

What is Bullying?

They punch me in the jaw, strangle me, they knock things out of my hand, take things from me, sit on me. They push me so far that I want to become the bully.

-ALEX

It feels like everybody just turned against me. It was like nine of them, nine or ten of them, calling me stupid and dumb, and they started throwing things at me, and one of the guys said something to me, and he threatened me, telling me what he was going to do to me, and he'll fight girls, and everybody was laughing.

-JA'MEYA

You can always count on something happening when you're walking down the hall at school, in the classroom, after school when I'm walking home, when I'm walking through the parking lot in the morning to school. I wasn't welcomed at church. I'm not welcomed in a lot of people's homes.

-KELBY

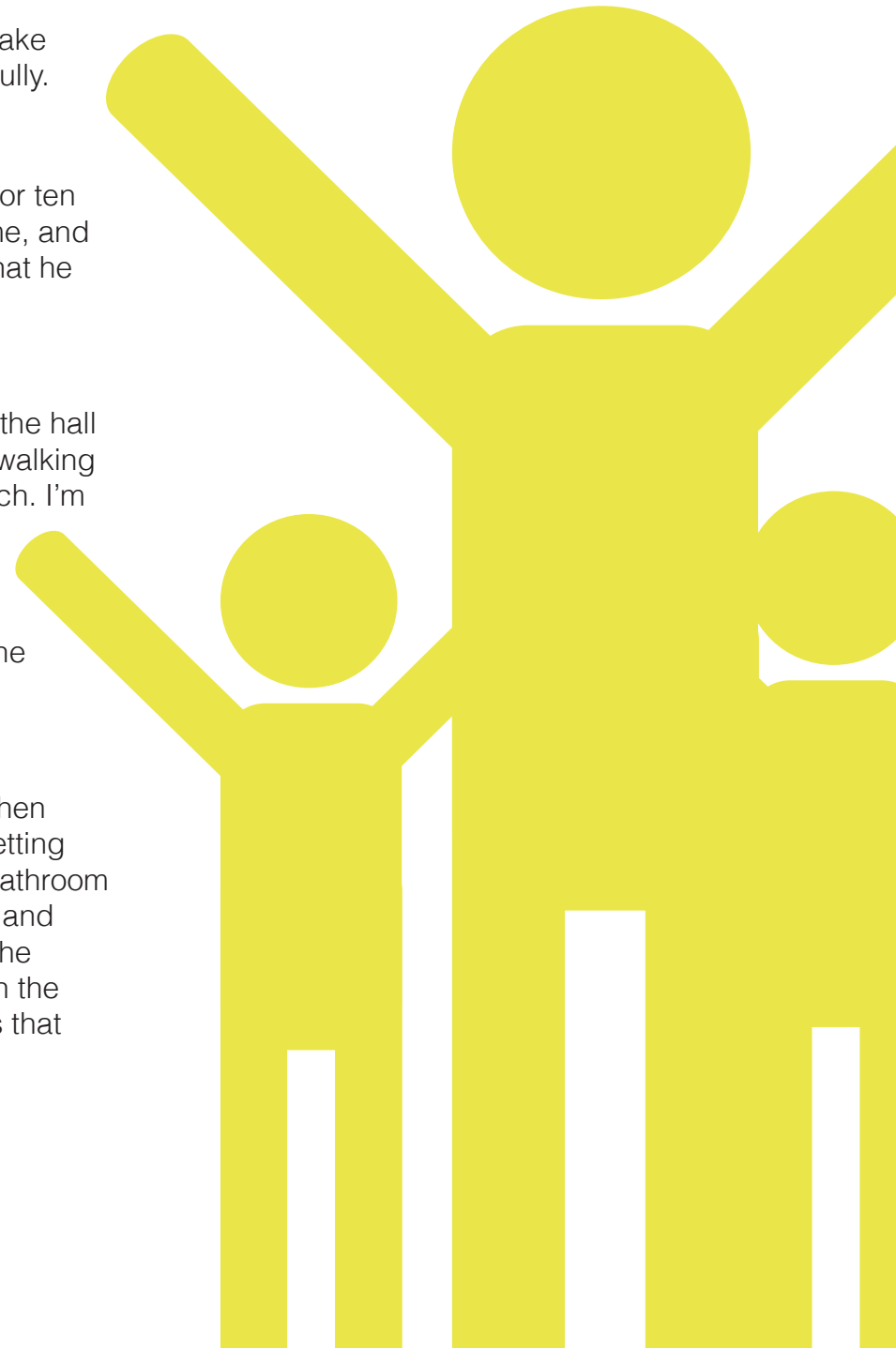
If it involves repeated, malicious attempts to humiliate a helpless victim, if the victim is fearful, does not know how to make it stop, then it's bullying.

