

(W)holy, (W)holy, (W)holy
Health, Healing and Wholeness

“Answer me when I call, O God of my right! You gave me room when I was in distress. Be gracious to me, and hear my prayer. When you are disturbed, do not sin; ponder it on your beds, and be silent. Offer right sacrifices, and put your trust in the Lord.” (Psalm 4:1, 4-5)

Some would say that bullying is behind all forms of violence, conflict, persecution, abuse, harassment, discrimination and prejudice. The philosopher Seneca, once said, “All cruelty springs from weakness.” He’s probably correct. We are seeing increasing examples of bullying instigated by teens and adults. They’re everywhere – at work, at home, in schools, in medicine, in governments, on the internet, in social cliques, and yes, even in churches – as a co-worker recently said, “People seem to be nastier and nastier.”

What every bully has in common is their use of power to satisfy their own shortcomings. For an instant, he or she, feels better, but that feeling doesn’t last, so they have to do it again and again. Yes - people make mistakes – lash out in hurtful ways, be rude, or be thoughtless, but bullying means that someone (or more than one person) is repeatedly and deliberately trying to hurt another person with less power. That power over another may be physical, economical, emotional, or social.

Feeling helpless and persecuted and wishing that the bullying would stop are normal reactions, however, feeling helpless and/or victimized, waste your time and energy. They will most likely cause you a lot of pain, and will not make the situation better. Figuring out how to use the power you already have to protect yourself can change your life. Most of the time, you can choose how you are going to respond to bullying behavior. Making a conscious decision instead of feeling like the helpless victim of someone else’s behavior can be very empowering.

Leaving or Staying – You can choose to disengage for a moment, or end the relationship completely. You can set boundaries regarding what needs to change in order for you to stay. If you decide to stay, you need to figure out how to stop the other’s behavior from upsetting you – you cannot force another person to change his/her behavior, however you can change how you handle it. When we allow others to treat us poorly, we send an unspoken message that we agree with their low opinion of us – in other words, we enable the behavior to continue by not putting limits on the bully’s behavior.

Confront the bully privately – Bullies tend to play to an audience, so if you try to talk to them in front of someone else, you might not get the results you want. ***However, there is one important exception – If you are concerned that the situation could escalate to physical violence, always make sure you have a witness present.***

Recognize what is happening and remember it is the bully who has the problem, not you. Unless they are physically threatening you, stand up to them calmly and confront their behavior rationally. If you call them out on their behavior, they usually have no place to go – especially if others witness these actions. Don’t attack. Simply and calmly stand up for yourself. It may take some practice. If you can’t stand up to the bully immediately, don’t buy-into their behavior by trying to appease them. Quietly walk away. Think about what you want to say and either talk to them later, or wait until the next time, then call them out. Once exposed, they will gradually lose interest. The following example model can help you organize your thoughts:

“I feel ... (state your feeling in terms that are yours rather than attacking the other person)... when you .. (state the specific behavior that is a problem to you; try not to use words like ‘you never’...‘you always’). Please(say what you specifically want the person to do).” Example: “I feel uncomfortable when you make jokes about others. Please stop doing this in my presence.”

Get help – Document the bullying in as objective terms as you can. Join forces with others if someone in a position of power is misusing his/her authority. Be willing to go up the chain of command. At work, talk with your human resources staff. Talk problems over with people you trust, but remember that endlessly agonizing about someone else’s behavior won’t lead to change. If you are feeling stuck, get professional help to support you in making healthy changes and in taking care of yourself emotionally – speak to your pastor, parish nurse, or a therapist.

Autumn blessings!
Debbie Best, RN, BSW, MS

Nurse’s Notes

October 2011

October 2 Be active outdoors and indoors.

Make fall yard work fun. Have kids come up with different ways to pick up leaves or pine cones (i.e., squatting, bending, leaning, stretching, or balancing on one foot). Sing, dance, and explore. Provide kids with rakes and other tools that are safe. Have a song-and-dance talent show. Draw, color, and explore with health in mind. Remember that children and adolescents should be active for at least one hour a day, and adults should be active for at least 2½ hours a week. Don't forget to apply sunscreen and insect repellent to protect you and your family from the sun, mosquitoes, and ticks.

(<http://www.cdc.gov/family/parentautumn/index.htm>)

October 9 Have an afternoon of food-tasting.

Gather your family together to research at least 3-5 varieties of one type of food (i.e., fruit, vegetable, or nut). Talk about the unique qualities of the food and a little about its history (i.e., when it was discovered or what it is known for). Lead the family in a taste test of the different varieties of the food, or prepare the food several different ways and have everyone choose their favorite. For example, an apple could be prepared as apple snack wedges, applesauce, apple cider, and baked apples. You could also present similar types of vegetables, such as collard greens, spinach, kale, and mustard greens. Talk about differences in their taste. Pick fall favorites, or be adventurous and try new things.

(<http://www.cdc.gov/family/parentautumn/index.htm>)

October 16 Take time to get your flu vaccine!

CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses. While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine protects against the three viruses that research suggests will be most common. The [2011-2012 vaccine](#) will protect against an influenza A H3N2 virus, an influenza B virus and the H1N1 virus that emerged in 2009 to cause a pandemic. (<http://www.cdc.gov/family/parentautumn/index.htm>)

October 23 Expecting trick-or-treaters or party guests?

- Provide healthier treats for trick-or-treaters, such as individual packs of raisins, trail mix, or pretzels. For party guests, offer a variety of fruits, vegetables, and cheeses.
- Use party games and trick-or-treat time as an opportunity for kids to get their daily dose of 60 minutes of physical activity.
- Be sure walking areas and stairs are well-lit and free of obstacles that could result in falls.
- Keep candle-lit jack-o'-lanterns and luminaries away from doorsteps, walkways, landings, and curtains. Place them on sturdy tables, keep them out of the reach of pets and small children, and never leave them unattended.
- Remind drivers to watch out for trick-or-treaters and to drive safely.

Follow these tips to help make the festivities fun and safe for everyone!

(<http://www.cdc.gov/family/parentautumn/index.htm>)

October 30 Is it a Toothache?

Subtle clues that your pet is having dental pain:

- She becomes 'shy'. If she ducks when someone pets her head or neck, she's likely feeling sensitive.
- She picks kibble out of her bowl and drops it on the floor (the pet equivalent of pushing food around, and a sign that eating hurts).
- Her gums are more red than pink – inflamed tissue means an infection is lurking
- She suddenly ignores her chew toys – no fun with a gum/tooth ache.
- She makes herself scarce – this is especially true of cats, who get quieter when they're not feeling well.
- Her breath smells bad – healthy pets should have sweet breath with no overwhelming odor.