Internet privileges or electronic devices.

All too often, a school's handling of bullying incidents is quick and cursory due to limited time, information, or resources. In a 2011 study of bullying by the National Education Association (NEA), 93% of teachers said their district had a bullying prevention policy in place. However, only 54% had received training related to the policy. Moreover, teachers feel ill-equipped to deal with bullying, especially when attacks occur in the digital world. Teachers are most comfortable intervening when: (a) they have effective strategies to use, and (b) their colleagues are also willing or likely to intervene.

## Take a Stand Against Bullying

Bullying is everyone's business. The consequences of bullying can be devastating to the school climate, and can infringe on the students' right to learn in a safe, respectful environment. Furthermore, students who watch in silence as peers are ridiculed are also affected by these hostile acts. "Bystanders" inadvertently encourage bullying by providing an audience. Yet, many students report adult intervention is infrequent or ineffective. Without teachers, support staff, parents, and the community-at-large taking a stand against bullying, the frequency of this behavior will not be reduced. Ignoring the problem also sends a message that bullying is a harmless rite of passage that adolescents must simply endure.

## Understand the Warning Signs

Because bullying is so mean spirited, the immediate reaction when incidents are brought to teachers' or administrators' attention may be to invoke punitive consequences. However, this approach does not necessarily get to the heart of the problem. While bullies must experience consequences, the primary goal should be to change the behavior rather than simply punish it. In many cases, the bully may be experiencing his or her own sense of pain or low self-worth. Bullies may be trying to fill an underlying need (e.g. a need for attention, a need for power, a need for friendship). Or they may have been victimized themselves.

Without skillful interventions by caring, supportive adults, bullying can lead to depression, anxiety, humiliation, and even bullycide (e.g. when a victim commits suicide or a bully is killed by a victim). The descriptors in this special edition of *You Can Handle Them All* will help school personnel understand the warning signs so that interventions can be immediate, targeted, and effective.

## A Comprehensive Response Model

The response model in this book offers a step-by-step guide to handle 27 different types of bullying behavior. Since bullies don't conform to a single profile or harass targets in the same way, this model is designed to help educators address a spectrum of bullying behaviors—both traditional and online. By working from the same foundation, members of a school team can ask, *what kind of bully are we facing?* Then they can apply specific solutions to deal with the aggressive behavior. It is important to know how bullies and their targets are situated in the social fabric of school life. Otherwise, we may focus exclusively on obvious cliques, while lesser-known individuals or groups perpetuate harmful behavior.

## How to Use This Resource

Every state and school district has policies either pending or on the books that prohibit the harassment, intimidation, and bullying of students. This resource and supplemental materials available for teachers, administrators, support staff, and parents by THE MASTER TEACHER are intended to complement existing state and local policies.

The book is divided into two sections. The first section addresses 15 common behaviors of traditional bullying, their impacts, and actions for dealing with each behavior. The second section introduces 12 behaviors of cyberbullying, their impacts, and actions for dealing with each behavior. For many educators, the social media venue of cyberbullying is uncharted territory. These descriptors expand our knowledge and understanding of this new type of digital bully. The use of this resource empowers educators as they combat the merging world of traditional and online bullying.

### Source:

Brown, F. (Summer 2011). Use professional learning to protect children from bullying. *The Learning Principal*.

# THE JEALOUS

## **I. BEHAVIOR: Specific attitudes and actions of this student at home and/or at school.**

1. Exhibits destructive emotion toward particular people who have things this student wants: an award, an opportunity, praise, friendships, possessions, etc.
2. May pick one person as a target—and stay on that target continuously.
3. His or her choice of target is often misdirected.
4. May try to prevent a friend from having other friendships. Even though the jealous student has other relationships, he or she will resent any the friend has. If the friend succumbs to the jealous student's demands, the jealous student has made the friend a possession.
5. Is indiscriminate. The trivial can provoke as much wrath as the significant.
6. Will seldom say what he or she will do to solve the problem, but may freely tell what the other can and cannot do—and make it clear that simply making an effort to comply is not good enough.

## **II. EFFECTS: How behavior affects teachers, peers, support staff, and the school learning environment.**

1. The target of the jealousy, and the target's friends, are hurt.
2. Achievement is often affected because the jealous person tries to block the target's attempts to achieve.
3. An increasing feeling of rejection develops among the target and his or her associates.

