

**Program Presentation for the 2006 National Social Norms Conference**

**ASSESSING BULLYING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS WITH A NEW ONLINE SURVEY:  
APPLYING THE SOCIAL NORMS MODEL TO ADOLESCENT VIOLENCE**

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**Abstract**

A new online survey has been developed for use in assessing bullying in secondary schools and for conducting social norms interventions. The survey reveals attitudes about bullying, incidence levels of bullying behavior as reported by perpetrators and victims in various school contexts and also assesses perceived norms among peers regarding these attitudes, bullying behavior, and experiences as victims. Included are several types of physical and emotional harm that adolescents experience. Although bullying is substantial, is not the norm. The most common (and erroneous) perception, however, is that the majority engage in and support such behavior. Furthermore, students underestimate support among peers for reporting bullying behavior to teachers and administrators. These misperceptions thus enable the bullying behavior that does occur.

### Example Results

The data provided below are some example results from the "Survey of Bullying at Your School" conducted anonymously in a large middle school (grades 6-8) in the Eastern United States with 578 respondents. These results demonstrate the pattern of misperceived norms commonly found when researching various problem behavior topics, specifically, the tendency to erroneously perceive the problem behavior as the norm. Bullying behaviors and attitudes supporting bullying are a significant problem, but such behaviors and attitudes do not reflect the majority of students. Many students think the majority engage in and support bullying, however, creating a climate where bullying by a minority of individuals can continue as most other students become resigned to thinking it is normal.

#### Behavioral Norms and Misperceptions about Bullying

NOT bullying another student during the last 30 days was the norm:

74% DID NOT push shove hit, kick, pull hair, or trip another student;

63% DID NOT engage in teasing other students in an unfriendly way;

75% DID NOT exclude someone from a group to make them feel bad;

89% DID NOT take or damage someone else's belongings;

83% DID NOT spread unkind stories or rumors about another student;

81% DID NOT threaten to hurt another student.

In contrast, bullying in the last 30 days was widely MISPERCEIVED to be the norm:

83% thought most other students had pushed, shoved, hit, kicked, pulled hair, or tripped others;

83% thought most other students had engaged in teasing other students in an unfriendly way;

79% thought most other students had excluded someone from a group to make them feel bad;

71% thought most other students had taken or damaged someone else's belongings;

78% thought most other students had spread unkind stories or rumors about another student;

75% thought most other students had threatened to hurt another student.

### Attitudinal Norms and Misperceptions about Bullying

Most students personally believed one should tell adults if they or someone else were being bullied at school:

58% thought students SHOULD TELL a principal;

74% thought students SHOULD TELL a teacher or counselor;

69% though students SHOULD TELL a parent or other adult relative.

In contrast, this support for telling adults about bullying was widely MISPERCEIVED as not the norm among peers:

61% thought most other students would not say you should tell a principal;

52% thought most other students would not say you should tell a teacher or counselor;

59% thought most other students would not say you should tell a parent or other adult relative.

Most students (58%) strongly agreed that "students should always try to be friendly with students who are different from themselves" and fully 91% agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

In contrast, 81% MISPERCEIVED the attitudinal norm among peers regarding this statement. They thought most other students would answer with less than strong agreement. More than one-third of students (36%) incorrectly thought the majority of their peers would disagree or disagree strongly with this statement about being friendly.

### Social Norms Surveys Online

Alcohol Education Project  
 Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY 14456  
<http://alcohol.hws.edu>

*Funding for the development of this survey was provided in full through a grant by the New Jersey Department of Education with funds from the United States Department of Education under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act of the No Child Left Behind Act.*

## Survey of Bullying at Your School

Page 1 of 4

This is a survey about how students relate to each other. Sometimes students do things that may be called bullying. We want you to tell us about yourself and what you think about other students. You will not be asked to give your name-- this is an anonymous survey. Questions that ask about other students are asking about students at your school. Please read each question carefully. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers-- just give your best estimate. This survey is voluntary. If you do not wish to answer a question you may leave it blank and continue on.

#### 1. At this school...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a. I feel that other students care about me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. I feel that teachers care about me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. I am encouraged to help and respect other students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. I don't fit in	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Other students look to me to show them how to act	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. It is easy to make friends here	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. I can't do much to change bad things that happen here	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. I am happy here most of the time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Teachers don't really try to stop kids who are bullies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### 2. During this school year have you ever felt bullied at school?

(choose one)

- Never (NOTE: If you answer 'Never' here skip questions 3 and 4 below and go to question 5)

- Rarely  
 Sometimes  
 Often

#### 3. How would you describe the person (or persons) who bullied you most?

(choose one)

- One boy  
 One girl  
 A group of boys  
 A group of girls  
 A group of boys and girls

(choose one)

- Older or mostly older than me  
 About the same age as me  
 Younger or mostly younger than me

(choose one)

- Same race or most were same race as me  
 Different race or most were different race than me

#### 4. During this school year have you done any of the things below to get away from a bully at school?

(Check all that apply)

- a. Skipped recess or playground time  
 b. Not gone to the bathroom  
 c. Not gone to lunch  
 d. Pretended to be sick and went home  
 e. Avoided a class  
 f. Avoided a hallway  
 g. Avoided some other place in school

#### 5. How often have you skipped school this year because you were afraid of other students hurting you or making fun of you?

