

# Is it Rude, Mean, Conflict or Bullying?

# Is it Rude?

# Rude =

accidentally saying or doing something hurtful.

Rude behaviors include:

Burping in someone's face

Butting in line

Bragging about making a team

Rude behaviors are usually thoughtless and ill-mannered, but not meant to actually hurt someone else.

# Is it Mean?

**Mean** = Saying or doing something to hurt a person on purpose.

The main difference between “rude” and “mean” behavior is that rudeness is usually unplanned. Mean behavior, on the other hand, is done on purpose.

Mean behaviors include:

Making fun of what someone looks like or what they are wearing

*I don't like your hair cut. You look ugly.*

*Why did you wear that dress?*

Insulting someone's intelligence or ability

*You're so stupid.*

*You stink at soccer.*

Saying or doing something unkind after a fight with a friend.

*Saying, “I hate you.”*

*Taking something that doesn't belong to you.*

Make no mistake; mean behaviors are very hurtful and should be avoided at all times! Still, meanness is different from bullying in important ways that we'll talk about.

# Is it Conflict?

## Conflict =

- a serious disagreement or argument, be incompatible or at variance; clash, differ, diverge, disagree, contrast, collide:

*"parents' and children's interests sometimes conflict"*

- fight, battle, war; *"an armed conflict"*

- competitive or opposing action of incompatibles : antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons) *"a conflict of principles"*

- mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands *"His conscience was in conflict with his duty"*

\*Conflict is normal and learning how to resolve issues fairly is an essential part of growing up

# Is it Bullying?

## Bullying =

*For a determination of HIB under the ABR, there must be:*

### HAS TO MEET ALL 3

- Substantial disruption or interference with the orderly operation of school or student's rights;
- An actual or perceived distinguishing characteristic as the motivating factor; and
- One of the following:
  - Physical or emotional harm to a student or his or her property or fear of harm to student or property;
  - Effect of insulting or demeaning a student or group of students; or
  - Creation of "hostile educational environment," interfering with student's education.

**\*\* Personality traits are not distinguishing characteristics\*\***

**\*\*Don't forget the imbalance of power\*\***

“The statutory definition of “bullying” does not include all violent or aggressive conduct against a student. The definition refers to conduct that is “reasonably perceived as being motivated” by a “distinguishing characteristic” of the victim, such as, “race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical, or sensory [disability]” N.J.S.A. 18A:37-14.”

— “The statute has not limited “distinguishing characteristic” to those specifically enumerated, but it has consistently required such a perceived motivation. Thus, harmful or demeaning conduct motivated only by another reason, for example, a dispute about relationships or personal belongings, or aggressive conduct without identifiable motivation, does not come within the statutory definition of bullying.”

# Examples

## **Rude**

- Daniel holds the door for Jonathan and Jonathan doesn't say thank you.
- Basically bad manners

## **Mean**

- Susan tells Sheila that Sheila is ugly and doesn't like her.
- Hurtful opinion

## **Conflict**

- Daniel and Jonathan both push their way to be first in line to lead the class to the assembly.
- Susan and Sheila argue over who is the new girl's best friend.
- Disagreement, difference of opinions

## **Bullying**

- Daniel organizes his friends to all push Jonathan out of the way because he is a certain race and Jonathan is afraid to go to class.
- Susan tells the new girl she has to choose: "you can be my friend only if you don't talk to Sheila because she is in special classes" Sheila is seen sitting alone at lunch crying.

- Meets the criteria for a definition of a HIB

# Conflict vs. Bullying

Is it conflict . . .

that can be effectively handled by the students themselves or perhaps with the help of a teacher?

**OR**

Is it bullying . . .

which requires adult intervention?

# Conflict or Bullying?

Conflict may be an inevitable part of group dynamics, but bullying is not. A different response is required for conflict or bullying.

*Sue and Jane, two girls in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, are very competitive with each other. During the school science fair, Jane accused Sue, in front of a group of other girls, of copying her science project. The next day, during a class discussion about the fair, Sue talked about what happened and started crying because she felt so humiliated.*

## CONFLICT OR BULLYING?

# Conflict or Bullying?

## Conflict or Bullying?

### CONFLICT

- The girls seem fairly equal and very competitive with each other.
- Jane, who felt her science project was copied, did not intend to humiliate Sue; she seemed to want to express and vent her anger.
- Sue cried and said she felt humiliated. It is clear the incident had a negative impact upon her. However, there is no evidence that she is afraid of the girl who made the accusation.

# Conflict or Bullying?

*Denny is a very popular boy in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and initiates and organizes different games in the playground every day. All the children play, except one boy, Tyler. He is small for his age, very shy and has a stutter. Denny says he doesn't want Tyler to play because he says Tyler talks funny and feels they are his games since he organizes them, so he gets to choose who plays and who doesn't. Tyler sits all alone during the games and looks very sad and unhappy. The rest of the school day Tyler keeps his head down in class and refuses to do his school work.*

## CONFLICT OR BULLYING?

# Conflict or HIB?

## Conflict or Bullying?

### Bullying

- There is intentional exclusion going on and the excluded boy is very upset about it.
- There appears to be motivation because Tyler is shy, has a stutter and physically smaller than the other 6<sup>th</sup> grader.

