

Working Together to Stop Elder Bullying

Elder Presentation



Key Points

- What is Bullying?
- Characteristics of Bullies
- Causes of Bullying
- Warning Signs of Bullying
- Bullying Cycle
- Interventions
- Review of Participation Agreement

What is Bullying?

Intentional, repetitive aggressive behavior involving an imbalance of power or strength.

Hazelden Foundation, 2008

Types of Bullying

- Verbal: name calling, teasing, insults, taunts, threats, sarcasm, or pointed jokes targeting specific individuals
- Physical: pushing, hitting, destroying property, or stealing
- Anti-social: shunning/excluding, gossiping, spreading rumors and using negative non-verbal body language (mimicking, offensive gestures)

Bullying

- Insults or belittling jokes
- Spreading rumors or whispering when individual enters room
- Harassment, meanness, insulting individuals, gossiping and racial and ethnic slurs
- Criticizing or ridiculing physical or mental disabilities
- Offensive gestures or facial expressions
- Physical intimidation or abuse

Causes of Bullying

- To show they are in charge
- They're insecure with themselves
- They're victims of bullying or have been a victim of bullying
- Medical or Mental Health issues
- Substance abuse
- An individual may be irritable due to pain, medication, lack of sleep, grief, etc.

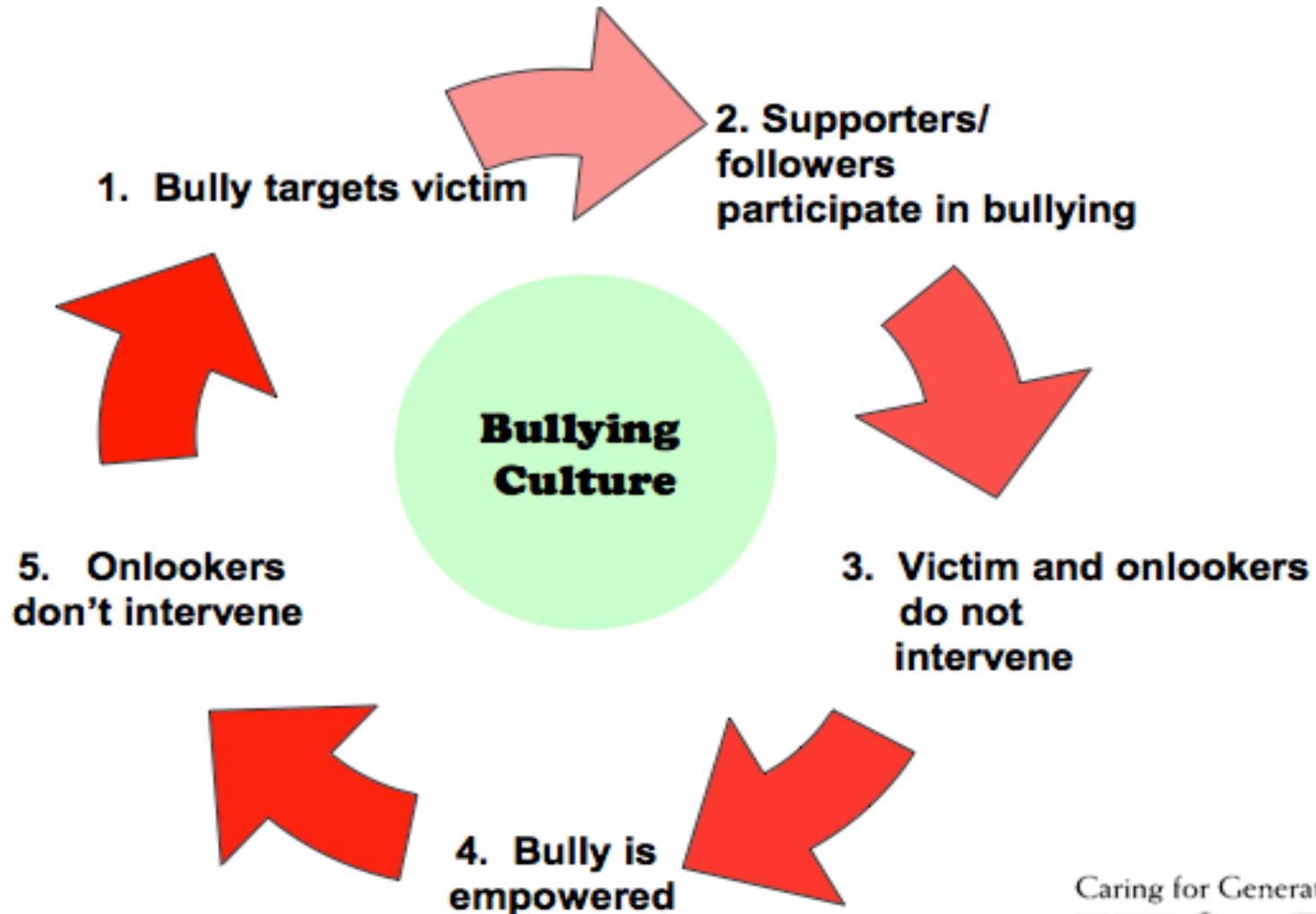
Bullying Warning Signs

- Individuals who are being bullied may exhibit these behaviors:
 - Anger, frustration
 - Self-isolation
 - Avoidance of specific areas or activities
 - Vague complaints “They don’t like me” or “They won’t let me be in their group.”
 - Depressed mood

Bullying Warning Signs

- Individuals who bully their peers may exhibit these behaviors:
 - Intimidate staff
 - Often tell others what to do using a bossy style
 - Criticize others or lack empathy toward them
 - Make repeated complaints about others

Bullying Cycle



Interventions for Bullying

- Preventing and minimizing bullying behavior requires intervention at multiple levels:
 - Community
 - Bully
 - Victim/Target

Community Intervention

- Have elders sign a “Participation Agreement” that specifically addresses bullying behavior and other behaviors
- Support individuals to support others with consideration, respect, and dignity

Interventions for Individuals who Bully

- Consistently set limits on bullying behavior (Participation Agreement)
- Offer an appropriate outlet to vent frustrations
- Help them to:
 - Identify alternative methods to feel in control
 - Learn positive communication skills
 - Develop empathy
 - Expand their social network
 - Address feeling of loss

Interventions for Individuals Being Bullied

- Stand up for your rights
- Manage feelings of anger
- Use positive communication strategies
- Make your opinion clear without any aggressive language or motions
- Remove yourself from the situation
- Report violations of the Participation Agreement to staff immediately

Never interrupt or provoke!

Participation Agreement Review



Code of Conduct for Service Centers

Be Respectful to All Individuals

- **Include Everyone**
- **Encourage Others**
- **Accept Differences**
- **Control Your Emotions**
- **Use Positive Communication**
 - **Leave Gossip At Home**
 - **Distance Yourself from Negative Situations**
 - **Promote team spirit**

Sources

- The National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center (NORC), www.ltombudsman.org
- Alzheimer's Association – alz.org
- “Who bullies and who gets bullied?” Robin Bonifax, PhD, MSW, Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, Arizona State University