


a n i n s t a n t h e l p b o o k f o r t e e n s

the
bullying workbook
for teens



activities to help
you deal with
social aggression
and cyberbullying

* learn **antibullying**
tips and strategies

* **manage emotions**
that bring you down

* build **self-esteem**
and **confidence**

RAYCHELLE CASSADA LOHMANN, MS, LPC
JULIA V. TAYLOR, MA | FOREWORD BY HALEY KILPATRICK

“The Bullying Workbook for Teens is a remarkable, relevant resource for both teens and professionals. The activities are engaging and offer practical strategies to help teens work through and cope with bullying situations, while also raising their self-confidence. As I read it, I found tools to implement in my own work with teens. This book offers eye-opening insights and will be useful to any teen who has been victimized by bullies.”

—Rosalind Wiseman, author of *Queen Bees & Wannabes*, the book that inspired the motion picture, *Mean Girls*

“*The Bullying Workbook for Teens* is a non-judgmental companion, reflection aid, and an ‘aha’ moment-maker for isolated teens. It’s also a much-needed tool for clinicians. I recommend it highly and look forward to using it myself.”

—Rachel Simmons, author of *Odd Girl Out*

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Authors' Note

The *Bullying Workbook for Teens* is intended for use in conjunction with a counseling professional.

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foreword

When I learned that Raychelle Lohmann and Julia Taylor were collaborating on a workbook to help teens better cope with bullying and cyberbullying, I was immediately so grateful and so excited.

I'm grateful because these two truly get it. As highly respected professionals in their fields, they get what it is like to be a teen in today's world, and they are committed to being part of the solution. They have clearly poured their valuable resources into this book to provide you with the tools to know how to handle being bullied, how to cope, and how to heal. Their commitment to improving the lives of middle and high school students through relevant, practical strategies has already helped thousands of school counselors, administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

I'm excited to share this workbook with the thousands of girls I work with through Girl Talk, a national organization that pairs middle school girls with high school mentors. Like me, Raychelle Lohmann and Julia Taylor are frustrated by the problem, and our frustration has led us to our passion. We are committed to developing resources that empower you to be a key part of the solution.

What I love most about this book is that it meets you precisely where you are and empowers you to take action. It is clear that the authors know that bullying is not limited to a select few or happening only in school hallways. They know it's happening through various forms of social media, and they get that it is sometimes what isn't said or done that hurts. They know that at some point we have all felt like we were the only ones. They also know that there are millions of young people who want to put a stop to bullying, and that is precisely why this book was written. I wish it had been available when I was a teenager! I know it would have helped me through my own experience as a victim of bullying, cyberbullying, and relational aggression.

A quote from Lily Tomlin reminds me of their efforts. "I said, *Somebody should do something about that. Then I realized, I am somebody.*" I am thankful that Raychelle Lohmann and Julia Taylor have chosen to be somebody, and I am confident that what you learn in this workbook will inspire you to be somebody, too.

—Haley Kilpatrick Founder and executive director of Girl Talk Author of *The Drama Years: Real Girls Talk about Surviving Middle School —Bullies, Brands, Body Image, and More*

introduction

Dear Reader,

When you walk into class, do you automatically feel like your peers hate you because they laugh at you or whisper to one another? When you sit down in the cafeteria, do you feel lonely and undeserving of friendship? Do others refuse to look at you, speak to you, or include you in their circle of friends? If you ever feel miserable because of bullying, know that you are not alone and that there is help for you.

My name is Victoria, and I'm twenty years old. In the sixth grade, a group of girls in my class made the decision to socially isolate me. They spread mean rumors and mocked me, and they made fun of my hair and clothes. I thought their bullying would never stop. As a result of their constant harassment, I repeatedly broke out in hives. The stress often caused me to pass out, and I coughed constantly. I was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and began to have suicidal thoughts at the age of twelve. When I went to high school, things didn't get much better. Some of the same bullies from middle school were at it again, and I became the target of cyberbullying.

