



## **About Bias**

- Bias includes stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination.
- A stereotype is a generalization, often negative, about a group of people. ("All \_\_\_\_\_ are sneaky and dishonest.")
- A prejudice is a judgment, often negative, about a person or a group. ("I can't stand those \_\_\_\_\_.")
- Discrimination is negative behavior towards someone based on prejudice or stereotyping. ("None of those \_\_\_\_\_ will be allowed in our club.")
- Bias is related to bullying. Often, bullies pick on people who are "different."

## **Biased? Not Me!**

Yes, you...and everyone else, too. We all have biases, even ones that we are not aware of. The important thing is to notice our own biased thoughts and actions and try to change them.

## **Interrupting Bias**

If you are present when bias is being expressed, it's important that you say or do something. By keeping quiet and doing nothing, you support the bias. Here are some things to try:

- Say how you feel about the remark or action. You might say, "It really bothers me when..." or "It's not fair when..." or "It's not cool to...."
- If someone makes a biased comment, ask why he or she thinks this way. Try to understand his or her point of view. Use active listening to make sure you understand. Then see if the person is willing to discuss the issue with you.
- Reach out to the person or group who is being stereotyped or discriminated against. Get to know them. Stand up for them when they are put down.

## **Did You Know...?**

Besides the big "-isms" like racism and sexism, many students cite forms of bias like "looks-ism," "size-ism," and "clothes-ism" as being typical of their group.

# *SOME METHODS OF RESPONDING TO BIAS*

When we hear a biased comment or observe biased behavior we often don't know how to respond. The following guidelines offer some positive responses.

1. Listen and try to understand what the person is saying.
2. Paraphrase what is being said.
3. Share how you feel about the comment or behavior. "I" Statements can be helpful here.
4. Ask questions to clarify what is being said or felt, why the person feels that way, and where the person got the information.
5. Let the person know it is the comment or behavior which is problematic, not the person. It helps to recognize that bias is learned, not something with which we are born.
6. By speaking to a person in private, we take away the element of embarrassment or shame for being criticized in public.
7. Remaining calm, non-judgmental, and caring is an important element of effectively responding to bias. Responding aggressively is likely to escalate the conflict.
8. Something we may need to take the time to become calm before discussing the bias.
9. Offering alternative information concerning the bias is sometimes effective.
10. A mediator may help solve the problem if none of the above works.
11. Asking for specific guidelines might be an outcome of the mediation agreement; e.g., "I agree not to make biased comments around you."

The above methods assume that you want to maintain a positive and ongoing relationship with the person. They also assume that it is important to respond and try to do something. These methods may not always work and it may be hard to choose which method to use. However, one or more of these hints may be effective in any number of bias situations.



## Websites Related to Bias, Hate Crimes, Bullying

### Bias, Hate Crimes

- [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
Offers a wealth of information, resources, curriculum materials.
- <http://www.hate-crime.net>  
Lambda GLBT Community Services  
A network for documenting hate crimes and providing support to victims.
- <http://www.apa.org/pubinfo/hate>  
American Psychological Association  
"Hate Crimes: An Age-Old Foe in Modern Dress"—an overview, with extensive bibliography.
- <http://www.aaiusa.org/Tragedy/racism.html>  
Arab American Institute  
Information about bias acts in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks in the U.S.
- <http://www.adc.org/education/advice.htm>  
"Advice to Educators from the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee." Many other articles are listed on the home page.
- <http://www.glsen.org/templates/resources/index.html?section=14>  
Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)  
Resources including article "Addressing Homophobic Behavior in the Classroom."
- <http://www.pbs.org/americaresponds/educators.html>  
Public Broadcasting System  
"America Responds: Lesson Plans" for grades K-12, on a variety of topics including history and culture of Afghanistan.

### Bullying

- <http://familyeducation.com/article/0,120,3-9245,00.html>  
Learning Network  
Article entitled "Bully-Proof Your Kids."
- <http://www.accesseric.org/resources/parent/bullying.html>  
Education Information Resource Center (ERIC)  
Brochure entitled "What Should Parents and Teachers Know About Bullying?"
- <http://www.ncpc.org/10adu3.htm>  
National Crime Prevention Council  
Article entitled "Bullies: A Serious Problem for Kids."
- <http://www.allkids.org/Epstein/Articles/Bullies.html>  
All Children's Hospital  
Article entitled "The Child Who Bullies."
- <http://www.detya.gov.au/schools/publications/2000bullying.htm>  
Commonwealth Dept. of Education, Training, and Youth Affairs (Australian site)  
Article entitled "Bullying: Information for Parents"
- <http://www.weinholds.org/bullyingmain.htm>  
The Colorado Institute for Conflict Resolution and Creative Leadership  
Article entitled "Bullying: The Tip of the Iceberg" addresses causes of, and responses to, bullying.
- <http://www.lfcc.on.ca/bully.htm>  
London Family Court Clinic (Canadian site)  
Article entitled "Information on Bullying for Parents and Teachers."



## **Creative Responses to Bullying Bibliography**

- DeVries, R. & Zan, B. (1994). *Moral Classrooms, Moral Children: Creating a Constructivist Atmosphere in Early Education*. NY: Teachers College Press.
- Froschl, Merle; Sprung, Barbara and Nancy Mullin-Rindler (1998). *Quit It! A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use With Students in Grades K-3*. New York, NY: Educational Equity Concepts.
- Kreidler, William (1998). *Teaching Conflict Resolution Through Children's Literature*. NY: Scholastic.
- MacBeth, Fiona and Nic Fine (1995). *Playing with Fire: Conflict Resolution for Young Adults*. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers.
- Olweus, Dan (1993). *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.
- Porro, Barbara (1996). *Talk It Out: Conflict Resolution in the Elementary Classroom*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Prutzman, Priscilla et al. (1988). *The Friendly Classroom for a Small Planet*. Philadelphia, PA: New Society Publishers.
- Rigby, Ken (1998). *Bullying in Schools and What To Do About It*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Slaby, Ron (1997). *Aggressors, Victims, and Bystanders*. Newton, MA: Education Development Center.
- Sjostrom, L., and N. Stein (1996). *Bully Proof: A Teacher's Guide on Teasing and Bullying for Use With Fourth and Fifth Grade Students*. Boston, MA: Wellesley College Center for Research on Women and the NEA Professional Library.
- Smith, Charles (1993). *The Peaceful Classroom: 162 Easy Ways to Teach Preschoolers*. Useful, tried-and-true activities, organized by theme and age. Mt. Rainier, MD: Gryphon House.

**REATIVE RESPONSE TO CONFLICT  
RKSHOP EVALUATION FORM**

What did you find valuable, productive, or promising about the workshop?

What would you like to see changed, added, or enhanced?

Please add any other comments you wish.