

Stan Davis

<http://www.stopbullyingnow.com>

Thank you for your letters about bullying prevention. You asked what you can do in a presentation to other students.

Here's how I see it:

1. Bullying is not caused by any action of the target. That means that any advice we give about 'telling the bully to stop', 'just walk away'; 'don't let it bother you' are not going to help much.
2. Bullying is not conflict. That means that peer mediation or any other approach that aims at 'working things out' between the bully and target will make things worse.
3. Bullies like what they do and have strong self-confidence (most of them), so if we tell the whole student body to be nice the bullies won't listen.
4. Two groups (beside the bullies) have power- the adults at the school and the bystanders (because there are so many of them- about 80% of the students).
5. What you can best do is to urge adults to act when they see and hear about bullying. You can urge bystanders to do the two things an adult would do if he or she saw a robbery in progress:
 - a. Get help for the target by telling adults and then being willing to be honest witnesses if the bully says he or she didn't do it. And the adults should know that it is their job to protect you when you do that.
 - b. And be a friend to the target, either while it's happening (Say to the target: "the science teacher is looking for you" or in some other way help the target get away from the bully) , or later (Sit or walk with the target, be his or her friend, and help her connect with others).
 - c. Bystanders can also refuse to go along with rumors, excluding, and other kinds of bullying. There is no need to confront the bully (though if he or she is a good friend of yours you could tell the bully to cut it out). The main thing is not to spread the rumor any farther or otherwise join in the bullying.

I hope that helps. Will be glad to help more.

Stan Davis