

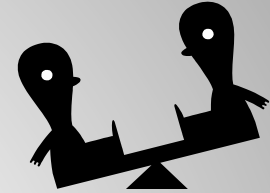


# **What to do About Bullies**

## ***In Long Term Care Settings***

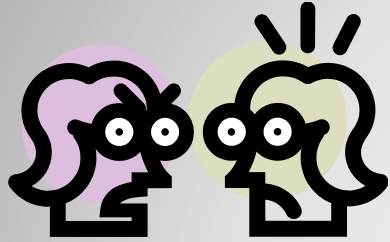
Lori Goetz and Sandra Newbauer,  
Minnesota Board on Aging  
Office of Ombudsman for Long Term Care  
June 2013

# Definition



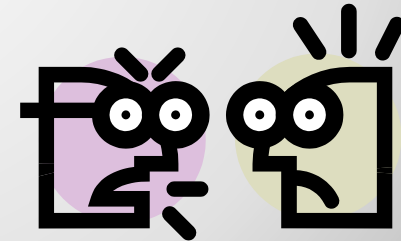
- Bullying is intentional repetitive aggressive behavior involving an imbalance of power or strength
- Includes verbal, physical or antisocial behavior that occurs in the context of social relationships that cause emotional distress

# Verbal Bullying



- Name calling
- Teasing
- Insults
- Taunting
- Threats

- Being bossed
- Sarcastic remarks
- Pointed jokes
- Loud arguments
- Targeting



# Non-Verbal Bullying

- Mimicking one's walk or disability
- Making offensive gestures or facial expressions
- Turning one's head away when the other person speaks
- Using threatening body language
- Encroaching on personal space
- Disrespectful

# Cyber-Bullying

- E-mail
- Cell phone pictures
- Texting
- Facebook/Twitter



# Antisocial Bullying

- Shunning, excluding or ignoring
- Gossiping
- Spreading rumors
- Negative non-verbal language
- Hounding people for money or cigarettes



# Bully Dynamics in LTC Settings



- Resident ↔ Resident
- Resident ↔ Staff
- Resident ↔ Family
- Staff ↔ Staff
- Staff ↔ Resident
- Staff ↔ Family
- Family ↔ Resident
- Family ↔ Staff
- Family ↔ Family





**You're fat.**

**That's very ...**



**HIPPO-CRITICAL**



# Why Does Bullying Occur in Long Term Care Settings?

- Resources are shared
- Closer quarters
- Childhood behavior problems continue into adulthood
- Vulnerabilities
- Fear
- Change



# Characteristics of Those Who are Bullied

- Defenseless
- Powerless
- Passive
  - Emotional, anxious, insecure, shy...
- Provocative
  - Annoying, irritating, poor boundaries...
- Dementia, developmental or neurological disorder
- Social status

# Intolerance of Social Status

- Dementia
- Mental Health or Disability
- Sexual Orientation
- Race or ethnicity
- Gender
- Economic Status



# Characteristics of Bullies

- Low self esteem
- Need for power and control at the expense of others
- Difficulty tolerating individual differences
- Lack of empathy
- Few positive social relationships
- Loss (income, loved ones, independence, social status)
- Don't fit in



# Circumstances that contribute to Bullying Behavior

- Medications
- Dementia
- Anger
- Emotional pain
- Physical pain
- Loneliness and loss
- Fear
- Feeling entitled
- Lack of control
- Lost abilities and functions
- Resentment for life circumstances
- Jealousy



# The Impact of Bullying

## For Person Bullied

- Reduced self esteem
- Feeling of rejection
- Depression
- More health problems
- Functional changes
- Thoughts of suicide
- Problems eating and sleeping
- Isolation

