



CHOFETZ CHAIM HERITAGE FOUNDATION PRESENTS:

ANTI-BULLYING WORKSHOP WITH DR. YITZCHOK SHINDLER, PsyD

- Bullying is a big issue.
- Bullying is a learned behavior. Learned behaviors can be unlearned, even for the victim and the bystanders.

- **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

- 1. Constant bothering of someone.**
- 2. There is an intent to hurt.**
- 3. An imbalance of power.**

- Ninety percent of children in 4th to 8th grades have reported being bullied.
- Nearly three-quarters of the children who are bullied never report it, which means that children are suffering in silence.
- Amongst the many problems of bullying is that it really gets to the person's self-esteem. People believe the bullies, and when the bystanders are also shaking their heads or joining in, the victim starts to believe that he or she is weaker, less smart, less attractive, or less capable than other children, and that stays with them.
- The earlier you detect what's going on and help the child, the better it will be.
- We determine if someone is considered a bully based on:

THE FID SCALE

Frequency

Intensity

Duration

- **WHAT DOES BULLYING LOOK LIKE?**

-Boys tend to bully more physically.

-Girls bully more verbally, and sometimes they do it with exclusion from the group.

- **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOUR CHILD IS A BULLY?**

- **Don't be in denial or combative with the school.**
- **Try to get the facts from your child.**
- **Be supportive of your child.**
- **Get to the root of why your child is bullying.**
- **Ask your child: "How do you think you would feel if someone consistently put you down or made fun of you?"**
- **Teach your child how amazing it is to wake up in the morning and say, "Who can I say something nice to today? Who can I make feel good?"**

- Incentives are good, but those are tangible things. Rather try to get your child's heart-he should *want* to do this for its own sake-because that's what will ultimately make him feel best.

- Conducting a conversation with the bully:

- Don't just tell your child, "Don't bully." Tell him, "Be nice." אהבת חסד is one of the few *mitzvos* that the word is אהבה. It's not just עשיית חסד - you have to love it. And that starts by loving *people*.
- Emphasize to your child that you know that this is not who he really is.
- Tell your child that you're on his side and ready to help him overcome this problem.
- Reassure him that better times are ahead of him after he makes the necessary changes.

- **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOUR CHILD IS A BYSTANDER?**

Empowering the bystander is the most powerful thing you can do. If there are no bystanders, the bully has no power.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF BYSTANDERS:

- Join the bully.
- Join the bully, but don't actually enjoy it.
- Neutral.
- Want to intervene, but they're afraid.
- Ready to stand up to the bully.

- Conducting a conversation with the bystander:

-Validate your child's fears: "I understand that you're scared to stand up to the bully, because you do not want to become the next victim, and this bully is tough, etc."

-Give your child concrete suggestions:

- Don't laugh or give the bully the feeling that he should continue hurting or making fun of the victim.
- Even better, stay away. Don't even be there.
- Stand up to the bully if you can.

-Emphasize that it's not *loshon hora* for your child to tell on a bully.

-Explain to your child that losers bully. Winners stand up/ walk away / befriend the victim.

-Explain to your child that ultimately, he is doing the bully a *favor* by helping to stop his mean behavior.

- **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOUR CHILD IS A VICTIM?**

- Most kids do not want to report that they are being bullied.

Reasons Why Children Don't Report Being Bullied:

- They're afraid.
- Their self-esteem is questionable.

- ❖ When a person feels big enough, then there's room to occasionally get bullied, take criticism, or be shown that he is wrong in some way. But **“when you're not big enough, then there's no room to be small enough.”**

- If you suspect that your child is being bullied:

- Look out for suspicious signs: trouble sleeping, nightmares, bedwetting, school refusal, etc.
- Keep an eye out for frequency-check if it's consistently happening.
- Ask the school if they are aware of any issue with your child

- Conducting a conversation with the victim:

- Don't be afraid to have this conversation with your child!
- Ask your child open-ended questions to get some facts.
- Reassure your child that you believe him/her and that you will protect him/her.
- Never invalidate what he tells you, even if you think he is blowing things out of proportion.
- Whatever he is telling you is correct. This doesn't mean it's happening as he says it is, but it's correct because it's his perception.
- Tell him you're going to do something about it.
- Allay his concerns.
- Teach him assertiveness. (This is the most difficult!)

- ❖ There are many reasons why certain children are more likely to be picked on: they may be lacking social skills, they may have suffered trauma or have difficulties in the home, etc.
- ❖ We must teach them step-by-step how to be assertive and develop confidence, and this can change their lives.
- ❖ Never give a victim the feeling that he is too weak to fight back-show belief in his inner strength, which will further build his self-confidence.

- Working with the School:

It's important to reach out to the school once you know that your child is being bullied.

How to reach out to the school:

- Call the principal to set up an appointment.
- Be cordial and respectful.
- Try to speed up the process by asking for an appointment right away. Don't make it sound like an emergency.
- State the facts how you've heard them.
- Emphasize that you are partners with the school in dealing with this issue.
- Ensure that there is a follow-up in place.
- Speak logically – not emotionally.

If the Bullying Persists:

- Consider switching the child's school.
- Connect the child with a therapist.
- Teach him/her assertiveness.

- **Any challenge that a person was given by Hashem, he has the ability to overcome.**
- As a therapist, I've seen hundreds of parents feel so hopeless and worried about what will be with their victimized child. I always tell them this idea-your child being bullied is definitely a challenge, but you have to deal with it, and you have the tools to do so.
- If we do the work properly, most of these children grow up healthy and resilient.

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732-905-9909/icare@cchfglobal.org