

FROM A SCHOOL'S PERSPECTIVE

01

Even the best anti-bullying programs will only stop 30-40% of bullying.

02

Not all aggressive behavior is in fact "bullying".

03

The school may not legally be allowed to give you all the information you want.

04

Your instinct to react a certain way to bullying may not be the ideal way to deal with the situation.

The school will have methods that you might not understand, but that are the correct things to do.

Operation Survival was founded in 1988 in the hopes of stemming the inevitable tide of drugs and alcohol seeping into the community.

Operation Survival provides evidence-based programming in the local yeshivas and public schools, art programs, rap groups, positive alternatives, and crisis assistance to thousands of students each year.

The program also networks with other agencies to disseminate information to educators, clergy, social service and medical professionals, and community agencies.

Operation Survival is the first program to combat alcoholism and substance abuse in both the Jewish and African-American communities of Crown Heights, and has been credited with bringing the racially diverse community together in common cause.

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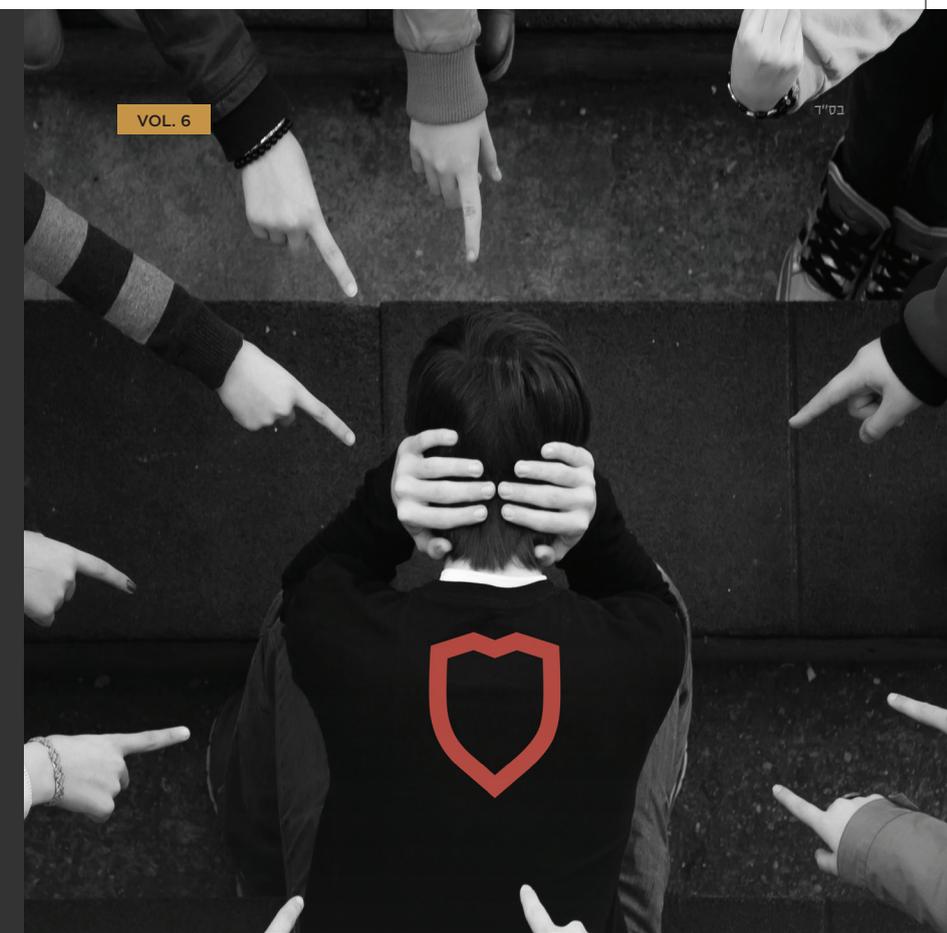
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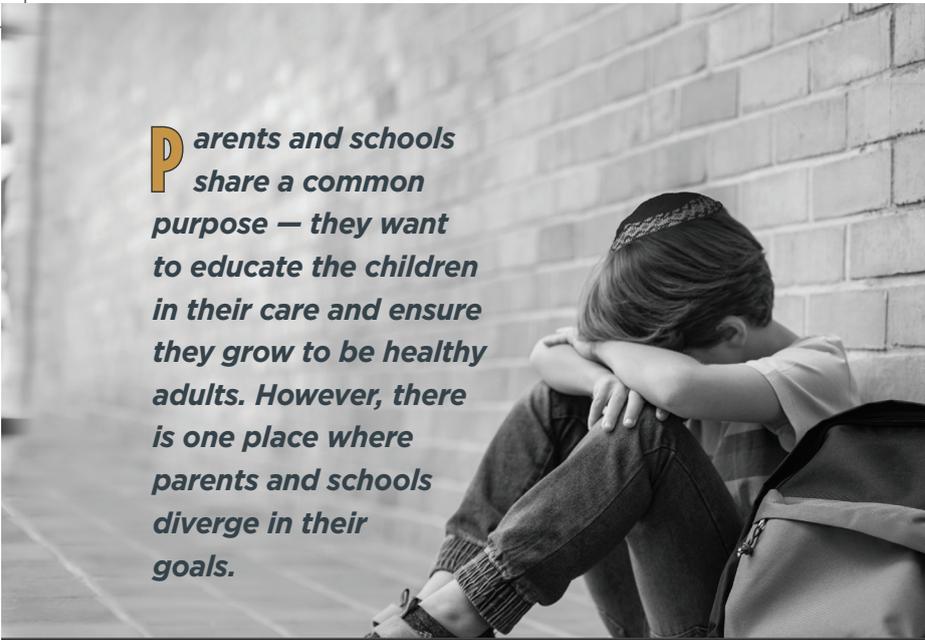
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PREVENTION 
Help Save a Life.

