"Let's Get Real" CURRICULUM GUIDE

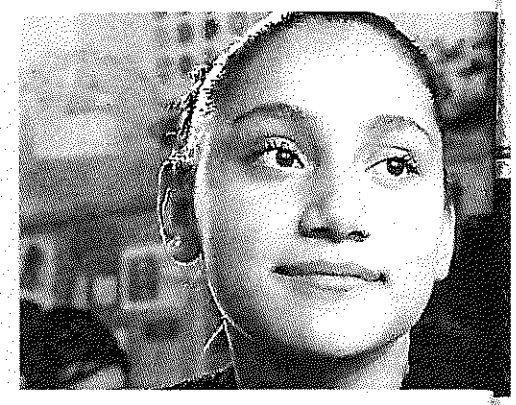


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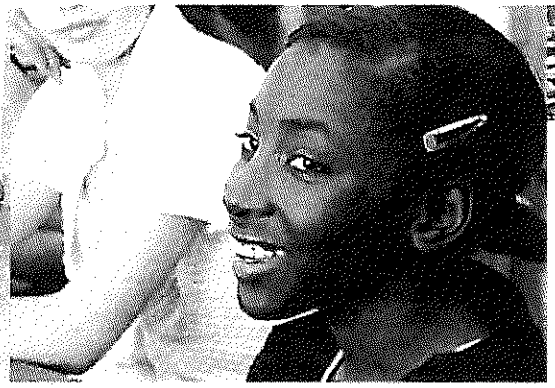
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THE REAL DEAL:

Bullying has Reached Epidemic Proportions

Sixty-six percent of youth are teased at least once a month, and nearly one-third of youth are bullied at least once a month.

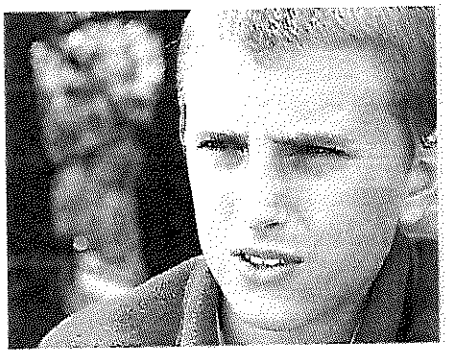
–2002 National Survey of Students in Grades 5–12, Families and Work Institute

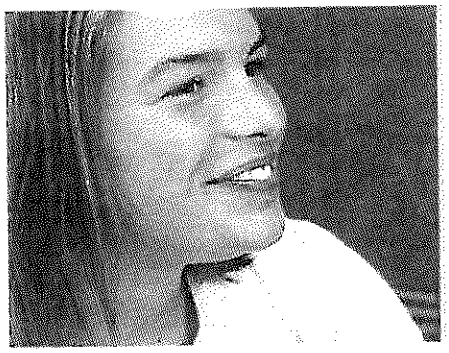
Six out of 10 American teens witness bullying at least once a day.

–National Crime Prevention Council, 2003

For children in grades 6–10, nearly one in six—or 3.2 million—are victims of bullying each year and 3.7 million are bullies.

–Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, September 2003





About the Film and Curriculum Guide

Studies consistently show that name-calling, bullying and school-based violence are on the rise. These problems have become so widespread that many young people and adults have come to accept them as inevitable rites of passage. We created *Let's Get Real* and this curriculum guide to challenge this belief.

We urge adults who work with youth to dig deeper to help kids examine the issues that underlie the bullying epidemic. Together, this film and guide reflect some of the best thinking of educators, child-health advocates and violence-prevention experts from around the country.

When we asked young people to tell us how they were singled out or targeted for harassment, issues such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, body size and immigration status, among others, came to the forefront. And yet, they told us, these issues are rarely, if ever, discussed in an honest way as part of the curriculum. We've designed exercises and activities to help you generate much-needed discussion about these sensitive subjects.

Though this curriculum guide is written primarily for middle and junior high school teachers, it can be easily adapted for use by high school teachers, school counselors, administrators, youth-service organizations, after-school providers and religious groups. It is divided into six main sections: We have organized information in this way to provide planning and preparation tips, pre-film *and* post-film activities, and additional assignments and resources.

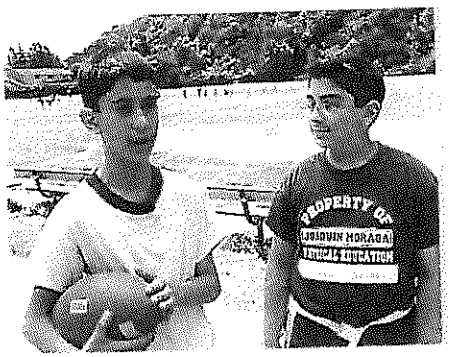
While no one resource alone can eradicate name-calling and bullying, we know that fostering dialogue is the first step toward meaningful change. We at The Respect for All Project hope this film and guide will help you achieve just that. Share your stories with us at **info@respectforall.org**.

What Makes "Let's Get Real" Different From Other Films About Name-Calling and Bullying?

