

The bully, the bullied and the bystander
From Pre-School to High School—Breaking the Cycle of Violence
A workshop by Barbara Coloroso

According to recent studies and surveys with American school children:

- **One in seven school children has been a bully or a target**
- **35% of kids were directly involved in bullying incidents**
- **Bullying peaks in the eleven- to twelve-year-old age group**
- **38% of students identified special education students as those targeted by bullies**
- **24% reported that race bullying occurred now and then or often**
- **23 % of the students bullied and 71% of the teachers reported that teachers intervened often or almost always**

It's a deadly combination: Bullies who get what they want from their target; bullied kids who are afraid to tell; bystanders who watch, participate, or look away. . .and adults who explain incidents as simply "teasing" and a normal part of growing up. Today's newspapers are filled with stories of chilling brutality and even teen suicides relating to bullying. Discussing her book, *The bully, the bullied, and the bystander*, Barbara Coloroso gives parents, caregivers, educators, the medical community and juvenile justice personnel—and most of all, kids—the tools to break this cycle of violence.

Drawing on her decades of working with youth, parents and teachers, and her wide experience in areas of conflict resolution and reconciliatory justice, Barbara Coloroso offers a blueprint for healing and prevention strategies in the workshop.

She introduces a powerful way to understand bullying that explains why current approaches to the problem—at home, at school, and in our communities--have often failed. She explains that bullies are motivated by contempt (a powerful feeling of dislike toward someone considered to be worthless, inferior or undeserving of respect)—so treating the issue as a conflict to be resolved, as typically happens, won't end the problem. The bully's cruelty escalates as the bullied child retreats and bystanders look on (or join in)—and the "cycle of violence" begins. Some bullied targets have fought back with violence that has devastated entire communities. Others have taken their own lives. Many more suffer constant emotional and physical pain in silence.

She debunks the misconceptions and explains what administrators, teachers, parents and other caregivers can do to recognize and help bullies and their targets before the violence becomes entrenched or tragically escalates. She outlines how to read the subtle "cues and clues" that a child is being bullied, explains how to effectively discipline rather than punish the bully, and outlines how parents, schools, and communities can formulate constructive strategies that go beyond the usual "zero tolerance" stances.

The third, and often overlooked characters in this tragedy are the bystanders. They are the supporting cast who aid and abet the bully, through acts of omission and commission. Barbara Coloroso discusses how these kids can become a potent force as active witnesses, standing up for their peers, speaking out against injustices, and taking responsibility for what happens among themselves.

Objectives:

Educators, parents, caregivers, human service providers, and the medical and juvenile justice personnel who attend this workshop will have a working knowledge of the following and tools to effectively help break this cycle of violence:

- What the Bully is and isn't
- The differences and similarities between **Boy** and **Girl** bullies
- The short and long-term impact on **the Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander**

- Three apparent **Psychological Advantages** that come with contempt allowing kids to harm others without feeling shame, empathy, or compassion
- **Cyberbullying:** What it is; how to effectively deal with it; links and resources
- Four **Antidotes** to bullying
- **Warning Signs** a child is being bullied
- The differences between **Telling and Tattling; Reporting and Rattling; Teasing and Taunting; Flirting and Sexual Bullying**
- **Six Scenes** from a tragedy and how to rewrite the script
- How **the Bystander** can become witnesses, resisters, and defenders
- It runs in the family: how **the Home** can help create a cycle of violence or help create larger circles of caring

And will include an extensive discussion of the following:

- The **Three P's:** Strong antibullying policies, procedures, and programs
- The difference between **Punishment, Rescuing, and Discipline**
- How **Reconciliatory Justice** works with bullying cases as opposed to conflict cases
- The **Legal Ramifications** for failure to act
- How **Schools** can teach “the fourth R”: relationships
- How **Community**-wide solutions can work effectively

It is easy to point fingers; place blame; fortress our schools; push zero-tolerance plans; mandate a bully awareness week; stiffen penalties for bullying; or simply ignore the problem and hope it will go away. It is more difficult—and necessary—that we as individuals, families, and entire communities create safe harbor for all of our children. We must do what is necessary to take the weapons out of the hearts, minds, and hands of our kids. We need to give kids the tools to be able to stand up for their own rights while respecting the rights and legitimate needs of others; to handle conflicts nonviolently; to act with integrity, civility, and compassion; and to develop a personal code (inner moral code) that gives them the wherewithal to do what is right in spite of external consequences, and never merely because of them. No easy task; no simple answers.

About the Author

Barbara Coloroso is an internationally recognized speaker and author on parenting, teaching, school discipline, non-violent conflict resolution and restorative justice. She is an educational consultant for school districts, the medical and business community, the criminal justice system and other educational associations in the Canada, United States, Europe, South America, Asia, India, Africa, New Zealand, Australia and Iceland.

Barbara has served as a classroom teacher, a laboratory school instructor, and a university instructor. She is the author of five international bestsellers: *kids are worth it! Giving Your Child the Gift of Inner Discipline*; *Parenting Through Crisis: Helping Kids in Times of Loss, Grief and Change*; *The Bully, The Bullied and The Bystander—From Pre-School to High School—How Parents and Teachers Can Help Break the Cycle of Violence*; *Just Because It's Not Wrong Doesn't Make It Right—from toddlers to teens, teaching kids to think and act ethically*; *Extraordinary Evil: A Brief History of Genocide...and Why It Matters*