- Never  
 Once  
 2-3 times  
 4 or more times

**6. On a scale of one to ten, how safe do you feel at school?**

(choose one)

Very threatened										Very safe
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**7. In the last 30 days how often have the following things happened to you? And how often do you think they have happened to most other students at your school?**

**a. Pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, hair pulling, or tripping...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
Happened to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Happened to most other students at my school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**b. Teasing in an unfriendly way...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
Happened to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Happened to most other students at my school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**c. Being called hurtful names...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
Happened to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Happened to most other students at my school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**d. Being excluded from a group to hurt feelings...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
Happened to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Happened to most other students at my school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**e. Belongings being taken or damaged...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
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Happened to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Happened to most other students at my school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

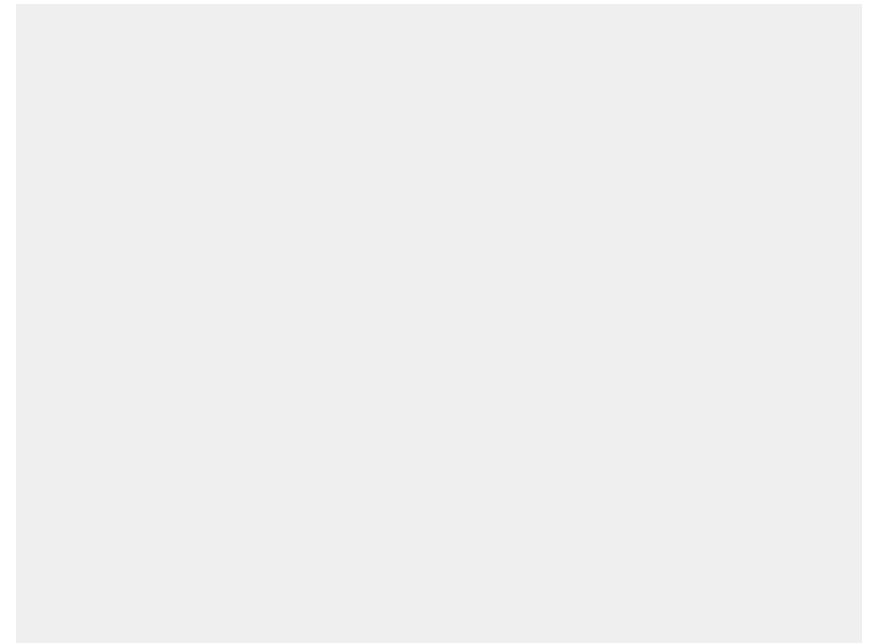
**f. Unkind story or rumor spread...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
Happened to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Happened to most other students at my school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**g. Threatened to be hurt...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
Happened to me	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Happened to most other students at my school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Next >



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## Survey of Bullying at Your School

Page 2 of 4

**8. In the last 30 days how often have you done the following things to another student? And how often do you think most other students have done these things at your school?**

**a. Pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, hair pulling, or tripping...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
I have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most other students have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**b. Teasing in an unfriendly way...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
I have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most other students have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**c. Calling hurtful names...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
I have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most other students have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**d. Excluding someone from a group to make them feel bad...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
I have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Most other students have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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**e. Taking or damaging someone else's belongings...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
I have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most other students have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**f. Spreading unkind stories or rumors about someone else...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
I have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most other students have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**g. Threatening to hurt someone...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
I have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most other students have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**h. Making someone do something they did not want to do...**

	Not in last 30 days	Once	2-3 times	4 or more times
I have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Most other students have done it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**9. In which places have any of these things happened to you during the school year?**

*(For each category a through g, check all places that apply or check 'Has not happened')  
 (Check all that apply)*

	Playground	Lunch room	Class room	Gym	Hallways	Bath room	Bath Bus	Email or phone message	Has not happened this year
a. Pushed, shoved, hit, kicked, hair pulled, or tripped	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Belongings taken or damaged	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Made to do something that you didn't want to do	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Teased in an unfriendly way	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. Called hurtful names	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Unkind stories or rumors spread	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g. Threatened about being hurt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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## Survey of Bullying at Your School

**10. Tell us if you agree or disagree with each of the following statements (a through d). Also, do you think most other students at your school would agree or disagree with these statements?**

**a. Students should NOT tease in a mean way, call others hurtful names, or spread unkind stories about other students.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My belief	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think most other students would...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**b. Students should NOT shove, kick, hit, trip, or hair pull another student.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My belief	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think most other students would...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**c. Students should NOT threaten to hit another student even if they don't actually hit the other student.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My belief	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think most other students would...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**d. Students should always try to be friendly with students who are different from themselves.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
My belief	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think most other students would...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**11. Who do you think students should tell if they or someone else are being bullied at school? And what would most other students say?**

