



# **Taking the Power Back from Bullies**

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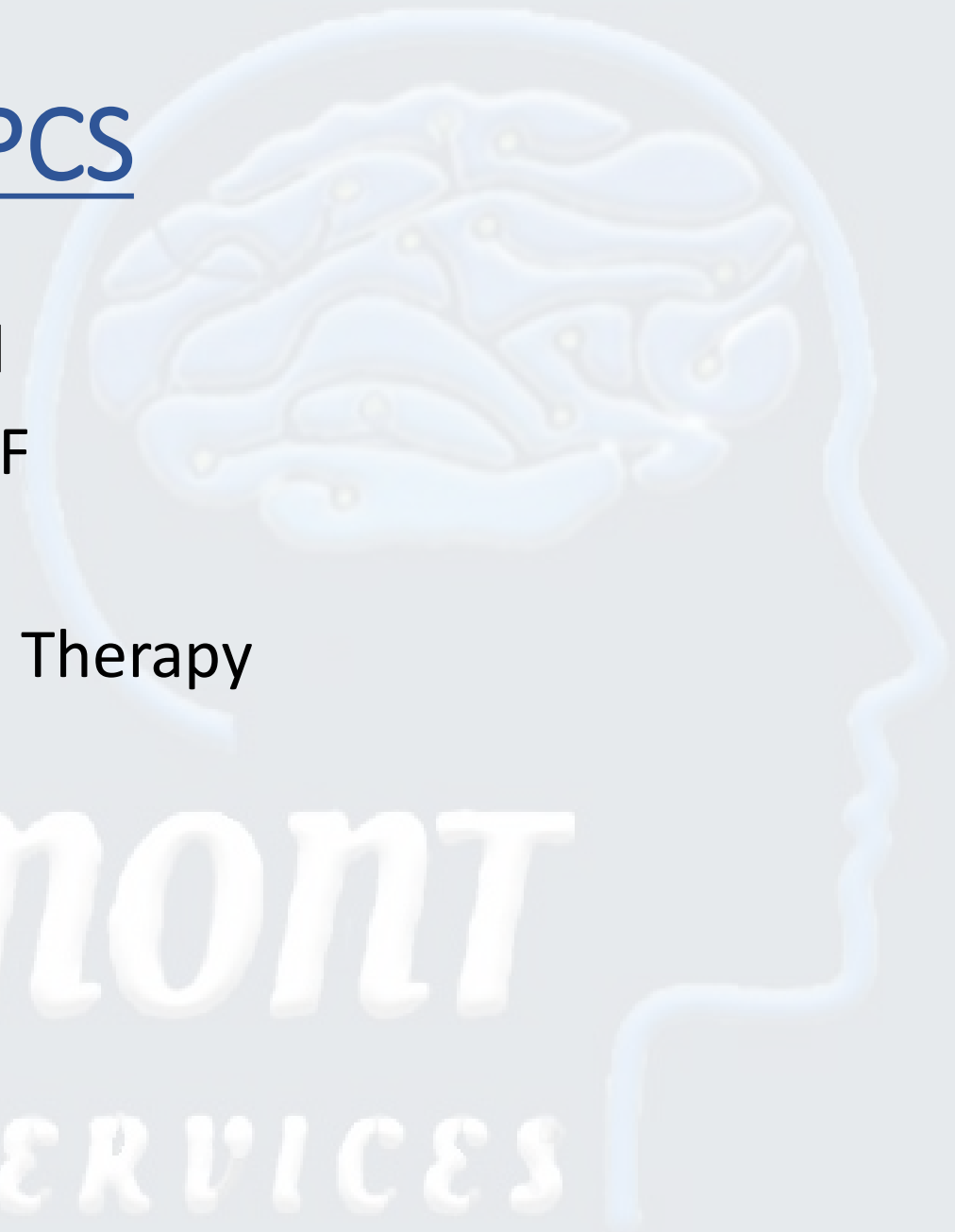
# Important

- The techniques taught today and in the referenced workbook are intended to use in response to **verbal and/or cyber bullies**. It is not recommended that individuals try to use these same techniques with bullies that are violent, physical, or even threatening to do physical harm. In these cases, it is always recommended to see help from the nearest trusted adult.