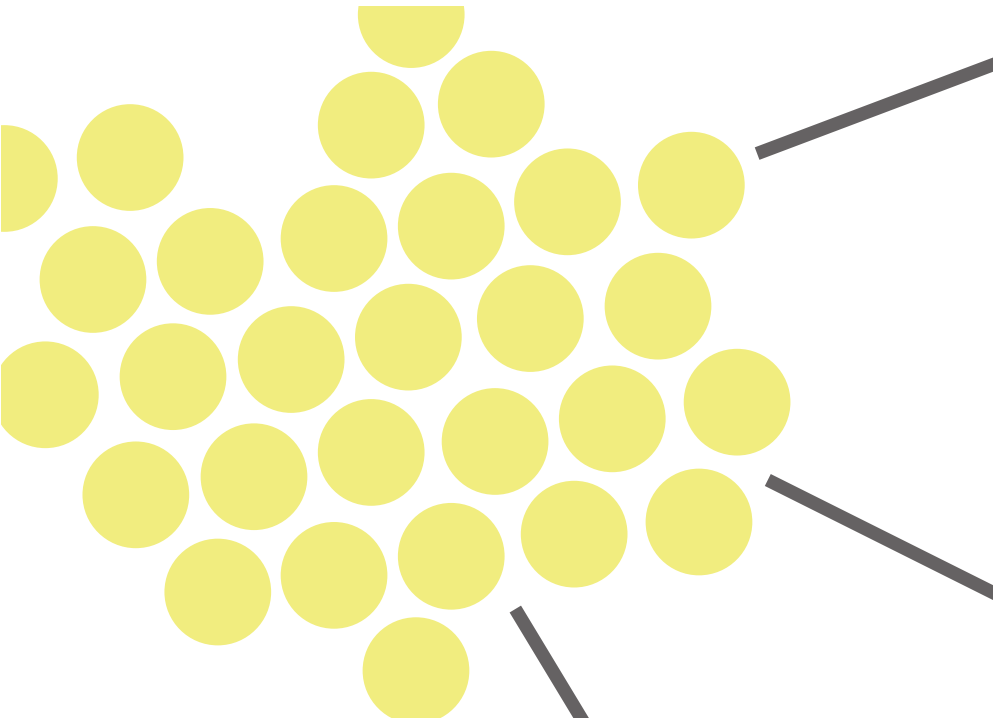
- Kim Zarzour,

...We knew why Tyler did what he did. There was no doubt in our minds. When you're in the shower and your clothes are taken, and you have no way of getting out of the gym other than walking out naked. When you're standing in the bathroom urinating, and kids come up and push you from behind up against the stall and against the wall, and you urinate on your pants. When you're sitting in the classroom and someone grabs your books and throws them on the floor and tells you, 'Pick 'em up bitch,' those are things that happened to Tyler.

-DAVID LONG, Tyler's father

The
BULLY
Project





Bullying involves an individual or a group repeatedly harming another person—physically (e.g. punching or pushing), verbally (e.g. teasing or name-calling), or socially (e.g. ostracizing or spreading hurtful rumors).

Sometimes these harmful actions are plainly visible, but other times, such as when gossip and rumors are used to ostracize the target, the actions are covert.

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, bullying behavior might include assault, tripping, intimidation, rumor spreading and isolation, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, destruction of another's work, and name-calling.

With the advent of the Internet, bullies are able to maintain a more persistent presence in the lives of their victims through cyber-bullying. Researchers define cyber-bullying as “willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.”

Bullying often does not happen in an isolated context with a single tormentor and victim. There may be multiple bullies or multiple victims, and there are almost always peers, adults, and other community members who know about the bullying taking place.

Often, the victims of bullying are socially vulnerable because they have some characteristic that makes them different from the majority. A person might be singled out because of his or her race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation. Young people who have physical or learning disabilities are also targeted more frequently, as well as students who are on the autism spectrum. Other times, there are no apparent characteristics that cause the target of bullying to be singled out by the tormentor. Regardless, the person being bullied does not know how or does not have the power to make it stop.

Recent research suggests that bullying is a common occurrence in United States schools. A 2011 nationwide study found that 40% of teachers and school staff consider bullying a moderate or major problem in their schools and that 32% of students between ages 12-18 report experiencing bullying.