# Conflict or Bullying?

*John, a 5<sup>th</sup> grader, was asked by his classmate, Scott, to play. John told Scott that he did not want to play with him. Scott approaches John every day for two weeks to ask him to play. Scott does not have a lot of friends and seems desperate to make friends with John. John is beginning to feel harassed by Scott.*

CONFLICT OR BULLYING?

# Conflict or Bullying?

## Conflict or Bullying?

### CONFLICT

- Based on the facts, a reasonable person would believe that John's conduct would not physically or emotionally harm Scott.
- John who has refused Scott's friendship has not done so in order to hurt him (he has not told others, he has not tried to humiliate or hurt Scott intentionally). He is simply following his own feelings and his right to choose his friends.

It is important to respect students and allow them to express their tastes and preferences. While the child who does not wish to be friends may need to learn skills to express this constructively, he should not be forced to make friends he does not want to have.

# Conflict or Bullying?

*A group of about eight close-knit 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls spend a lot of time hanging out together at lunch and at sleepovers on the weekend. During a conversation, Nicole becomes furious about a comment made by Megan, which she perceives to be an insult. The next day, Nicole and all the other girls in this circle of friends refuse to speak with or look at Megan saying that because she is in special classes she doesn't deserve to be their friend. Over the course of the following weeks, the group of girls bands together to ignore, freeze out, and spread rumors about Megan. Megan becomes increasingly quiet and withdrawn and begins to miss days at school.*

# Conflict or Bullying?

## Bullying

- While this relationship started out as a peer relationship, it is now a group of girls excluding one girl.
- Megan's reaction (becoming quiet and withdrawn, missing school) indicates the situation is causing her some distress.
- A dynamic of rejection and exclusion has developed.
- Nicole, the girl who instigated the exclusion and spreading of rumors, intends to hurt the other girl, as she has mobilized the whole group to act against her.
- The motivation is that Megan is in special classes.

# Conflict or Bullying?

*Michael and Bill, two boys in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, are good friends – they hang out together on weekends and generally spend a lot of time together. One day the two boys have a verbal fight because Michael borrowed Bill’s jacket and did not return it. Bill decides he no longer wants to be friends with Michael. Seeing that Bill has rejected him and will no longer talk to him or interact with him, Michael becomes furious. He begins a campaign of revenge, vandalizing Bill’s locker, jumping on him on his way home from school, fighting him, and writing graffiti about him. Bill retaliates and the level of aggression gradually escalates until school staff step in to calm the boys down.*

## CONFLICT OR BULLYING?

# Conflict or Bullying?

## CONFLICT OR BULLYING?

### CONFLICT

- Although Michael might be more responsible than Bill for the initial conflict (not returning the leather jacket), both are responsible for escalating the violence.
- None of these facts indicates bullying it is “harmful or demeaning conduct” motivated by only a dispute over personal belongings.

# Conflict or Bullying?

We all need to understand the difference between conflict and bullying.

*A friend borrows your homework to see how you've answered a question. The next day, you discover your friend copied all your homework. You are very angry and let your friend know you are mad.*

## CONFLICT

*Five days in a row, Sam receives an email message that says, "You're a pig. You're a big fat slob. Everybody hates you." Sam is so upset by this, he refuses to go to school.*

## BULLYING

# Dealing with Conflict

Conflict is neither good nor bad.

It is how we deal with it that makes it either:

- A destructive experience that can damage relationships, create bad feelings, and maybe lead to future problems; or
- A constructive challenge that helps us learn, grow, and change for the better by:
  - seeing things from others' perspectives;
  - becoming more open-minded, tolerant, and accepting; and
  - building stronger relationships with the people in our lives.
- Since conflict is an inevitable part of life, learning how to respond to it constructively is essential.

# What We Know About Conflict

- Conflict is a natural part of life.
- Don't brush conflict under the rug.
- Use conflict as an opportunity to teach skills and promote healthy relationships.
- Help your children see that conflict can be an opportunity for growth rather than a source of grief.
- Teach your children a conflict resolution process and give them the framework.
- Provide opportunities to practice conflict resolution strategies in real life context.
- Model good conflict resolution skills.

# In Closing....

*“As adults, we cannot solve young people’s problems for them. We can, however, provide them with the knowledge, skills, and encouragement to resolve conflicts in a nonviolent manner, using words instead of fists or weapons.*

*Conflict resolution education includes negotiation, mediation, and consensus decision-making which allow all parties involved to explore peaceful solutions to a conflict. When these problem-solving processes to conflict and strife become a way of life, young people begin to value getting along instead of getting even or getting their way.”*

*Richard W. Riley*

*Former Secretary of Education*