BEAUMONT  
COUNSELING SERVICES

# Jon D. Beaumont, MS, LPCS

- 2 years at Carolina Neurobehavioral
- 8 years at Three Rivers Midlands RTF
- LPC & LPC Supervisor
- Certification in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- **Beaumont Counseling Services**
  - Started 2013
  - Individual & Family therapy
  - Ages 10 and up



“Don’t listen to *criticism*  
from someone you  
wouldn’t take *advice* from.”  
- Jeff Van Gundy

# This strategy can be used by virtually ANYONE!

## **Success has been proven in:**

- All Socioeconomic levels
- Numerous races, cultures, genders
- Private and Public Schools
- Kids as young as 6 (with help from an adult)
- Even at an inpatient treatment facility, ***where some of the worse bullies reside!***
- Adults too!

# Sounds Simple to Us, but...

- Kids and Teens may need some convincing
  - Cognitive Dissonance
- PRACTICE!
  - Written & Live Rehearsal
- Techniques should also be taught as a PREVENTITIVE measure!

# Your Experience with Bullies

Have you experienced or witnessed any of the following, either in person or on social media?

- Being bullied
- Being picked on
- Being made fun of
- Being the target of jokes
- Being laughed at



# Levels of “Bullying” Behavior

There is a difference between:

- o Being picked ***with***
- o Being picked ***on***
- o People being ***mean/rude*** to you
  - **Rude** = accidental or inconsiderate
    - Can be inadvertent or impulsive
  - **Mean** = intentional, based on a specific incident
    - “I don’t like you, you can’t hang out with us”

o **Bullying**





# Definition of Bullying

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*Intentional, repeated aggressive or humiliating actions where there is an imbalance of power*

- o Just once doesn't count
- o Must be on purpose
- o Power can be size, number, status, etc.

# The Good News

Now that you have “officially” been educated on all the levels of how words or actions can hurt feelings, just know...

**THIS STRATEGY WORKS TO PREVENT, REDUCE, OR MANY TIMES STOP ALL OF THESE BEHAVIORS!**

Actually, it is most effective if the target starts to use the techniques in the early stages, (picked with or picked on, etc.), before it even gets to bullying.

# Consequences of Bullying

- Research has found that students who are bullied are more likely to experience depression and anxiety, have more health complaints, and skip or drop out of school (Swearer and Hymel 2015; Hornor 2018)
- The involvement of young bullying victims in recent suicides and school shootings has also heightened concerns regarding the public health implications of bullying (Hornor 2018).

# Consequences of Bullying

- Statistics on Consequences of Bullying (Hinduja & Patchin, 2010)
  - o Bully victims in Elementary are 3x more likely to self-harm
  - o Middle school girl victims are 2.5x more likely to have suicidal ideation
  - o Middle school boy bullies are 3.5x more likely to have suicidal ideation
  - o Middle school girl bullies are 4.2x more likely to have suicidal ideation
  - o Middle school boy bullies are 8x more likely to have suicidal ideation
- Therefore, more interventions should be developed to treat bullies as well

# Facts about Bullies (2019+)

- According to data from the School Crime Supplement (SCS), during the school year in 2019, about 22 percent of students ages 12–18 reported being bullied at school.
- More than 160,000 teens each year have skipped school because of bullying.[\[2\]](#)
- Frequently bullied students score lower in reading, math, and science.[\[2\]](#)
- The most reported type of bullying is verbal harassment. [\[3\]](#)
- 70% of school staff have seen bullying.[\[4\]](#)
- Cyberbullying stats range from 30 – 60% of people at different ages report being “bullied” in some way online

# Facts about Bullies

- Cyberbully victims have a higher prevalence of short-term depression and suicidal thinking than other forms of bullying
- Middle school has the highest rate of bullying
  - Likely because puberty and social rankings become more important
- High school bullying can often be more deliberate, more malicious, and more personal

