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Bullying can be stopped

Growing up is tough, especially these days. There are a lot of violent influences that our children are exposed to through the media. Computer games, other gaming devices, television, and movies can give young unformed minds the idea that some ends can be met by using force, or threats of force.

Parents and educators alike are very concerned with the bullying that occurs on the schoolyard. Bullying can take the form of physical violence, ostracism, intimidation, and humiliation.

There are a number of things that you can do for your child if they tell you that they have been bullied. Listen, to get an idea of how they are feeling. They may feel that they have not dealt with the situation very well, and their self worth is suffering for that reason also. Don't suggest that they did something to bring it on. No child deserves to be bullied. Let them know that it is not their fault. Talk about a plan of action with your child. They may not want you to get involved, for fear that the situation will get worse.

Speak to the teacher or principal at the school, if that is where it is happening. They may suggest a "conference" with the involved parties. This will not only assist the victim, but will let the culprit know that their actions are harmful and hurtful. Bullying is about power and control. Once it is out in the open, the culprit has lost that control.

You should never tell your child to fight with the bully. They should defend themselves if they need to, but make sure that your child knows the difference between defence and retaliation!

Another common thread with bullying is bystanders. The bully will usually look for wit-

911/
411



Laurel Barnett

nesses to see the power that they are exerting over another. The bystanders need to know that they are contributing to the problem if they don't do something positive about it. If they don't feel that they can intervene immediately, they can tell an adult. They need to know the difference between telling tales just to get someone into trouble, and telling an adult to assist another child.

There have been many items in the news recently about bullying victims committing suicide, and acts of violence against others. This is Halton; we are on the map now for being a great place to live and work and play and go to school. We don't want to be national news for the wrong reasons.

I would like to extend a thank you to all of the people who assisted with the Jail-N-Bail and the head shaving fund-raiser last Saturday at the mall. We managed to raise over \$18,300 for the Canadian Cancer Society! Thank you also to all who contributed money.

If you have any questions about this or other police issues, contact me at 905-878-5511 ext 2120 or laurel.barnett@hrps.on.ca

Const. Laurel Barnett is the community support officer for 1 Division

Dr. Henry Lau, M.D.

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