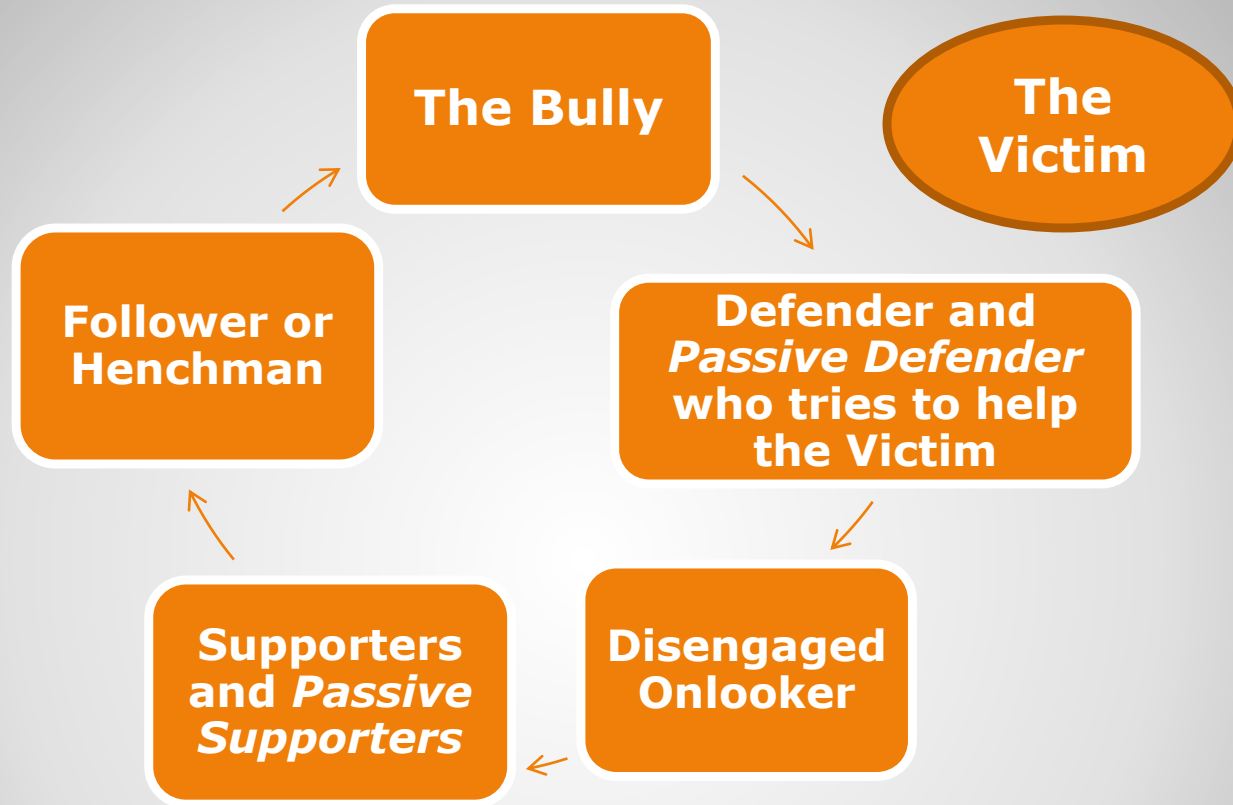
## For Consumers & Staff

- Creates culture of fear, disrespect and insecurity
- Threatens staff loyalty and retention
- May contribute to retaliatory bullying



# Solutions for Individuals

- Research bullying to differentiate actual bullying or temporary moods
- Remember this is not your fault
- Confide in someone close
- Discuss with professionals, advocates or clergy
- Develop a support network
- Document incidents, times and dates to create record and verify pattern
- Use “I” statements and try to be kind, gentle and understanding with bully
- Be assertive in early stages
- Keep distance and walk away if necessary
- Enlist help from reliable source



# The Cycle of Bullying

Adapted from: [msn.com](http://msn.com)

# Systemic Solutions to Bullying

- Resident, tenant and family councils
- Rules and expectations for consumers and staff
- Partnerships between consumers, staff and community
- Education (tolerance, conflict resolution and bullying awareness)

**Training for staff,  
resident, tenant  
and family  
councils to  
identify bullying  
and act  
responsibly to  
protect oneself  
and others**

**Identify Hot  
Spots and  
develop steps to  
create a  
community  
culture of  
respect, dignity  
and diversity**

**Clear policies,  
procedures and  
lease  
agreements  
with  
consequences  
for bullying that  
are enforced**

To ensure  
**A Bully  
Free  
Zone**

# References

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