

# Easing the Teasing®

Helping Kids Cope with Name-Calling,  
Ridicule, & Bullying

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Introduction

Types of Teasing vs. Bullying

"Mean Girls" - Relational Aggression

E-Bullying and Online Social Cruelties

Reactions to and Harmful Effects of Teasing

What Are Kids Teased About?

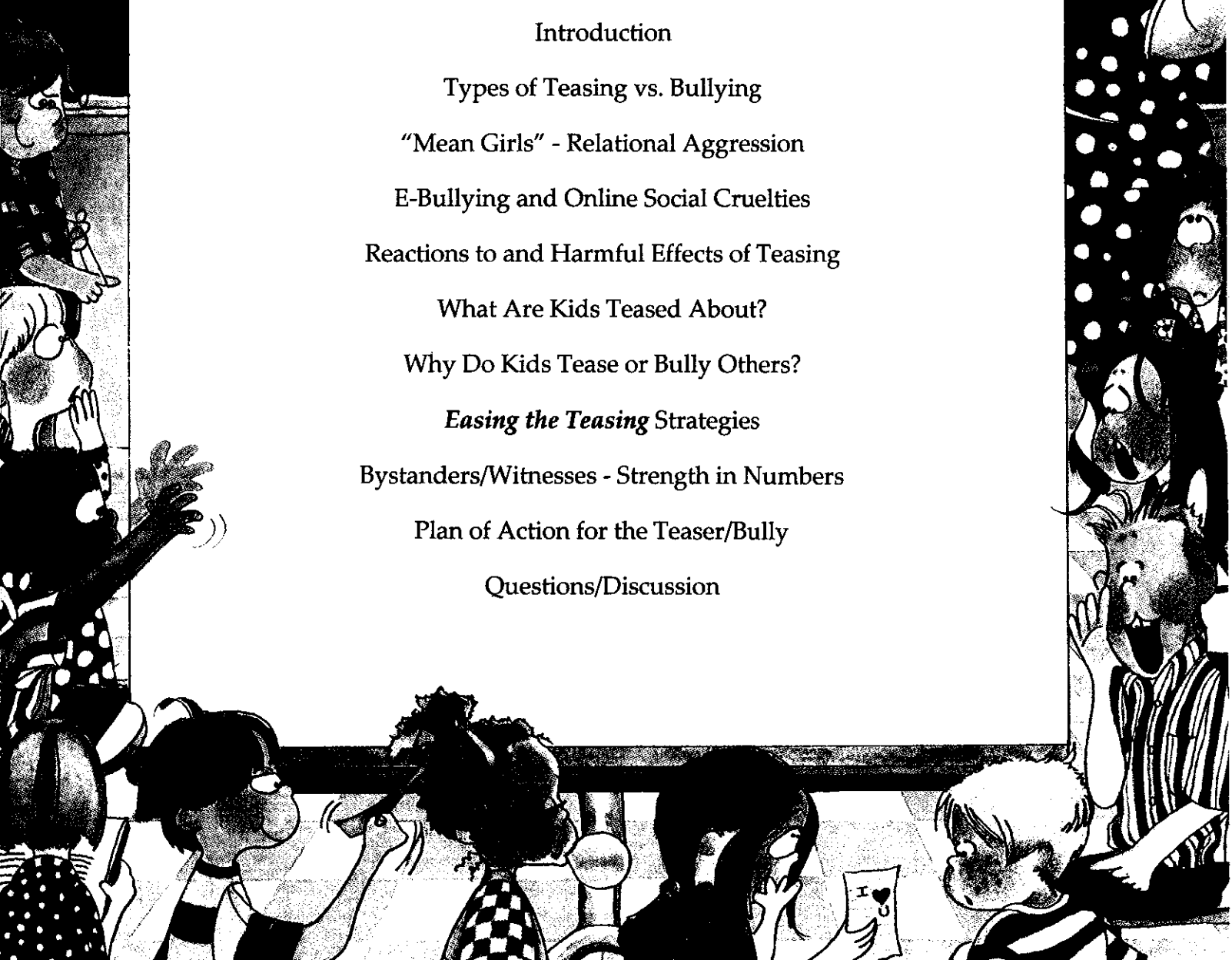
Why Do Kids Tease or Bully Others?