When I was being bullied, I felt like my life was out of control. I didn't have friends. I was hopeless and frequently sick. I thought life was not worth living. But today, life is completely different! I am happy, healthy, and free from the effects of bullying. I am a successful college student, and I travel around speaking out against bullying.

Being bullied is not a life sentence. You can move forward, make friends, and be happy. As you read *The Bullying Workbook for Teens*, you will gain the tools necessary to cope with the situation you are now in and to end the bullying. This workbook can help guide you as you seek support and take the steps to set yourself free from bullies.

Wishing you success,

Victoria DiNatale

1. what is bullying?

you need to know

Bullying is a form of abuse. It is repetitive, aggressive behavior intended to harm another person.

If you've been targeted by a bully, you've come to the right place. This workbook will help you develop the coping strategies and skills you need in order to deal with bullying. To begin, let's take a look at the types of bullying, why some people bully, and how it affects the victim.

What are the types of bullying?

- Verbal: name calling, mocking, threatening, gossiping, or spreading rumors
- Physical: hitting, punching, pushing, stealing personal property, or any other form of physical aggression
- Social: ignoring, isolating, or excluding peers from social activities
- Psychological: stalking, taunting, harassing, or intimidating
- Cyber: bullying through electronic devices; for example, texting, e-mailing, IM'ing, posting on social media, or uploading lewd or offensive pictures

Why do people bully others?

- They want to feel popular.
- They are jealous.
- They want to feel powerful.
- They feel threatened.
- They want to escape their problems.
- They feel insecure.

What are the effects of bullying?

- Emotional problems (such as stress, anger, depression, or anxiety)
- Physical problems (such as headaches, stomach cramps, vomiting, loss of appetite, or skin

breakouts)

- Withdrawal from friends or social activities
- Decline in schoolwork
- Nightmares or poor sleep

for you to do

Name the types of bullying you're experiencing.

Write down what the bully does to you. For example, does the bully repeatedly pick on you or make fun of you for the same thing?

Why do you think the bully has chosen you?

Tell how bullying is affecting your life.

Tell what you want to achieve by using this workbook.

and more to do

Write a letter to a person who is bullying you. Let the bully know how his or her actions are affecting you. You won't actually give this letter to the bully, so you can write openly about what you're thinking and feeling.

Dear _____,

Today I, _____, am taking the first step to regain control of my life. You've singled me out and picked on me for too long. Enough is enough, and I won't take it anymore. I am going to equip myself with the tools I need to work through my feelings, build my confidence, and cope with bullying.

When you _____, I feel (*Write down the ways you're being bullied.*)

anxious angry annoyed ashamed scared sad _____ (*Circle all that apply; use the blank line*

add other feelings.)

You've been doing these things since _____.

I want you to stop _____

_____. *(List the things you want the bully to stop doing to you.)*

Remember when

_____? *(Write about one of your worst experiences with the bully.)*

Well, that's not going to happen again. I am

determined brave confident strong secure fearless _____ *(Circle all that apply; use the blank line to add other feelings.)*

and I am taking the power away from you right now.

Confidently,

_____ *(your signature)*

As you work through this book, you will be asked to explore some very sensitive and possibly uncomfortable topics. It's not uncommon to feel vulnerable when you're exposing things about yourself that bother you. Sometimes people don't feel comfortable talking about things that are troubling them, so they keep their concerns bottled up even if they're in danger of being hurt or harming themselves. But if they told someone, they might feel better and get the help they need. By acknowledging your feelings and learning to cope with what's happening, you'll become a stronger person.

It's going to take time to see the change occur. One good way to make sure you are working toward change and are keeping yourself safe is by making an agreement with yourself because your safety comes first.

2. safety first

you need to know

What you write in this workbook is confidential. You can explore your thoughts and feelings in private with one exception: if you think you're in danger of being physically hurt by someone or if you have thoughts of harming yourself, get help immediately. Your safety always comes first.

