



HELP GUIDE FOR PARENTS

The Bravery Over Bullying Project© Help Guide for Parents

The Bravery Over Bullying Organization was created by parents for parents whose children are being bullied in the classroom.

In our own experience, there was nowhere to go, no one to listen, no one place to help us help our children whom were struggling.

We know that every child will at one time or another face a bully in their life, either at home, school, the playground, or the ballfield, but what if there was a place you could go to help your child understand that there are ways to effectively handle their experience and emotions?

What if there was a place to get them counseling, crisis intervention specialists, and other mental healthcare opportunities for free?

What if there was a place to go to help parents dealing with bullying in the classroom when their pleas for help have fallen on seemingly deaf ears?

What if there was a place to reach out to get help and a liaison to walk with you as you approach those in charge?

Oh, how we wished this place existed when we were in the midst of our bullying crisis.

When everyday was a fight for the safety of our students within the confines of the classroom, the lunch room, the hall way, bathroom, P.E., and carpool lanes.

But the fact is, there wasn't. There wasn't even a school counselor to talk to.

There was no one to listen phone call after phone call, day after day, notes sent home by teachers to tell us our

student had been, pushed, shoved, pinched, punched, distracted and ultimately threatened with death.

Yes, teachers were reporting these behaviors by a known bully, culminating in years of abuse by one such student, and there was never a real offer of hope, protection, relief, or even confirmation that our students would be safe from the moment they left our care to the moment we picked them up.

How? Who? Why? When? Yes, it happened to us. We've been there. We showed up day after day advocating for our children, and even after the student who was bullying



was removed from the classroom to another classroom, the violence continued. It worsened, and the death threat was the very last straw. ENOUGH.

How can a parent get ZERO response when the bullying was documented for years?

We know we aren't alone.

We know it happens every day across America, in every classroom, public schools, private schools, charter schools, prep schools, day schools, parochial schools. Sometimes it's a student, sometimes it's a teacher, often times it's a group of students, many times it's one such student who has chosen your child as the target of bullying, intimidation, threats, and your student may be enduring it everyday in silence, sometimes in violence, and often they are blamed for what's happening to them.

Yes, victim-blaming is a common misguided approach to bullying: If only your student were taller, smarter, faster, then they wouldn't get bullied. If only your child were this, that, and the other.

What? Why can't my child just be themselves? Why are the only responses of the actions taken against my child only with regard to my child? You mean there is nothing you can do to prevent this from happening again?

We at The Bravery Over Bullying Organization have been there. We've walked in your shoes. We've picked up the pieces of our children's broken-hearts, broken spirits, and broken bodies. We knew they were hurting, we tried to intervene, but what does a parent do when their 3rd grade child comes to them, and tells them they just want to die rather than face another day at school. That they are too afraid to leave the house, go to Church, go to the swimming pool for fear they might run into the one who has tormented them day after day at school. That it must be all their fault

they are getting bullied, and it would just be easier if they were dead.

Those words hauntingly echoed in our hearts and minds when we had to place our third grader on suicide watch. Yes, you read that right, our THIRD GRADER. Our once happy, smart, out-going, ten-year-old son.

He lost his door privileges, because in this day and age, when your child threatens suicide, you can't ignore them. It's in the headlines everyday. EVERYday. And it is 100% avoidable. We monitored his every move, we listened, we took him to the pediatrician, to a mental health care professional, and yes, ultimately sought treatment for depression and PTSD from the effects of bullying. ONGOING persistent, escalating violent bullying.

Now that you know a little about where we've been, let me tell you where we're going.

We thought no parent should ever have to navigate this road alone, and NEVER should lose their child to suicide due to bullying.

We know parents work, and have other children, and numerous other responsibilities, and when you drop your child off at school in America, you should have piece of mind that they are going to be treated fairly, appropriately,

safely, and given respect that every human being deserves.