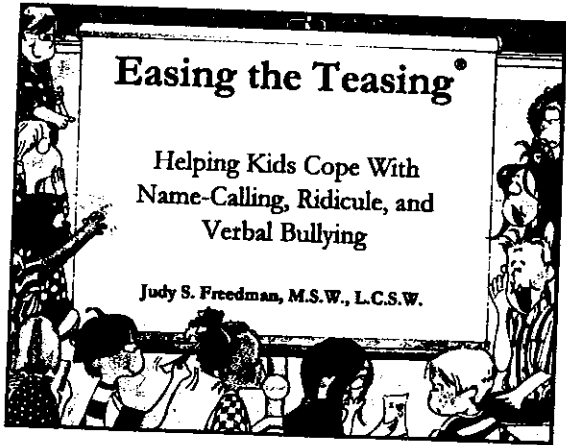
*Easing the Teasing* Strategies

Bystanders/Witnesses - Strength in Numbers

Plan of Action for the Teaser/Bully

Questions/Discussion





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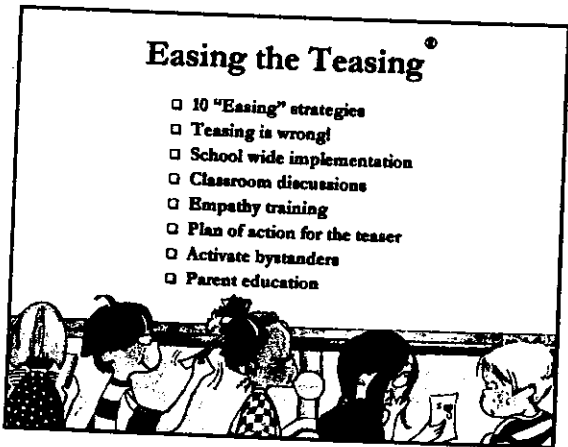
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## Types of Teasing

### Fun and Friendly

*Having fun with* someone  
Laughing *with* someone  
Kidding, good-natured bantering  
No feelings are hurt.  
Everyone is smiling.

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### Cruel and Hurtful

*Making fun of* someone  
Laughing *at* someone  
Embarrassing someone  
*"Look at what she is doing!"*  
Ridicule, name-calling, insults, putdowns  
*"You are such a loser."*  
*"I can't believe you don't know that."*  
Exclusion - Relational aggression

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### "Mean Girls"

- Relational aggression
- Use relationships rather than fists to hurt or manipulate others
- Friendship is the weapon.
- Victims often lack confidence to stand up to the aggressor.
- Many girls would rather have an "abusive" relationship rather than being alone.

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## Behaviors are Subtle

- Alienation
- Exclusion
- Gossiping
- Rumors
- Ignoring
- Silent treatment
- Whispering
- Passing a note
- Eye rolling
- Glares and stares
- 3 way calling
- Electronic cruelties
  - Posting/ sending false information
  - Online polling

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## Hostile Teasing

- More severe and chronic
- Harassment
- Tormenting
- Continued or consistent relational aggression
- Verbal bullying
- e-bullying/Cyberbullying

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## Web sites, blogs, social networks, & chat rooms are the new schoolyards.

New Weapons in Kids' Arsenal of Social Cruelties

- Computers
- Cell phones

Ammunition includes e-mails, instant and text messages.

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## Cyberbullying

- ❑ Making fun of another person electronically - repeatedly
- ❑ Through e-mail or text messages
  - Sexting
- ❑ Posting something embarrassing on a website or social network
  - Jokes, stories, online polling, photos, videos, gossiping

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## Social Networking Communities

- ❑ Websites that include profiles re: one's interests, affiliations, likes, and dislikes and then linking to others
- ❑ A social life-line
- ❑ [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)
- ❑ [www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com)

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## Who are the e-victims?