# Facts about Bullies (National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017)

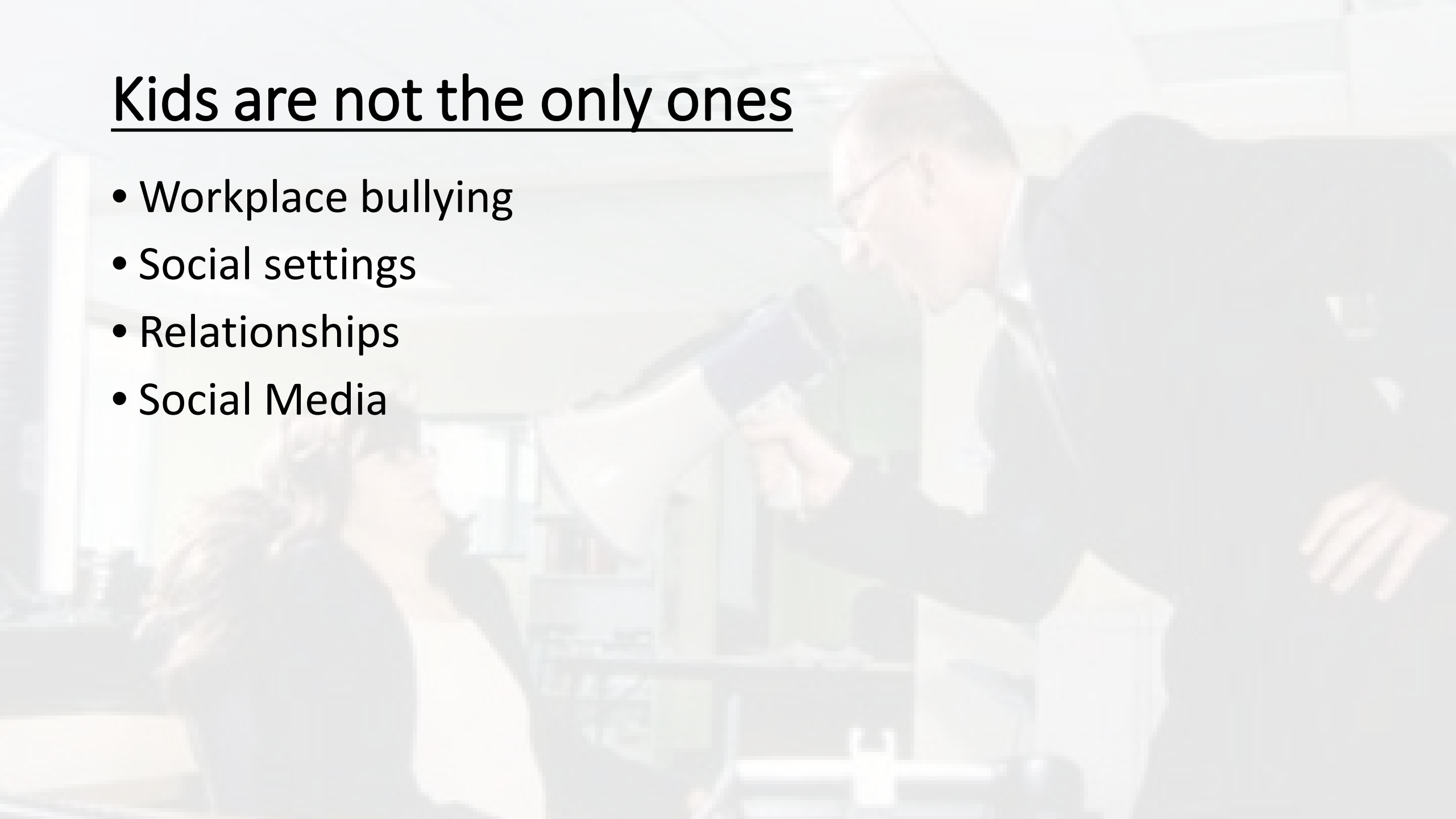
- Types of Bullying

- Verbal = 15% of girls, 10% of boys
- Rumors = 18% girls, 9% boys
- Threats = 4% b & g
- Physical = 4% g, 6% b
- Social exclusion = 7% g, 3% b
- Cyber = 20% g, 15% b

- \*\*\* numbers likely much higher since 2017, especially cyber

# Kids are not the only ones

- Workplace bullying
- Social settings
- Relationships
- Social Media



# What doesn't work?

Since we were young, what have we been taught to do when we are the victim of verbal bullying?

How well do bullies usually respond to these reactions, especially in today's society?

# Why the “Old Ways” Don’t Work

**Ignoring** → Bullies are more persistent than they were in the past. Ignoring can just encourage them to try harder.

**Walking away** → Bullies can use this as evidence that the target is “scared”

**Insult back** → Bullies have much more practice saying hurtful things. Plus, this requires the target to be mean.

**Tell the teacher** → Usually, little can be done if not heard directly and most bullies don’t care about getting in trouble.