You shouldn't have to fear for your children's safety at school. Your child shouldn't have to fear for their own safety at school.

We felt there should be a place to go, to offer resources available to them. Counseling, education, crisis intervention. A BULLYING HOTLINE, and we're doing just that.

The Bravery Over Bullying Organization is a community educational resource to help YOU, the Parent, to offer your child keys for success both in and out of the classroom. A proven effective method, because we've been in your shoes, we've walked that road alone, so that no parent ever has to go it alone.

We've seen how getting the necessary help our children so desperately needed allowed them to overcome the devastating effects of bullying.

Our children are alive today. Healthy, happy, thriving, and working to help others #bebravenotabully You too, can help your children overcome a bullying crisis, but it will take a few steps to recognize, take action, and respond.

HERE'S A FEW QUESTIONS TO HELP YOUR CHILD.

Is your student at risk? If so, then Ask the following:

1. Recognize **WHO** may be targeting your child?
2. **WHAT** efforts are currently in place to protect the student victim?
3. **WHEN** is mediation an option for BOTH students and their families?
4. **WHERE** can my child and our family go to seek help academically, emotionally, spiritually, and physically?
5. **WHY** is my child the target?

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Maybe your child isn't getting bullied, maybe they ARE the bully. We're here for you, too

What can you do to help your child stop acting like a bully?

Behaviors, like bullying, are often acted out, and witnessed in the home.

Are you in an abusive relationship? Is an older sibling physically abusive to their younger siblings?

Talking to your children about respectful boundaries when it comes to their bodies is important.

Maybe they are acting out something they've seen on tv or online.

Being involved in your child's day to day routine includes knowledge of their online activities, who their friends are, what is happening when they aren't under your supervision.

We're not asking you to invade their personal space, but with freedom comes responsibilities. As your child grows, and they demonstrate that they can handle freedom to choose their friends, screen time, gaming, and free time then you can loosen the reigns, but that doesn't mean it isn't still your responsibility to check in from time to time.

How are they handling those responsibilities? Are they spending too much time with a certain group? Are they staying up too late on social media or devices?

YOU still have to parent your older children. We all need structure, rules, and often times restrictions.

Are you modeling healthy behaviors in the home?

Is your style of parenting conducive to your child's needs?

Maybe your child feels bullied by you?

TALK TO THEM. LISTEN.

It's never too late to continue forming a relationship and a bond with your child. NEVER TOO LATE.

Maybe you weren't always around when they were little? Be there NOW! Maybe you don't feel you have time to listen and parent, FIND SOMEONE who will. Find a mentor, a relative, a grandparent, who will spend a few minutes talking to your child about their experiences.

Encourage your children to READ

There are so many useful books about teaching children empathy for others. Maybe you were bullied as a child and just view it as part of growing up?

Yes, it may be something we all experience, but talk to your child how you overcame it, how you moved on, and how they can effectively handle their emotions and deal with it in the day-to-day realm.

We believe bullying is a learned behavior. There is a difference between being unkind, or mean, and bullying. Bullies evoke fear. Bullying is repetitive behaviors that often prey on those whom are perceived as weaker, smaller, inconsequential.

If you witness your child emulating these behaviors, it is up to YOU, the Parent, to put a stop to this behavior at an early age.

Finally, is your child acting out because they are feeling themselves inadequate, insignificant, or unimportant. Children who bully often

are looking for the response. Maybe they like the attention, even if it's negative, that they get from bullying others.

We encourage you to help your child know that you love and care for them, and are interested in their lives.

Don't just show up to school when there is a problem. Show up just because.

Show them you care about their sports activities, their Spelling tests, their talents. Ask questions about what they are doing at school, and let them know you want to be a part of their successes, not just their failures.

Respond with interest, enthusiasm, love, acceptance no matter where your child may be, and you will get that in return.

