

SAFE & SOUND

TIME

STOP Bullying



Diana Herweck

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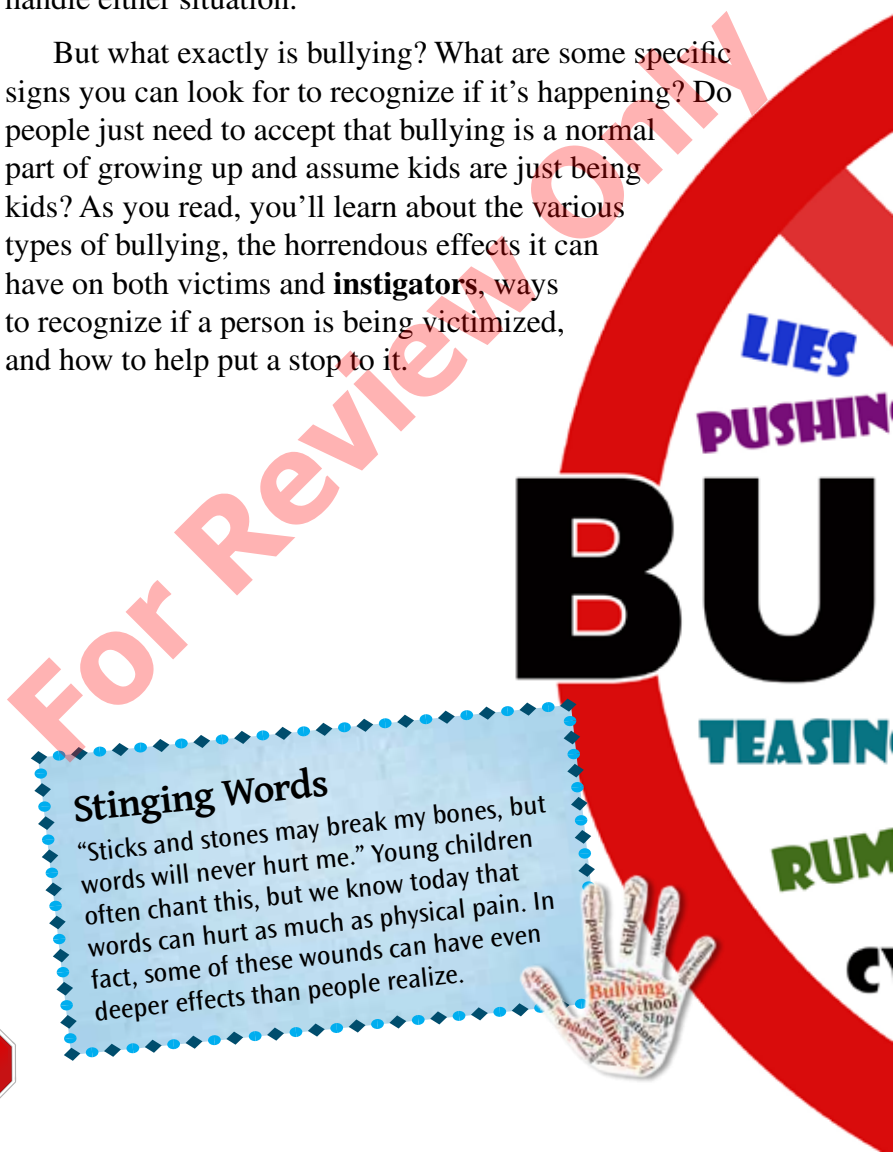
It's Not Funny Anymore

Bullying. People hear about it almost daily. Parents, teachers, and other adults are talking about it, and there are quite a number of movies that portray stories about bullying. You might even have witnessed a classmate being bullied or experienced it firsthand and weren't sure how to handle either situation.

But what exactly is bullying? What are some specific signs you can look for to recognize if it's happening? Do people just need to accept that bullying is a normal part of growing up and assume kids are just being kids? As you read, you'll learn about the various types of bullying, the horrendous effects it can have on both victims and **instigators**, ways to recognize if a person is being victimized, and how to help put a stop to it.

Stinging Words

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." Young children often chant this, but we know today that words can hurt as much as physical pain. In fact, some of these wounds can have even deeper effects than people realize.



Georgia Led the Way

The first state law in the United States **prohibiting** bullying was passed in Georgia in 1999. This was partly due to the mass shooting that happened earlier that year at Columbine High School in Colorado. Since then, the rest of the states have each passed antibullying laws, with Montana being the last in 2015.

THREATS

BRUTALIZE

HITTING

STEALING

HARASSMENT

AGGRESSION

BULLYING

INSULTS

ABUSE

HUMILIATE

GOSSIPING

CYBERBULLYING

HURT

MISTREAT



What Is Bullying?