**Fight** → Obviously, danger of physical injury to both parties, but also major academic (or possibly legal) consequences

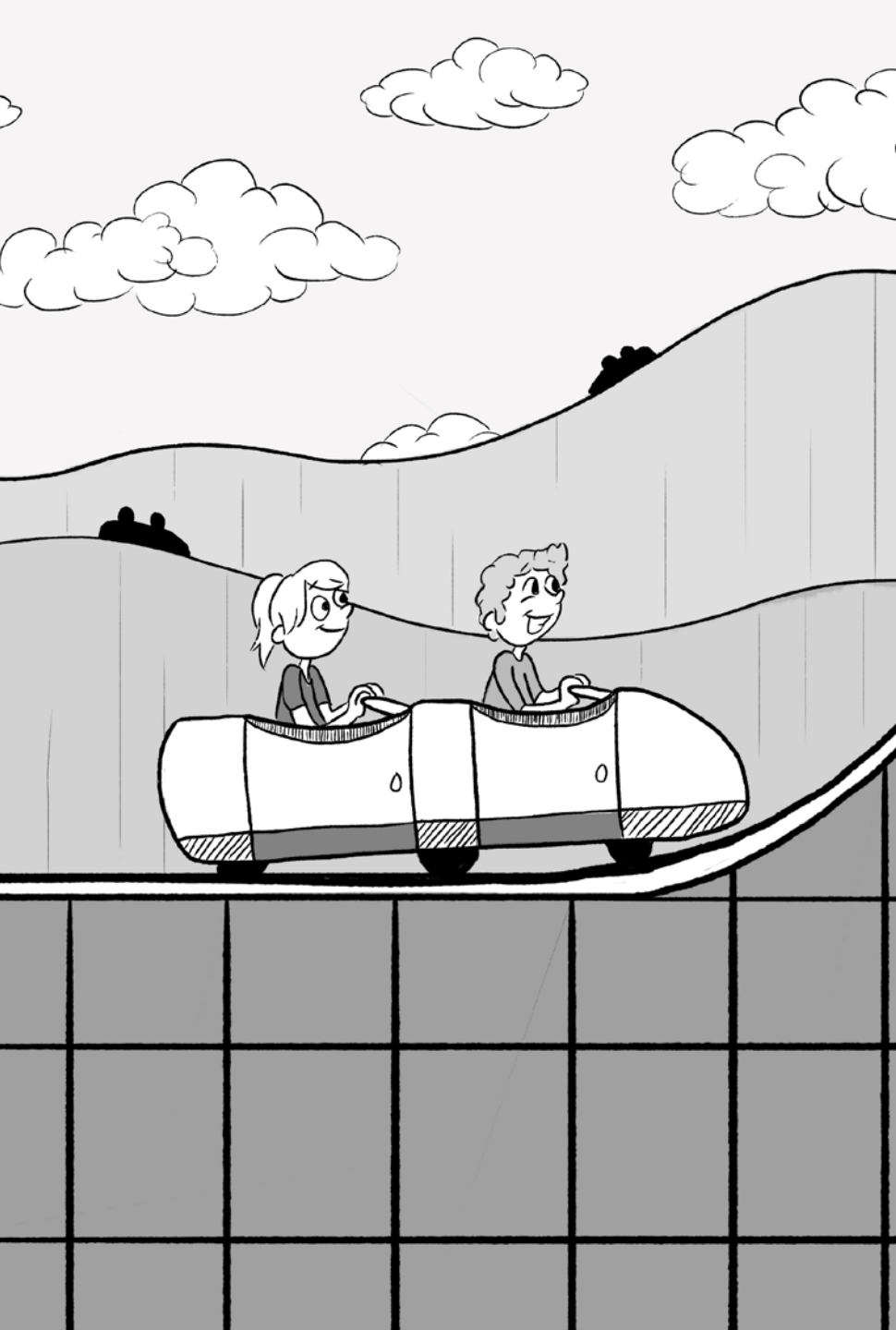
# Become the Boring Roller Coaster

**The main reason why bullies pick on people can easily be explained by thinking about it in terms of a roller coaster ride.**

Before the ride even starts, we have the expectation of steep slopes and exciting drops several times throughout the ride. Our hearts start to race as the coaster goes up the first hill and we start to get excited.

*For people who love roller coasters,* the most thrilling part begins at the top of the hill and continues as they speed through the downward drop. Our hearts barely have time to settle as we wait for the next slope or loop, and then the excitement resumes or may get even more intense when we hit the rest of the drops, twists, and turns.

When the ride is over, many people feel a sense of accomplishment. Then they're ready to go back for more!