**What should I do?
My child is being
bullied in school and
no one seems to care?**

A project of Operation Survival



Parents and schools share a common purpose — they want to educate the children in their care and ensure they grow to be healthy adults. However, there is one place where parents and schools diverge in their goals.

The parents are, rightfully, always looking to protect the interests of their own child. The school though, must protect the interests of all the children. Most of the time these two things go together, but sometimes, especially in bullying situations, they may diverge.

Teachers and administrators are often confronted by hurting parents whose child is being bullied and they feel the school is not doing enough to stop it. There are several difficult truths that must be confronted in this situation. The first is that the very best bullying prevention programs being rolled out in schools are accomplishing somewhere between a thirty to forty percent reduction in bullying, in spite of all their resources.

Basically this means that even if your school is doing everything they should be doing, the international standard suggests there will still be quite a lot of bullying that parents and children will have to deal with.



The next difficult truth is that not all problems are bullying; some of the problems are aggression-related and are not bullying. These problems will not respond to anti-bullying programs.

It is important to realize that while there are things your child's school can and should be doing, it is not necessarily going to solve your child's problem. A parent might say, "I need my child isolated," or, "I need total attention and supervision provided to my child in order for x, y, or z to happen." A school cannot do that without sacrificing the service that it provides to all the other students in the building.

There is also a legal issue at play here. Very often parents will not know and will never be able to know how much a school is doing to deal with a bullying problem.



By law, schools are prohibited from sharing information about other students.

To better understand this issue, you need to think about how you would feel if the school shared information about your child with other parents, whether it is related to discipline, academics, or personal situations. A school might be taking very appropriate and serious actions toward a known bully, but they can't tell you that.

Another complication is that most bullying is witnessed by children and not adults, so a lot of the information that comes to a school comes to them by hearsay. Can and should a school take action against a student based on the reports of other students when no adults saw it? Doing so sets a dangerous precedent. What if a group of students ganged up against your child, went to the administration, and said your child did x, y, or z? Based on those rumors with no physical evidence and no staff witnessing it, would you want the school to take action? That is the dilemma many schools find themselves in.

Sometimes, schools may be hearing all kinds of information and are investigating the situation. It may look as if schools are doing nothing, but in fact, they are being cautious.

Bullying is tricky. Very often, the first thing adults want to do is actually the worst thing they could do. When a child who is not socially integrated at recess is being teased, alienated, and ostracized, it is very tempting to say, "Let's throw an adult in there to play with that child or to protect that child." But that will only further alienate the child and mark him or her as different and unusual. Adults, especially educators, have to be very careful about how they intervene and what they do. Dr. Rona Novick says the best interventions she has seen have been ones that schools are doing without the express knowledge of many people, but the people who need to know are aware of what is going on. These types of intervention seem to have the best impact.



► Based on interviews with Dr. Rona Novick, PhD, for Prevention 101 series.



PARENTS should share their concerns and frustrations with school personnel, but they should remember that schools are often taking action but are unable to share that information with parents. It is important to not assume that schools are ignoring a situation just because they do not immediately tell a parent how they are responding.