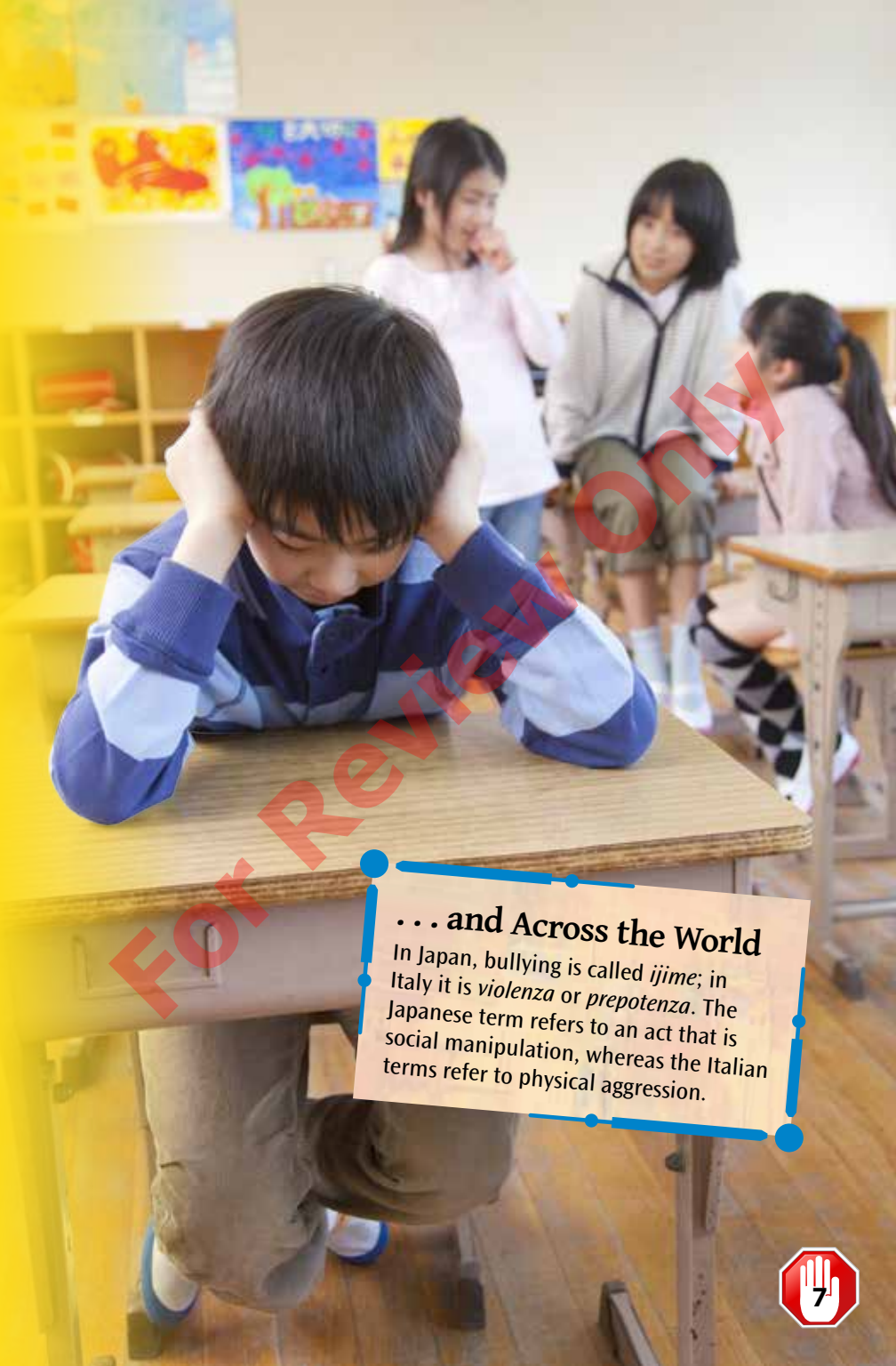
To some adults, it might seem as though bullying is a relatively new concept. They remember being teased when they were young or being called names when they were in school. But they never considered that *bullying*. They just thought other children were mean. It's likely you know someone who thinks bullying is something that only started happening recently. They might wonder how some people can be so cruel or why others cannot handle teasing. They might not understand what bullying really is. These people don't know how bullying is playing out in schools, in neighborhoods, and on the Internet.

People today might have many definitions for the term *bullying*. But professionals generally agree that it refers to repeated verbal or physical abuse done deliberately by someone who is more powerful, physically or otherwise, than the targeted victim. Some bullying is obvious and seen by others. Other bullying behaviors are more **covert**.

Bullying can include teasing, leaving someone out of something on purpose, talking about someone behind his or her back, or spreading **malicious** rumors. It can also include threatening to hurt someone and even attacking someone physically. And with the **advent** of the Internet, bullying has taken on another face.

Bullying through the Ages . . .

Believe it or not, the word *bully* was first used in the 1500s to mean "sweetheart." A few centuries later, the term referred to someone who spoke with empty threats. It wasn't used the way we now know it until the 1800s when a British novel had a main character that verbally and physically attacked his peers.



... and Across the World

In Japan, bullying is called *ijime*; in Italy it is *violenza* or *prepotenza*. The Japanese term refers to an act that is social manipulation, whereas the Italian terms refer to physical aggression.

Instigators and Victims

Anyone can be the victim of bullying, and bullies come in all shapes and sizes. There are many reasons why someone might bully others. People who bully have a lack of **empathy** for their targets. Bullying instigators also typically have low self-esteem, and choosing to bully other people makes them feel better about themselves since it gives them a feeling of power. It is also possible that they might be dealing with difficult home situations and bullying allows them to feel as though they are in control of something when other aspects of their lives seem out of control.

There is not just one type of person who is victimized. Anyone can be bullied once someone decides to target him or her. People who are bullied are usually different from the bullies in some way. But no matter who the victim is, here's something to keep in mind: when bullying happens, the victim is never to blame—only the instigator is responsible.

It Can Happen Anywhere

Bullying can happen at any age, although physical bullying tends to start late in elementary school, become worse in middle school, and lessen in high school. Verbal bullying tends to remain constant throughout the school years. Incidents can happen as early as preschool, and some even continue well into adulthood, at college campuses and in the workplace.



- © How do you think most children feel about telling an adult about bullying? What about teens?
- © What would make children and teens feel safe to report bullying more often?
- © What are some examples of how bystanders, people who witness bullying, can help victims?



Reader's Guide

1. What's the difference between reporting bullying and tattling?
2. How does staying silent make a person who is bullying more powerful?
3. How would you want your peers and adults to respond if you were being bullied?
4. Why is it important to speak out about injustices such as bullying?

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