- ❑ Anyone can be a victim at any time!
- ❑ Cyberbullying DVD – [www.NetSmartz.org](http://www.NetSmartz.org)
  - *Feathers in the Wind*
  - *You Can't Take it Back*
  - *Broken Friendship*

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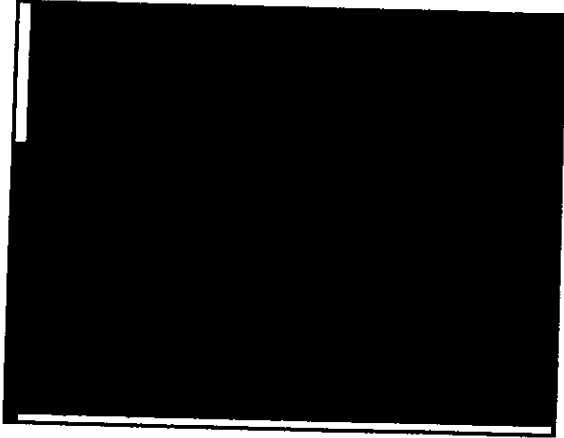
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**Joe - Let's Fight it Together**  
□ [www.digizen.org/cyberbullying/joe](http://www.digizen.org/cyberbullying/joe)  
□ [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

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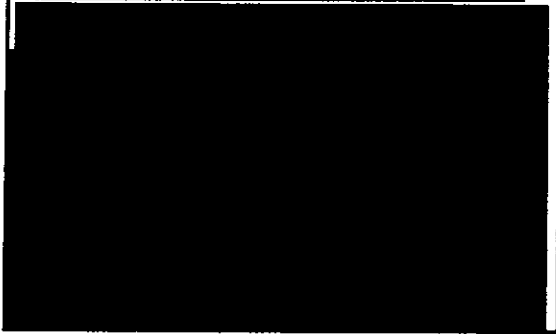
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**Most kids "say" things on the computer they would not say face-to-face.**



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### **Harsh Realities**

- ❑ Actions don't speak louder than words.
  - No body language or tone of voice
  - No contextual clues
- ❑ Kids cannot see the effects of their words or the hurt their words have caused.

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### **Bullying**

- ❑ Intimidating, threatening, abusive behavior
- ❑ Physical and verbal,
- ❑ Persistent and repeated
- ❑ Power imbalance
- ❑ Goal is to exert power!

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## Bully Profile

- ❑ Enjoys the power and intimidation
- ❑ Strong need to control others
- ❑ Sense of entitlement to control or exclude
- ❑ Getting the victim to respond is often more important than the issue.
- ❑ May use force to get their way
- ❑ Lack of empathy
- ❑ Doesn't feel remorse or guilt

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- ❑ Doesn't take responsibility for behavior – usually denies, minimizes or blames others
- ❑ Often justifies behavior with disturbed thinking of misinterpreted social cues – “He had it coming.”
- ❑ Minimizes the hurtful impact of words – “Just kidding.”
- ❑ Often see no need to change

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- ❑ Often lie during counseling
- ❑ Not just unhappy, insecure loners with low self-esteem
- ❑ Difficulties with anger control
- ❑ May be a history of disciplinary problems
- ❑ May be a history of violent or aggressive behaviors
- ❑ Intolerance of differences

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- ❑ May be affiliation with gangs
  - ❑ Bullies may have the control at home and always get what they want.
  - ❑ Bullies may have harsh, domineering, and punitive parents.
  - ❑ Bullies may grow up and bully their children, which perpetuates the violent pattern.

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- ❑ Bullying often begins as teasing...when the bully "shops" for a target.
- ❑ Emotional reactions escalate the bully's efforts.
- ❑ If kids can effectively deal with name-calling and put-downs, they will less likely become victims of bullying.

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## Research

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### Dan Olweus

- ❑ Father of bullying research
- ❑ School wide campaign
- ❑ Consistent intervention with bullies
- ❑ Adult authority is most important!
- ❑ Organize students against social cruelties



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**Dorothea Ross**

*"Teasing merits separate consideration when it occurs in the absence of any other components of bullying....Most teasing victims can learn to cope with teasing and manage teasing in incidents without adult help when no other components of bullying are involved."*

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Research support > Interest

"Click of the mouse"

■ Chicago Tribune

Let people know what you are doing!