As you work through this book, you will be asked to explore some very sensitive and possibly uncomfortable topics. It's not uncommon to feel vulnerable when you're exposing things about yourself that bother you. Sometimes people don't feel comfortable talking about things that are troubling them, so they keep their concerns bottled up even if they're in danger of being hurt or harming themselves. But if they told someone, they might feel better and get the help they need. By acknowledging your feelings and learning to cope with what's happening, you'll become a stronger person.

It's going to take time to see the change occur. One good way to make sure you are working toward change and are keeping yourself safe is by making an agreement with yourself because your safety comes first.

for you to do

Create a Safety First Agreement by initialing beside each statement. Use the blank lines to add your own ideas. Think of trusted adults that you can share your agreement with (for example, a parent, teacher, or another trusted adult).

I agree that my safety comes first. I will get help immediately if

_____ I am in physical jeopardy.

_____ I feel threatened.

_____ I begin to panic.

_____ I feel like there is no hope.

_____ I begin to pull away from people and lose interest in things I once enjoyed.

_____ I have thoughts of harming myself.

List the people you will give a copy of your agreement to.

Keep your agreement in a place you can easily get to. Refer to it when you feel like your safety is jeopardy.

and more to do

Copy this statement onto a sheet of paper and sign your name to it. Keep it somewhere accessible, and reread it often to remind yourself how important your safety is. Remember: Tell a trusted adult if you ever feel that your safety is in jeopardy.

My safety comes first. I promise that I will get help immediately if I ever feel like someone is going to hurt me or if I have thoughts of harming myself. No one has the right to hurt me, and if they do I will report them. I promise not to harm myself because I am needed and I am loved. I have a unique purpose in this world, and no one can fill that purpose but me.

3. ignore, respond, or tell

you need to know

There are times when you can ignore bullying, times when you should respond, and times when you should tell a trusted adult. It's important to know the difference.

Do you know what to do when you're in a bullying situation? Do you ignore the bullying? Do you take a stance and respond? Do you tell? In a tough situation, it can be hard to decide. Evaluating the bully's words and actions can help you figure out what to do.

Start by asking yourself, is the action or comment

- hurtful but not intimidating?
- a onetime offense or repetitive?
- something that can easily be ignored?
- hostile or threatening?

Next, use these guidelines to help you determine which course of action to take:

1. Ignore bullies who are just trying to get a rise out of you, if their words or actions aren't a big deal. Some situations are short-lived and die down on their own.
2. Respond to any action or comment that is not hostile or threatening. Bullies prefer easy targets, not ones who stand up to them. If you take a stance and respond, they may pull back and leave you alone, or they may test you to see whether you'll cave in. When a bully decides to test you, have a firm comeback, like "That's not true," or "Stop spreading those lies."
3. Tell a trusted adult immediately if your physical safety is being threatened. No one has the right to harm you, and any threat to do so is serious. Also, tell if someone has posted sexual material about you online. And finally, tell if you feel like you're spiraling into a black hole that you can't get out of. When you're targeted, you may feel like there's no end in sight, but that's not true. Adults can help.

for you to do

Write your own personal guidelines for determining the best course of action.

I will ignore bullying when _____

_____.

I will respond to bullying when _____

_____.

I will tell someone when _____

_____.

and more to do

Describe a situation when you were bullied and had to choose the best course of action.

Did you ignore, respond, or tell someone about the bully? Describe in detail the course of action you took.

4. asking for help

you need to know

If you need to ask for help in a bullying situation, it's normal to feel frightened or ashamed. Most people who told someone actually felt better after telling.

Morgan felt overwhelmed. A group of girls had started a vicious rumor about her being pregnant and the rumor had spread like wildfire! Everyone was talking about who the father was and what Morgan would do about school.