## **III. ACTION:**

- **Identify causes of misbehavior.**
- **Pinpoint student needs being revealed.**
- **Employ specific methods, procedures, and techniques at school for getting the student to modify or change his or her behavior.**

1. Primary causes of misbehavior:
  - Power: Jealousy is the result of a desire to possess and control.
  - Revenge: This student seeks to punish people who have things he or she wants or whom he or she cannot control or possess.
2. Primary needs being revealed:
  - Sexuality/Relationships: This student is seeking relationships and status within these relationships.
  - Escape from Pain: This student experiences intense and painful emotions as a result of jealousy. He or she attempts to escape these feelings by trying to either punish or control others.
3. Secondary needs being revealed:
  - Affiliation: The guidance of a caring adult can help this student deal with his or her jealousy.
  - Status: The jealous student desperately wants to be somebody. Helping this student give up the jealousy and achieve on his or her own is the first step.
  - Achievement: Once this student can achieve on his or her own, jealousy of other achievers will diminish.
  - Power: Jealousy renders this student totally powerless. Giving up the jealousy will help restore power over himself or herself.
4. We can begin by understanding that some jealousy is rational. A student may have cause to be jealous—sometimes because someone else is actually trying to make him or her feel that way.
5. Equally important, we need to know that some jealousy is irrational. It has no justifiable cause, but it has the same negative effect as when it's justified.

6. All staff member efforts based on rational thought, logic, or common sense are likely to fall on deaf ears when dealing with an irrationally jealous person. Just keep in mind that a central purpose of jealous behavior is to control or possess. And jealousy always has a target.
7. Accept the fact that although jealousy can be irrational and even absurd, it must be confronted or it will not change.
8. Get the student to recognize the emotion for exactly what it is—rather than put a different label on it or deny its existence. This means, of course, that the student must admit what he or she is feeling—to us and, if possible, to the person toward whom the jealousy is directed. This allows the student to deal with the real issue.
9. Suggest to the student that it can be helpful to tell the other person, “I don’t know why I’m jealous of you” or “I feel left out.” Such admissions may open the door for change or resolution.
10. Do not tell the student that his or her feelings are stupid or neurotic; such statements will derail efforts to deal constructively with his or her feelings and behavior.
11. Tell the student you will not accept responsibility or blame for his or her feelings—and you will urge others to take the same stance. Make the student accountable for any action he or she takes against the other person.
12. Next, urge the student to make a choice to give up his or her jealousy. It’s important to note that, in many cases, a jealous person must decide, “I’m going to give up jealousy because it’s hurting me all the time.”
13. Inform the student that you will not alter your relationships with others because of his or her behavior.
14. Tell the student that you will help him or her, but you won’t condone or tolerate any mistreatment of classmates that results from the jealousy. This is your only option in preventing the damage jealousy can do. It’s vital to understand and apply this stance because if you don’t, you allow a negative, unfair, and damaging emotion to control everyone.
15. Advise the student to learn more about the other person rather than concentrating only on his or her own negative emotions. The more the student knows and understands about the classmate, the less likely he or she is to be jealous and behave irrationally.
16. Encourage the student to talk about himself or herself when feeling jealous. Concentrating on rational thoughts will make him or her feel less jealous. Often you’ll find that this kind of thinking will cause the student to do something positive toward the other person. This is important because the more jealous a person is, the more negative he or she becomes, and extreme jealousy can “drive a student crazy.” It can make him or her imagine all sorts of things. When this is the case, the student can do and say things that can cause the relationship to deteriorate further.
17. The student who repeatedly cuts classmates down because of jealousy needs professional counseling. For the best result say, “Sally, I have to talk with you about repeatedly cutting down others. I wonder if you know how bad it’s making you look.” (Wait for a response.) Then say, “Sally, I think I know what’s eating you. Tell me if I’m wrong. Some of your classmates are getting opportunities that aren’t coming to you, and it’s making you upset—and a little jealous. Am I right?” (Wait for a response.) In all likelihood, the student will be a bit defensive when you use the word *jealous*. Nevertheless, continue the conversation by saying, “Sally, you have a lot of strengths and positive characteristics.” (Name them.) “You need to use them to create your own opportunities. If you continue being jealous of others, you’ll lose your ability to function successfully. Therefore, I’m going to help you. Every time I think you’re giving a jealous response, we’re going to talk until you have the confidence to function using your talents.” (Wait for a response.) Then close by getting the student to agree to your action. If the behavior continues, recommend professional help.

