



# *The Benedictine Counselor*

## *Newsletter of Benedictine Counseling Services*

*A Ministry of the Benedictine Sisters of Virginia*

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### **Message from the Director:**

May the blessings of Lent enrich you in a greater freedom from the things that tie us down in our spiritual journeys and a greater gift of yourselves to the people you serve.

This month we have the third article on the topic of bullying in the school setting.  
Tina Fraga, School Counselor at Linton Hall

School, presents actions that can be taken in the school setting and by parents.

May this Lenten season lead your schools and families to a deeper union with God and a greater generosity to God's children.



**Tina Fraga  
School Counselor  
Linton Hall School, Bristow, VA**

## **Bullying**

### **What It Looks Like/Strategies for Intervention**

#### **What It Looks Like**

Bullying is defined as aggressive behavior exhibited by one towards another which is intentional and where there is an imbalance in power or strength between the persons involved. The person being bullied has a hard time defending him/herself and the negative behavior is repeated over time. Bullying can take on different forms: physical (hitting, kicking, or punching), verbal (teasing or name calling), relational

(excluding, isolating, shunning, rumors, or gossip), and cyber (sending insulting messages by phone or computer) (Olweus 1993). Statistics show that one out of seven students is bullied and that this behavior occurs most frequently during school. Bullying begins in the primary grades and reaches its peak during the middle school years (Olweus, 1993).

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## Strategies for Intervention

Research shows that bullying can have negative effects on both the victim and bully. For this reason, it is important that school personnel and parents take action when they have learned about a bullying incident.

To respond to and prevent bullying, **schools** need to take a **community approach**. It is important that everyone (school personnel, students, and parents) do their part to stop or prevent bullying in the school. **Teachers and administrators** can respond to bullying in a systematic way. If an **adult** is a **witness** to bullying:

- stop it immediately,
- speak directly to the bully and state the inappropriate behavior,
- refer to the school policy on bullying,
- show support to the victim in a way that allows them to regain their dignity, dismiss the victim and bully with a promise to follow-up, and address the bystanders asking them to take more action next time.
- Later that same day it is important for the teacher or counselor to speak to both the victim and bully. Consequences and strategies for alternative behavior should be given to

the bully and strategies for bully prevention and response to the victim ([www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov)).

**Students** can take an active role too.

- The victim can do their part by: avoiding a potential bully situation, standing up to the bully, walking away, or asking an adult for help.
- Students who witness bullying (bystanders) can: stand up to the bully, remove the victim from the situation, or get an adult to help.

**Parents:** it is important that **parents** show support and offer their help. Mom and dad can:

- be supportive and gather information from their child,
- contact the school, and
- talk with their child about the things they can do to prevent themselves from being a target (Olweus, 1993).

### Resources:

Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying At school: What we know and what can we do*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

[www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov](http://www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov). Retrieved on January 19, 2008.

**Lent** begins with **Ash Wednesday**, February 6, 2008. We are reminded to prepare for Easter by seeking greater freedom, conversion from the things that hold us back from fully loving and serving God and our brothers and sisters.

Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are the ways recommended to us for they help in three important ways:

**Prayer** is a means of knowing and loving God more.

**Fasting** (self denial) enables us to have more control over our desires, so that when temptation comes we are stronger.

**Almsgiving** means giving of ourselves to those who need us.

Let us take advantage of this time of grace.

The **Anita Moreland Foundation** was begun to help BCS provide counseling and psychological assistance for people who would otherwise be unable to pay for services. For more information contact: *Benedictine Counseling Services* below.

To contact *Benedictine Counseling Services*,  
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