Morgan didn't know how to convince everyone that it was a lie. She was so embarrassed that she didn't want to ask for help, but this was too big for her to handle on her own. She thought, Maybe I'll make an appointment with my school counselor. I could take a friend with me. Or I could talk to my mom. I feel a little funny about doing that, but I guess I could e-mail her.

She finally got up the courage to tell her mom. To help her remember everything she wanted to say to her mom, she decided to write it down. Next, to build up her courage, she practiced reading it in front of her bathroom mirror. I can do this, she thought.

"Mom, can I talk to you about something really important?" Morgan asked. Then she told her mother about the rumor.

At first her mother was shocked and wanted to know why Morgan hadn't told her earlier. Then she sat and listened to her daughter's painful story.

After Morgan was finished, she thought, Whew, that didn't go as badly as I thought it might. And I feel much better!

for you to do

Describe a bullying situation you may need help with.

Whom will you tell? _____

How will you ask for help?

What will you say?

Practice your script, and then ask for help.

and more to do

Describe how you felt before you asked for help. For example, were you frightened that you'd get trouble or that asking would make things worse?

How did it go?

How did you feel afterward?

Did it play out like you thought it would? Explain what you thought would happen and what actually happened.

5. taking steps against cyberbullying

you need to know

Cyberbullying is bullying that occurs through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices. Because technology allows bullies to harass others anonymously, victims of cyberbullying may not even know who is responsible. If you are being cyberbullied, there are many steps you can take to get help.

Cyberbullying can take different forms:

- Threatening someone by e-mail, IM, or text messages, or on social media sites
- Revealing someone's secrets online to embarrass or humiliate that person
- Gossiping or saying mean things online while pretending to be someone else
- Using a website to make fun of somebody else
- Taking inappropriate photos of someone and posting them online without that person's permission

Maria's story suggests some of the steps you can take.

Maria was concerned that someone had been posing as her online. She had received threatening messages from another girl that said that Maria had better stop making nasty comments about her, but she had not actually made any of those comments.

Maria knew that she shouldn't respond to any of the threats directly, so she told her father what was going on. He asked whether she had given out her password. Maria remembered giving a friend one she used a few months ago, so she logged on to all the sites where she used that password and changed it.

Next, Maria and her father printed out both the messages that were threatening and the ones that she had supposedly written; that way, even if the girl deleted her messages, Maria would still have a record of them. Then Maria deleted the comments that had been posted from her account. She took all the messages to her school the following day so she could show them to the principal. Her principal contacted the school resource officer who handled cyberbullying, and she investigated the situation.

It wasn't easy for Maria to tell her father what was going on, and she was really nervous about taking the documents to school. However she knew it was the right thing to do and wanted the bullying to stop.

6. cyberbullying or not?

you need to know

Technology is part of our everyday lives, and most teens are constantly connected. It can be difficult to walk away from an unpleasant or stressful situation because technology allows it to follow you everywhere. But not all unpleasant or stressful situations are cyberbullying.

Online situations that hurt your feelings may be mean, wrong, and completely unnecessary, but they are not always cyberbullying. Two of the four scenarios below involve cyberbullying; others do not.

Situation 1

“This girl at school called me a slut online. She is really popular and everybody saw it. I took my account down and it got worse. Everyone said it must be true since I canceled my account. The next day it had spilled into school. Now people call me horrible names, boys make sexual remarks to me, and my friends don’t want to talk to me because they are afraid everyone will make fun of them, too. This has been happening for two weeks, and I feel like I can’t escape it.”

Situation 2

“My friends went ice skating and didn’t invite me. They posted pictures of themselves online and talked about how fun it was.”

Situation 3

“This boy in math takes pictures of me. He makes me look really ugly and writes mean things on them, then posts them online. I told my teacher, and he just tells him to put his phone away, but he never does. I started skipping math and got in trouble at school. Nobody understands how much this hurts, and I don’t know how to make it stop.”