#### **IV. MISTAKES: Common misjudgments and errors in managing the student which may perpetuate or intensify the problem.**

1. Capitulating to the jealous student.
2. Not understanding how difficult it is for this student to change.
3. Focusing totally on the pain this student causes, and not seeing how much pain he or she is in.
4. Not getting help for the student.

**SEE ALSO:** • The Agitator

• The Angry

• The Hater

• The Vindictive



# THE HARASSER

## **I. BEHAVIOR: Specific attitudes and actions of this student at home and/or at school.**

1. Repeatedly sends offensive, insulting, and hurtful messages.
2. Sends messages at odd hours of the day or night.
3. Posts hurtful messages in public forums, such as chat rooms or bulletin boards.
4. Dislikes everything, including himself or herself, and wants everyone to know it.
5. Has frequently experienced hurt.
6. Usually a loner.
7. May have sympathetic followers.
8. Tries to cause trouble and is delighted with it.
9. Likes to “get even.”
10. Displays behavior sometimes approaching sadism.
11. Enjoys being angry.
12. Occasionally feels terrible and reveals tremendous guilt over his or her actions.
13. Signs up other students for porn sites, junk email, and instant messaging spam.
14. Steals or accesses others’ passwords.
15. Posts real or doctored sexual images of other students online.
16. Shares personal information about others.
17. Seems to say, in all he or she does, “I won’t let you forget I’m here.”

## **II. EFFECTS: How behavior affects teachers, peers, support staff, and the school learning environment.**

1. Victims experience fear and anxiety.
2. Victims never rest, not knowing when they will be harassed again.

## **III. ACTION: • Identify causes of misbehavior. • Pinpoint student needs being revealed. • Employ specific methods, procedures, and techniques at school for getting the student to modify or change his or her behavior.**

1. Primary causes of misbehavior:
  - Revenge: This student is angry and gets satisfaction out of harassing others.
  - Attention: This person is trying to get a reaction.
2. Primary needs being revealed:
  - Sexuality/Relationships: The student cannot form relationships in positive ways, so he or she harasses as a result.
  - Escape from Pain: The school or home situation may be very painful, and this student may be using this behavior to escape. Make no mistake, this behavior is a cry for help.
3. Secondary needs being revealed:
  - Status: This student needs to be noticed and recognized. He or she is trying to be “somebody” through negative behavior.

- Power: This student feels powerful when he or she can cause trouble through harassment.
- 4. Be aware that this student needs counseling. This behavior is likely to worsen without adult intervention.
- 5. Understand that punishment alone will only exacerbate the problem.
- 6. This student needs a close relationship with a caring adult who is patient enough to help the student deal with many layers of pain. Know that this student needs love, but may not be able to accept it easily. That doesn't let us off the hook from offering it.
- 7. When approaching this student, know he or she needs you—and change will be slow.
- 8. Involve the parents, but be aware that this student's problems may be caused by a severely dysfunctional home life.
- 9. Confront the student about the behavior and ask him or her to stop immediately. His or her computer usage must be monitored. Yet, without redirecting his or her energies into something positive, he or she will find a way to continue bullying.
- 10. Involve the student in activities within the classroom, and seek extracurricular activities in which he or she can participate.
- 11. Encourage this student at any opportunity.
- 12. Understand that this student is very unhappy, and for good reason. He or she is finding very little success in any aspect of life. He or she is miserable and wants everyone else to be miserable too.
- 13. Try to get him or her to talk—even if he or she lets it “all hang out.” As you counsel, know this student has given up trying to get attention and power in healthy ways. He or she must have a “win” and won't begin to change without one.
- 14. If you can, uncover an interest or any area in which the student is experiencing success in appropriate ways. Then, focus your efforts on those interests and build off identified successes. Remember, once given hope, this student will strive for a positive relationship with you rather than spend time on vengeful acts.

#### **IV. MISTAKES: Common misjudgments and errors in managing the student which may perpetuate or intensify the problem.**

1. Not dealing with the problem.
2. Not seeking professional counseling for this student.
3. Thinking this student is beyond hope.
4. Interpreting the student's rejection of your attempts to connect as a sign he or she doesn't want you to keep trying.
5. Not keeping any evidence you acquire. You may need it later as proof.

**SEE ALSO:** • The Angry • The Stalker • The Techno Sniper • The Vindictive