***Let's Get Real* features only youth voices.** Unlike other media resources on this issue, *Let's Get Real* features young people—and only young people—speaking about their personal experiences with name-calling and bullying. Instead of having adults tell kids what to do when "the bully" does something mean to them, we decided to let young people speak directly to their peers. The entire film consists of real feelings and experiences, not dramatizations. Students talk candidly in their own everyday language, and they do not use euphemisms to sugarcoat their descriptions of what is really going on. After dozens of test screenings, we are convinced this is a powerful and unique way to get students to take the issue seriously.

It doesn't label any child as "the bully" who should shoulder all the blame, but instead looks at the full spectrum of behaviors from all points of view. This film illuminates that students cannot simply be labeled one-dimensionally as victims, bullies or bystanders. In fact, most of us—adults and youth—have inhabited more than one of these roles depending on the situation. We hope that *Let's Get Real* can help students begin to see a bit of themselves in one another—and give them the courage to express their true feelings about their own lives.





It makes the link between bullying and prejudice. Many different kinds of prejudice underlie much of the harassment that goes on between young people. With *Let's Get Real*, we connected these issues together in one resource. You'll hear many words in the film that raise important questions about how name-calling and bullying relate to stereotypes about race, religion, national origin, immigration status, gender, sexual orientation or disability, as well as more general factors such as physical appearance, social class and perceived popularity. By helping viewers make the link between bullying and prejudice, *Let's Get Real* can be used to launch discussions about any number of issues with young people.

It encourages honest dialogue and developing empathy as crucial steps toward a solution. The young people in *Let's Get Real* voice many thoughts on what to do about name-calling and bullying—giving educators a range of problem-solving ideas to explore further with students. The main strategy that we are advocating, however, is to facilitate *dialogue* between young people about their feelings about name-calling and bullying. In most schools today, there is actually very little discussion about the problem, even though there are many rules and punishments to discourage inappropriate behavior.

Putting "Let's Get Real" in Context

The Middle School Challenge

Although name-calling and bullying can be a serious problem at any age, it is particularly acute among middle school and junior high school students. Children in elementary school often have a single teacher who is able to create a consistent classroom climate and enforce class rules for one group of children. This is not the case in middle school, where students have many teachers and must find their way in unstructured settings such as cafeterias and locker rooms. Students may encounter peers who are much more (or less) physically and emotionally mature than themselves. This change in environment, coupled with the preadolescent need for conformity and peer acceptance, makes the sixth through the ninth grades a breeding ground for name-calling and bullying.

What's at Stake for Students

Studies show that students who are bullied are distracted, suffer health consequences and often skip school altogether. Others become increasingly isolated and depressed or dejected. Recent data suggest that targets of bullying are more likely to carry weapons. Even the most resourceful teacher cannot teach a student who is mentally or physically absent. Therefore, establishing a safe and respectful learning environment is essential before learning can begin.

Making Respect a Part of the Curriculum

While educators rightfully emphasize "formal" curricula such as math, science and reading, they often lack the tools to develop curricula through which students learn to express their feelings, resolve conflicts, and understand the societal factors that can lead to prejudice or violence. They struggle to influence the peer interactions and power dynamics that exist outside the classroom, where a large percentage of social learning actually takes place: in hallways and cafeterias, and on playgrounds. By helping students examine and internalize standards for their own behavior, *Let's Get Real* and this guide bring this so-called "hidden curriculum" out into the open.

Addressing Adult Behavior as Part of the Equation

This curriculum can also help adults examine their own behavior—which can, in some ways, convey as much information to students as the "formal" curriculum. There are plenty of ways in which educators may act—or fail to act—on a daily basis that have a huge impact on the young people around them. *Let's Get Real* and this guide compel each of us to ask: How do we respond to bullying? How may we unconsciously perpetuate inequalities or negative attitudes toward some students in our midst? Are we setting an example of respect by our language, our demeanor, and the attention we give to students' feelings and their treatment of each other? By raising these questions, this curriculum facilitates not just learning and self-discovery among young people, but also among adults.

THE REAL DEAL:

Bullying is Worst in Middle School

Twice as many children are bullied in the school environment than in any other location. Bullying appears to occur more frequently in middle schools and junior high schools than in high schools. Unsurprisingly, much bullying takes place where there is little or no adult supervision—on the way to and from school; in bathrooms, hallways and locker rooms; and on playgrounds.

–National Center for Educational Statistics, 1995

THE REAL DEAL:

How Bullying Affects School Attendance

An estimated 160,000 children miss school every day out of fear of attack or intimidation by other students.

–National Education Association, 1995

One out of every 10 students who drops out of school does so because of repeated bullying.

–Oklahoma Health Department, 2001

THE REAL DEAL:

How Bullying Affects Student Health

Victims of bullying are more likely to suffer physical problems such as common colds and coughs, sore throats, poor appetite and night waking.

–Journal of the American Medical Association, 2003

The effects of bullying can be long-lasting. By age 23, children who were bullied in middle school were more depressed and had lower self-esteem than their peers who had not been bullied.

–Dan Olweus, University of Bergen, Norway, 1993