Situation 4

“My friend and I got into a fight and she called me oversensitive. Then she wrote online: some people are like so oversensitive—I can’t deal!!!! I know it was about me.”

for you to do

For each of the four situations, tell whether you think it represents cyberbullying or not, and explain your answer.

Situation 1

Situation 2

Situation 3

Situation 4

and more to do

If you are in a situation that you define as cyberbullying, it's important to tell an adult you trust. Cyberbullying is often ignored or not reported.

How can telling an adult help the situation?

What might keep you from telling an adult?

Make a promise to yourself that you will tell an adult if you are being cyberbullied. And even if what's happening is not cyberbullying, you still may want to talk to someone you trust. Talking to someone helps.

7. private matters

you need to know

Whether you've had the best day or the worst day, you should always think carefully about what you share online. Nothing online is private. If you wouldn't want something posted on a highway billboard, it's not a good idea to put it online.

Stacie and Tanisha disagreed about something minor at the movies on Saturday night. Tanisha didn't think it was a big deal, so she didn't apologize. She thought that if she didn't bring it up again, Stacie would forget about it.

To Stacie, it was a big deal. She went home and posted "Tanisha is such a selfish bitch" on a social media site. Within minutes, people were commenting and asking what had happened. Four other people from school quickly reposted it, and by Sunday morning, the original post had been shared twelve times.

Tanisha was furious with Stacie for making her the subject of gossip at school. Stacie had done serious damage to their friendship.

for you to do

Read the statements below and circle "Public" or "Private" to indicate whether you think the statement is something you should share online or keep offline. Then, explain why you chose your answer.

"First home game tomorrow ... this one better not be rained out."

Public Private

Why _____

"I've had the worst day ever and nobody cares."

Public Private

Why _____

"Luv my bestie. XOXO"

Public Private

Why _____

"Things I HATE: snow, teachers, and HER."

Public Private

Why _____

"happy birthday ho! :) jk love you!"

and more to do

It's important to have an outlet to express your emotions, but in this era of social media, it's easy to forget that you can express yourself privately. The next time you feel like making an unnecessary announcement online, write about it on a piece of paper instead. After you have written down all of your thoughts and feelings, rip up the piece of paper and throw it away.

8. bullying or drama?

you need to know

It's easy to dismiss bullying as drama even when it's not. It can be scary to admit if you are being bullied, and people who don't own up to bullying often say, "Oh, it's just drama."

Bullying and drama are very different. Drama is often associated with petty behavior, misinterpretations, exaggerated feelings, rumors, gossip, and the inability to let go of something small. Bullying may involve those, but it goes further. It is a repeated, hostile behavior intended to hurt someone physically, emotionally, or both. Read the two situations below:

- 1. Janelle walks into her first-period science class, and two girls in the back of the room are whispering. When they spot Janelle, they stop. All morning, Janelle worries that they were talking about her, and she tells her friends about the situation, completely embellishing it. At lunchtime, Janelle eats with a teacher. By fifth period, everyone is spreading rumors that Janelle wants to fight the two girls.*
- 2. Janelle hates going to her first-period science class because two girls in the class have been harassing her since school started. They throw things at her back, call her fat, and kick her chair, and they have even knocked her books off her desk. It's November, and she can't take it anymore. She eats lunch with a teacher every day so the girls can't sit near her in the cafeteria and do the same thing.*

The first situation is drama because Janelle has created a scenario that doesn't exist. The second is bullying. It involves repeated physical and emotional abuse that requires adult intervention.

The best way to stop drama is to stay out of it, although that may be easier said than done. Most of the time, you are aware of the people in your life who cause the most drama. If you find yourself in a situation that could easily turn to drama, try to remove yourself from it. You have more power than you think.

for you to do

Describe a situation that comes to mind when you think about the term "drama."

Describe a situation that comes to mind when you think about the term "bullying."

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