*(Check all that apply)*

**I think students should ...**

*(check all that apply)*

- a. Tell a principal
- b. Tell a teacher or counselor
- c. Tell a hall monitor
- d. Tell a friend
- e. Tell a police officer or security person
- f. Tell a parent or another adult relative
- g. Tell a brother, sister, or cousin
- h. Not tell anyone

**Most other students would say ...**

*(check all that apply)*

- a. Tell a principal
- b. Tell a teacher or counselor
- c. Tell a hall monitor
- d. Tell a friend
- e. Tell a police officer or security person
- f. Tell a parent or another adult relative
- g. Tell a brother, sister, or cousin
- h. Not tell anyone

**12. Who do you think students should tell if they see a weapon (knife or gun) at school? And what would most other students say?**

*(Check all that apply)*

**I think students should ...**

*(check all that apply)*

- a. Tell a principal
- b. Tell a teacher or counselor

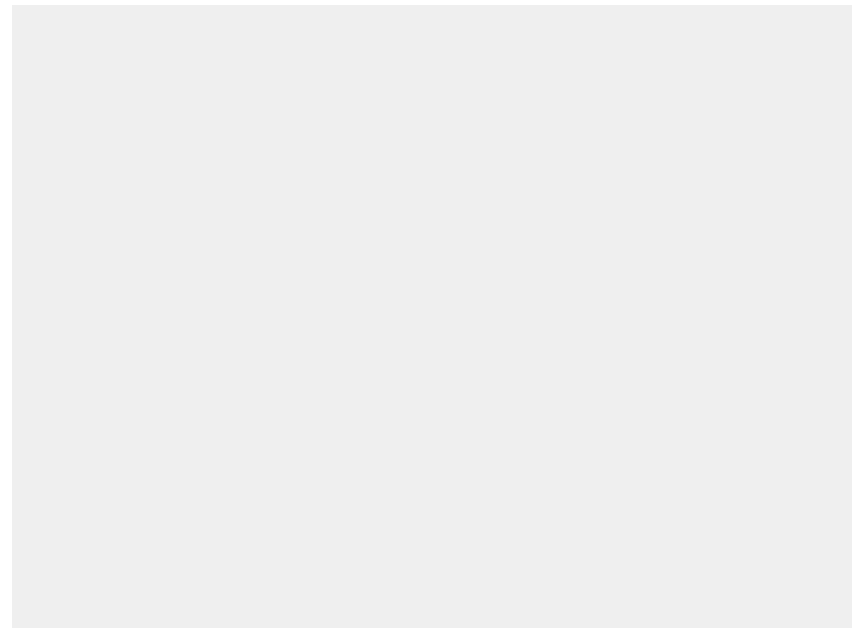
- c. Tell a hall monitor
- d. Tell a friend
- e. Tell a police officer or security person
- f. Tell a parent or another adult relative
- g. Tell a brother, sister, or cousin
- h. Not tell anyone

**Most other students would say ...**

*(check all that apply)*

- a. Tell a principal
- b. Tell a teacher or counselor
- c. Tell a hall monitor
- d. Tell a friend
- e. Tell a police officer or security person
- f. Tell a parent or another adult relative
- g. Tell a brother, sister, or cousin
- h. Not tell anyone

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# Survey of Bullying at Your School

Page 4 of 4

Some information about you (we want to make sure we hear from all types of boys and girls in this survey) :

**13. What grade are you in?**

- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12

**14. How old are you?**

- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19
- 20

**15. Are you a...**

*(choose one)*

- Boy
- Girl

**16. What is your race or ethnic origin?**

*(choose one)*

- American Indian/Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- White/Caucasian
- Other



**17. Activities: Which of the following groups or activities have you participated in this school year?**

*(check all that apply)*

- a. School club or student government
- b. School sport team
- c. School chorus or band
- d. Religious group
- e. After-school program that takes place at the school (like homework club, hobby club, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, open gym, etc.)
- f. After-school program in the community (like Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Boys and Girls Club, dance class, gymnastics class, community sports program, hobby club, etc.)
- g. Part-time job (like baby sitting, newspaper delivery, lawn mowing, etc.)

**18. What is the way you get to and from school most often?**

*(choose one)*

- School bus
- Walk or ride bike
- I drive
- Brother, sister, or friend drives
- Parent or another adult drives
- City bus or train

**19. What grade do you receive most often on your report card?**

*(choose one)*

- A
- B
- C
- D
- F

OR

- Excellent
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory

**20. What is your weight and height?**

**Weight**

\_\_\_\_\_ pounds

**Height (enter feet and then inches)**

feet

- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7

inches

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10
- 11

**21. Which best describes what you think of your current weight?**

*(choose one)*

**I am...**

- Very underweight
- Somewhat underweight
- About right
- Somewhat overweight
- Very overweight

**22. What would you guess is the most typical (average) weight for boys and girls in your grade?**

*(just give your best guess for each below)*

**Most typical (average) weight for boys in your grade**

\_\_\_\_\_ pounds

**Most typical (average) weight for girls in your grade**

\_\_\_\_\_ pounds

Finish