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**Basic Assumptions**

We cannot totally eliminate or prevent teasing.

We can help children to control their reaction and response to the tease.

Kids cannot control the actions of the teaser, but they can control their reactions to the tease.

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## Reactions to Teasing

- "Automatic" Hurt feelings
- Crying
- Anger: verbal and physical
- Physical complaints
- Helplessness

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## Effects of Prolonged Teasing/Bullying

### Signs to Look For:

- Chronic stress
- Change in eating/sleeping habits
- Decline: hygiene, appearance
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Heightened anger or avoidance after cell call
- Lowered self-esteem
- Physical illness
- School phobia
- Peer difficulties
- Academic decline
- Hopelessness
- Suicide

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## More signs...

- Rage and violence
- Alcohol/Drug abuse
- Cutting
- Scars
- Electronic attacks can have similar, if not worse effects that face-to-face encounters.

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## The Teasing Top 10

1. Appearance
2. Abilities
3. Identity
  - Gender
  - Race
  - Religion
  - Culture
  - Age
  - Sexual orientation
4. Behavior
5. Possessions
6. Names
7. Feelings
8. Opinions
9. Friends
10. Family

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## Why Do Children Tease?

- "Look at me."
- "I do what I see."
- "I'm better than you."
- "I'm in charge."
- "You make me so angry."
- Don't get mad, get even.
- "I'm green with envy."
- "Accept me" (to the peer group)
- "You're so different."
- "Do these words hurt?"
- Media Influence: A model of meanness

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## Why Do Kids Cyberbully?

- Think* they are invisible and anonymous
- No fear of consequences
- It is a joke/for fun.
- Enhance social status.
- Perception that someone who is different is inferior or doesn't like the target.
- Revenge
- Need to be part of the group

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## Easing the Teasing Strategies

- Appropriate for all ages
- Classroom
- Small groups
- Individually
- Effective for parents!



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## Self-Talk

- Encourage kids to think about what they can say or do.
- Reminder: Don't react with anger or tears.
- Questions:
  - *"Is the tease true?"*
  - *"Whose opinion is more important...the teaser's or mine?"*



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UGH! HOW CAN YOU EAT THAT?



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### More self-talk

- Think about positive qualities or a special time.
- Say to myself, *"Even though I don't like this teasing, I can handle it."*



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### Ignore

- No eye contact or verbal response
- Pretend the teaser is invisible.
- Practice/role play
- If possible, walk away and join others.
- May not be effective in prolonged teasing situations.



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### I-Message

*"I feel upset when you make fun of the way I run.  
Please stop."*

*"It really hurt my feelings when you  
stopped talking to me. I would like to know  
why you are angry at me."*



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- May not work...in unstructured situations.
- Can clarify misunderstandings.
- Make eye contact & speak politely.
- When a student has expressed a concern about a comment, the teasing should stop.




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### Visualization

- Words bouncing off
- Shield
- Create own visualizations.




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Match the person with the idea

1. I can hit my words or I shield if I want to leave the table.

Match the person with the idea

- 1. I can hit the table only
- 2. I can shield the table only
- 3. I can bring the teasing away
- 4. I can pretend that I am wearing a shield
- 5. I can break the table only

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## Reframing

- Turn the tease into a compliment.
- "Takes the tease out of it."
- *"Thanks for noticing my glasses."*
- *"Thanks for your opinion."*
- *"It is amazing that you give me so much attention."*



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## Agree

- Agree with the facts.
- Not in a self-degrading way
- *"Yes, I am a slow runner."*
- *"I have a hard time with math."*
- *"I am a big guy."*



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## "So?"

- Conveys the message of "so what?"
- *The Meanest Thing to Say* by Bill Cosby



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### Respond to the Tease with a Compliment

- "You are really a fast runner."
- "I wish math was as easy for me as it is for you."
- "You're so lucky that you don't have to care about what you eat."



