INTERNATIONAL
BULLYING
PREVENTION
ASSOCIATION

Newsletter
for Parents & Adult Family Members

When Your Child Is Bullied...

Penny Bisignano, State Coordinator for Olweus Bullying Prevention Programming in Iowa

Supporting Your Child/Youth

Bullying can be very difficult for children/youth to report. When they tell you:

- **Listen, take it seriously, and be supportive. They need your help.**
- **Don't say, "Just ignore it."** Kids who've been bullied did that a long time ago!
- **Don't ask, "What are you doing to cause this?" Don't blame them.**
- **Get the details so you can present information to the school for the inquiry/investigation** *(see 1,2,3 below).*
- **Let them know it is not their fault!** Bullying is about POWER. Kids who bully have power over others.
- **Help your child/youth identify their strengths, special gifts and ways they can buffer this difficult time.**
- **Make sure your home is a safe and comforting place for your child/youth.**
- **REPORT & make sure the bullying stops. Don't quit until it stops.**

More Steps / Strategies for Reporting Bullying

- Contact the school to report what has happened.
- Request a safety plan for your child.
- You may involve the police if another child/youth has physically assaulted your child or is seriously threatening him or her with bodily injury.
- Ask how the event(s) will be investigated. Request communication about the progress and results of the investigation.
- If the bullying was about age, race, color, national origin, disability, religion or sex, it may be discriminatory. You may decide to contact your state Civil Rights Commission and/or the Federal Office of Civil Rights.
- If the bullying issues are not resolved, you may contact your local superintendent of schools, your school board or the state department of education bullying prevention specialist. At any point in this process you may decide to contact an attorney.

What Should NOT Happen When Your Child/Youth Reports Being Bullied!

- They should NOT be made to feel responsible for the bullying.
- They should NOT be made to feel that they should take care of it themselves.
- They should NOT be asked to meet with their aggressors "to work it out."
- They should NOT be asked to change their schedule/plans because of bullying.

Strategies for Reporting Bullying to Schools

Keep a detailed diary of what has happened to your child. Make sure you have more than one copy of this documentation. The diary should describe:

1. **What happened –** who is bullying, what kind of bullying, when and frequency, where it happened.
2. **How target is affected –** physical, emotional/mental health, attendance, interference with schoolwork, interference with school events, and other things in their life harmed/affected.
3. **Other details –** like…it happened last year, started again, couldn't tell until now, online/phone as well, neighborhood issues etc.

Resources/References

- Cartoon Network – Stop Bullying Speak Up – Parent Tip Sheet
- For Schools – What NOT To Do When Bullying Occurs – stopbullying.gov
- Why kids don't report bullying – Committee for Children

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5 Ways to Nurture Empathy in a Digital-Driven World

Dr. Michele Borba, Parenting Expert

In 1966, Newsweek released the first part of their landmark cover story, "The Teen-Agers: A Newsweek Survey of What They're Really Like," investigating everything from politics and pop culture to teens' views of their parents, their future and the world. This week Newsweek released a fifty-year follow up study called "The State of the American Teenager in Numbers: 1966 vs Now." They set out to discover what's changed and what's remained the same for the teen set. Perhaps most fascinating was the seismic shift in "teen gadget ownership." The gadget categories show just how monumental the change in technology has been for our children. I just pulled a few differences:

Reality Check: Childhoods have changed and technology is

Teen Gadget Ownership in 1966	Teen Gadget Ownership in 2015
Records: Boys 75% Girls 90%	Smartphone: Boys 73% Girls 78%
Transistor Radio Boys 75% Girls 72%	Computer: Boys 55% Girls 78%
Encyclopedia: Boys 64% Girls 60%	Bike: Boys 61% Girls 49%
Hair Dryer: Boys: 0% Girls 65%	Tablet: Boys 48% Girls 51%

clearly a part of our children's lives. But sometimes we miss the big picture: how much our kids are plugging in and (even more important) potentially plugging out of real life. A recent report found that one third of infants are now using smartphones and/or tablets. And the average kid is plugged into digital devices longer than a typical school day and (in most cases), longer than he or she sleeps.

But something more is at stake: our children's empathy and emotional intelligence. As I researched and wrote, "UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World" I was struck by staggering statistics that show a forty percent drop in our children's empathy levels within the last thirty years. And interestingly the biggest dip happened around the year 2000– about the same time computers, tablets, smartphones, and all the rest became central in our children's lives. Yes, technology is taking giant leaps forward in so many ways as a society, but let's remember that the cornerstone of humanity is empathy. Empathy is the seeds of compassion, courage, collaboration and all those traits that help our children grow to be good people. The most effective way for our children to learn empathy is always face to face. You don't learn empathy facing screens.