Parenting isn't what it used to be folks. It just ISN'T. And every child has unique qualities and traits that can both work in their favor and against, but we encourage you to help bring out your child's strengths by focusing on giving them attention, not just to their negative behaviors, but by showing up and showing out.

Showing them, you love them, and that they have a circle made up of many people whom are invested in their lives, offer opportunities for growth, and ultimately making them feel secure in who they are.

A note about learning differences— In our experience, children whom deal with learning differences in the classroom often struggle in their peer-to-peer relationships.



We encourage you to speak often with your children's teachers about their classroom struggles. Maybe your child is ADHD, or dyslexic, or on the Autism Spectrum. Identifying your child's learning differences early on will help them succeed later on.

You want them to have all the tools available to them to help them learn and be their best, right?

Accepting that your child may have learning differences is not a weakness. It is giving them strength to be who it is they were created to be, and how they can achieve success in the classroom and beyond.

We believe once you have recognized who your children really are that you can help them be who it is they want to be! We all can **#bebravenotabully**

We encourage you to visit our website, follow us on Facebook, and ask your children what they learned about The Bravery Over Bullying Project!

Supporting the chains of command— While trying to find ways to combat bullying in the classroom specifically with regard to your child there are many approaches, however once you feel you have exhausted the order of

1. Teacher
2. Principal
3. Superintendent
4. Board of Education

And there has been little to no resolve, or total disregard of your child's safety, and you feel necessary action, then that is where a parent liaison might benefit you.



volunteer providers can assist you in finding a qualified and experienced mediator or legal representation to assist you in helping your child.

Often times, it may be necessary to take such action, but again we advise you to

- Document the grievances against your child
- Carefully consider and request moving your child to a different class
- Consider meeting with a school counselor
- Offering to take part in mediation with the offending child's parents
- Planning to remove your child from the school if necessary

These options may seem extreme, but you will know when enough is enough, and if you believe your child is in danger, or if their life has been threatened, then it is up to YOU, the parent, to act on their behalf.

If you notice signs that your child is being bullied:

- Chronic headaches or tummy troubles
- Inability to focus
- Lack of participation in school events
- Seemingly withdrawn from their usual activities/interests
- Shutting down and not talking
- Loss of appetite
- Self-harming
- Talking about death or feeling hopeless
- Don't ignore these very important signs, and seek HELP for your child.
- Starting with a trip to the pediatrician to rule out underlying health problems
- seeking a professional counselor to help them deals with feelings of sadness, isolation, or thoughts of suicide
- consider ALL your options with regard to their physical and mental healthcare
- Mental health isn't just a problem adults face, children are at risk of developing mental health crisis related to bullying, just as adults, and studies have shown that children and

teens who are/were bullied are at far greater risk of dying by suicide than any other group.

We cannot control the behaviors of others, but how our children respond to negative behaviors can put them at a far greater advantage of overcoming bullying, and continuing to live long and productive adult lives.

There is a skillset to be learned, and we believe mental health care is an essential part of that process.

Learning why you feel the way you do-- How you can work to resolve conflict in your personal lives? How can you deal with difficult people? How can you feel better when you are sad, anxious, or fearful?

There are proven and effective ways to giving your children the skills they need to overcome difficult situations, and we want to offer you help in your community by providing you with advocates, mentors, counselors, programs, and resources to getting your child help.

Our REAL TIME RAPID RESPONSE TEAM can help you assess your child's needs based on their unique experiences.

We can offer you help for your child, your family, and your circumstances with regard to bullying.

Don't hesitate to call our Helpline **1-800-BEBRAVE**

Your call is confidential and we want to listen and offer you the appropriate resources for your child.

We are here for you, and we want to help your child **#bebravenotabully** Contact us: Download our brochure, Project toolkit Help Guides and other valuable life-saving information on our website: **BraveryoverBullying.org** Email: braveryoverbullying@gmail.com Visit us on Facebook: facebook.com/braveryoverbullying The family that's brave together, stays together!