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### Use Humor

- Laughing or smiling defuses the mean comments.
- Bigotry, mocking of physical and mental disabilities and similar cruelties are never laughing matters.



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### Ask for Help

- An adult can often intervene successfully.
- Tattling:** trying to get someone in trouble
- Reporting:** trying to keep someone safe



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### Other 3 Rs

- Rehearsal
- Repetition
- Review



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### Dealing with "Mean" Girls & Their Victims

- Victims/targets need to know that they are not to blame.
- Tell the bully to stop.
- "Does it make you feel good to make me feel bad? Friends don't do that to friends."*
- Participating in the "drama" results in more intense drama.

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- Remove oneself from situation.
- Ask for help.
- Encourage targets to hang out with kids who make them feel good about themselves...who make them smile.
- Don't seek revenge.
- Outside sources for self-esteem

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Take a stand that RA is wrong.

- Framing in moral terms may help reverse the beliefs that gossip and rumors are fun or just something to do.

Social education for young children

- What are examples of acting mean?

Look for and celebrate the good in others.

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## Activating Bystanders

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**Encourage kids to stand up and speak out rather than stand by!**

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## Activate Bystanders

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There is strength in numbers!

**Bystanders' reactions can significantly impact the power of the teaser/bully and the weakness of the victim.**

The "WE" Message.

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### **Role-playing Situations for Bystanders**

- ❑ A classmate is teasing another student about his lunch
- ❑ A child is excluded from a game
- ❑ On the bus, a girl is being teased about her weight.
- ❑ The teaser is making fun of a friend of yours about being short.
- ❑ The teaser is teasing someone you don't know too well about her good grades.

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- ❑ A child is being teased because he struck out, which caused his team to lose the game.
- ❑ A student receives an e-mail that has a lot of rumors about a classmate.
- ❑ A student is asked to join in with the teaser/bully.

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### **Easing the Teasing Implementation**

#### **Goals and Objectives**

- ❑ Create and heighten awareness of teasing and its harmful effects.
- ❑ Establish the expectation that teasing and bullying are **WRONG!**
- ❑ Impose consistent consequences.
- ❑ Counseling and interventions for teasers
- ❑ Teach coping strategies.

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- Develop and increase empathy for students who are teased and excluded.
- Activate bystanders.
- Promote reporting.

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### Classroom Intervention & Activities

- Assess teasing (Questionnaires, surveys)
  - Ending the Teasing - Appendix - A
  - E-Bullying assessment - Appendix - B
  - Relational Aggression Survey (*Mean Girls - 101% Creative Strategies for Working with Relational Aggression* by Kaye Randall and Alyson A. Bowen)
- Turn up your radar.
- Assess your own behavior...
  - *Educators vs. Bullies* by Linda Star (Education World, 2006)

Ending the Teasing® Appendix - C

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### Classroom discussions

- One discussion is not enough
- Responding to students' complaints and issues.
- Watch for the "teachable moment."
- Empathy training
- Format for discussion and teaching strategies - Appendix - D
- Discussion questions - Appendix - E

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## Classroom Rules: School-wide Uniform Conduct Code

- We will respect each other.
- We will not tease or make fun of others.
- We will include all students in games and activities in class and at recess.
- We will stand up for others who are teased, bullied, or excluded.

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## Literature & Videos

- Erica's List of books
  - [www.easingtheteasing.com](http://www.easingtheteasing.com)
- Suggested Books - Appendix - F
- Questions:
  - *What was the motivation of the teaser?*
  - *How did the teaser feel? How did the victim feel?*
  - *Were there witnesses to the teasing? What did they do?*
  - *Evaluate how the teasing was handled*
- Elicit the help of older students/Partner classes

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- Videos -Appendix G
  - Sunburst Communications
    - [www.sunburst-media.com](http://www.sunburst-media.com)
  - Human Relations Media
    - [www.hrmvideo.com](http://www.hrmvideo.com)

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## Assignments

- ❑ Interview parent or family member about teasing experience.
- ❑ *The Misfits* by James Howe
- ❑ Research the harmful effects of teasing and bullying.
- ❑ Report or essay

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## Ideas for a report or essay...