Last week I spoke to parents at Willows Schools at the invitation of Common Sense Media discuss the empathy and technology connection. I offered several parenting tips as to how to nurture children's empathy especially in today's plugged-in, digital driven world. I've included five evening favorites.

Best empathy-building practices are always real and meaningful to children. (Hint: They're usually unplanned and don't cost a dime). Take advantage of those spontaneous moments with your children! Here are five ideas to keep our children's empathy open from "UnSelfie."

Be an emotion coach

Find natural moments to connect face to face to listen, and then validate your child's feelings and boost emotional literacy. The face is the best tool for developing emotional literacy.

Talk feelings

Kids need an emotion vocabulary to discuss feelings and guidance to become emotionally literate. Point out feelings in films, books, or real people and use more emotion words. And just keep naturally using more feeling words in your own vocabulary.

Set unplugged times

Take a digital reality check and stick to your rules so kids have "face time." Find times that are most convenient for all of your family, and then post them as a reminder.

Use literature to nurture moral imagination

Reading literary fiction-even for short periods-nurtures empathy and perspective taking ability like "The Wednesday Surprise," "The Hundred Dresses," or "The Boy in the Striped Pajamas." Read as a family, or one on one. Or get two copies (for you and your teen) to read alone, and then discuss together. And always remember to ask: "How would you feel if that happened to you?"

Ask "I wonder?"

Watch emotionally-charged films together (like "Dumbo," "Inside Out," "E.T."). Teach your kids to ask themselves "I wonder: what does (Benjamin Button, Charlotte, or even Uncle Fred) think/feel/need?" Encourage them to use same the "I wonder" question whenever they encounter someone new like the woman in line, child on swings, new student, man lying on the street.

Technology will continue to advance. Let's just make sure that our children's empathy levels do as well.

Digital Diligence

Kim Kiritschenko, School Resource Officer, Brownsburg ISD in Indiana

Just when we thought our kids were old enough where we no longer had to watch their every move on the playground or at the park, we now have to watch them online. It can be an overwhelming task to monitor their online world where approximately 500 new apps are released every day. How do we know which ones are most popular and which ones they are using? Below, I have comprised a Cliff Note's version of some of the apps that are the most commonly used as well as ones that are most concerning for parents and law enforcement.

Instagram

Most popular overall. Users post pictures and followers can leave comments as well as tag friends in photos. Parents should frequently check to see what their child is posting but should also be aware of who their child is following. Some users will offer up narcotics and request that their followers "DM" for more info. Instagram allows "DM" or Direct Messaging between users as well as group messages. Most bullying and drama occurs over DM. Common to see "Exposing" accounts where X rated photos are posted and the person who is in the photo will be named in the comments. These fake accounts are usually only active for a day or two however they gain followers very quickly and can do severe reputation damage.

Snapchat

More than just funny filters, overlays and face swaps. Kids love the ability to have fun with selfies and pics with their friends but pay attention to the Snapchat Stories feature. Think of Instagram but with videos. As a School Resource Officer I have seen Snapchat stories that range from videos of kids simply dancing and having fun to smoking marijuana. If you want to get an inside look in to what your child's friends are doing…watch some Snapchat stories that appear on their timeline.

Twitter

Still popular with high school age kids and tends to host its share of drama. Familiarize yourself with what a Subtweet is (a post that refers to someone else without directly mentioning them) and Twitter Beef (an argument played out on Twitter). Direct messaging allows for side conversations and Twitter does have its share of "Roast Accounts" where an anonymous user sets up an account to insult another person or group. Keep an eye out for local "Confession" accounts as well where students will post about illegal activity, rumors, crushes, teachers and more.

KIK

Definitely the most concerning app due to the large amount of fake profiles, child exploitation and the ability for users to start up conversations with people they have never met. KIK users have reported receiving automated spam bot messages containing explicit images as well as unwanted requests from strangers requesting pornographic photos. Parents need to closely monitor this app if their child has it. When a child reports being solicited online by a stranger, many times their initial contact can be traced back to meeting on KIK.

Social Media is like driving on a busy highway…some people are just simply better drivers than others. Some drivers are more patient, cautious, polite and safe while others don't care who they put in danger in order to get where they are going. The bottom line is that it is up to us as adults to teach our kids the rules of the road online.