- What are the differences between teasing and bullying?
- Are there teasing and bullying problems at our school?
- What are kids teased about?
- Why do kids tease other kids?
- How do kids feel when they are made fun of or excluded? What are the harmful effects of teasing and bullying?
- What do kids usually do when they see or hear a classmate tease others?
- What choices do you have when you see someone being teased or bullied?
- What would you do if your good friend were being teased?

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## A few more ideas...

- ❑ What would you do if your good friend teased others? Would you join in?
- ❑ Should you tell an adult if someone is being consistently teased or bullied?
- ❑ What is popularity?
  - Without using names, do you think "popular" kids are mean to other kids?
  - Do you think kids tease others in order to be accepted by the popular group?
- ❑ Create a bulletin board of teasing and bullying facts.
- ❑ Write scripts for play or puppet show for younger students.

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### Teasing, Put-Downs and Insults on TV

- TV show \_\_\_\_\_
- Date & time \_\_\_\_\_
- Characters involved \_\_\_\_\_
- Funny/hurtful comments \_\_\_\_\_
- Your reaction to the comments \_\_\_\_\_

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### A few more classroom suggestions...

- Encourage tolerance and the appreciation of differences.
  - How are we alike? How are we different?
  - Disability awareness activities
- Discussion of Current Events
- Promote and recognize kind behaviors.

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### School-wide Activities and Suggestions

- Administrators, teachers, assistants, students, parents
- Committee
- Involve older students
- Partner classes

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### Observe Interactions

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- Verbal
- Physical
- "Silent" behaviors
- Less supervised areas

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### More Suggestions...

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- More adult supervision
- Consultation for monitors
- School resource officer
- Character education

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- Affective education
  - Discuss policy
  - Promote reporting
  - Parent education

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### **Plan of Action for Teaser/Bully**

- Investigate situation
  - Conference with school personnel.
  - Consult with teachers and playground/lunch supervisors.
  - Interview students
- Written record of incidents

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### **Sanctions/Consequences**

- Predictable and Escalating
  - Inform parents.
  - Removal of privilege
    - Recess, fun activity, field trip
  - Detention
  - In-school suspension
  - Out-of-school suspension

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- Expulsion
- Escort from class to class
- Supervision for entire day
- Police intervention/police social work

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**More action plan... to include social learning interventions**

- Self-reflection activity – Appendix H
- Problem-solving group
- Verbal or written apology
- Reconciliation meeting
- Oral presentation or report
- Read a story or book related to teasing/bullying to younger kids.

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- Survey or interview students
- Write article for school newsletter
- Perform and record 5 acts of kindness.
- Participate in supervised, structured game or sport to learn cooperation skills.

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- Accompany a supervision aide at recess to assist in resolving conflicts.
- Counseling/Assessment/Case study
- Letter to parents in class
  - Appendix - I

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## Summarizing...

- Assessment
- Raise awareness
- Serve as moral compass
- Activate bystanders
- Intervene

The life lesson of treating others with respect  
is crucial whether it is face-to-face  
or in cyberspace.

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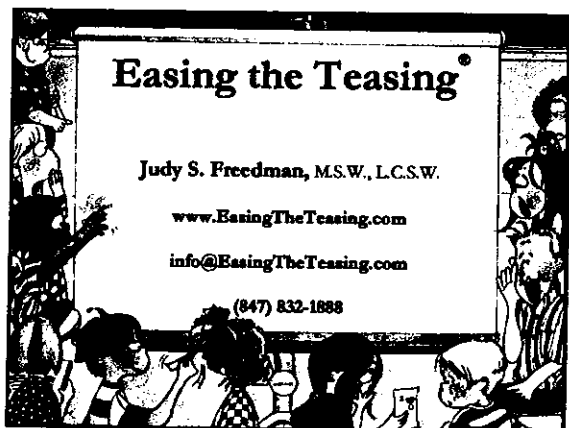
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