**Here's how it compares to a bully making fun of someone.**

- As a bully approaches with intentions to hurt your feelings, he expects you to respond in a way that easily shows you are upset.
- Just as we look forward to the adrenalin rush when we're going up the first steep slope, he looks forward to the thrill he gets from you responding in a negative way such as:
  - Crying or looking sad
  - getting angry
  - telling him to shut up
  - saying something mean back to him
  - telling on him
  - running away from him
  - threatening him

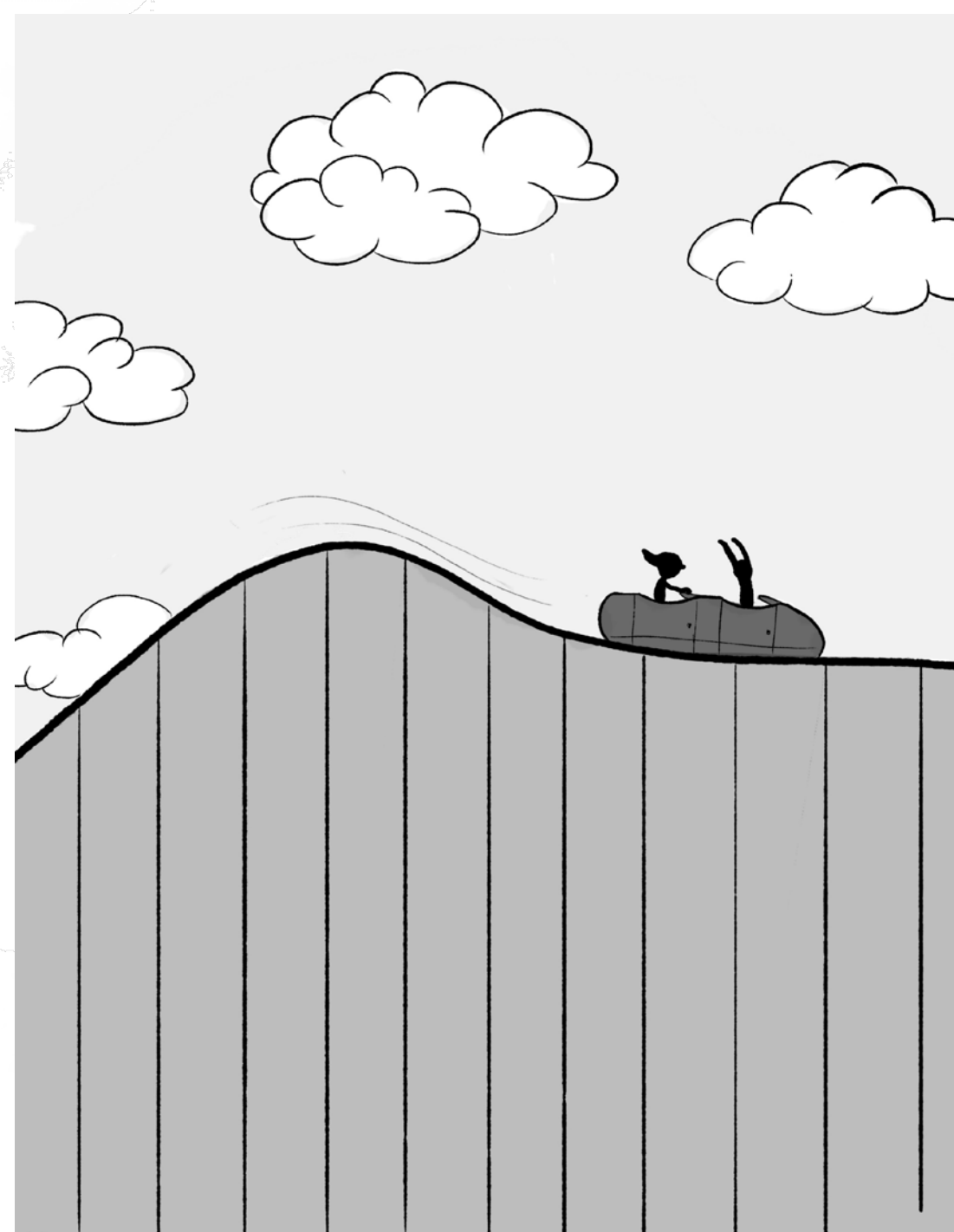
Once the bully makes his comment, this is when he's most excited; like being at the top of a peak on a roller coaster. He thinks he **KNOWS**, without a doubt, how the rest of the interaction will play out.

How would you feel if you got to the top of the first peak of a roller coaster and there was **no big drop** like you expected there to be?

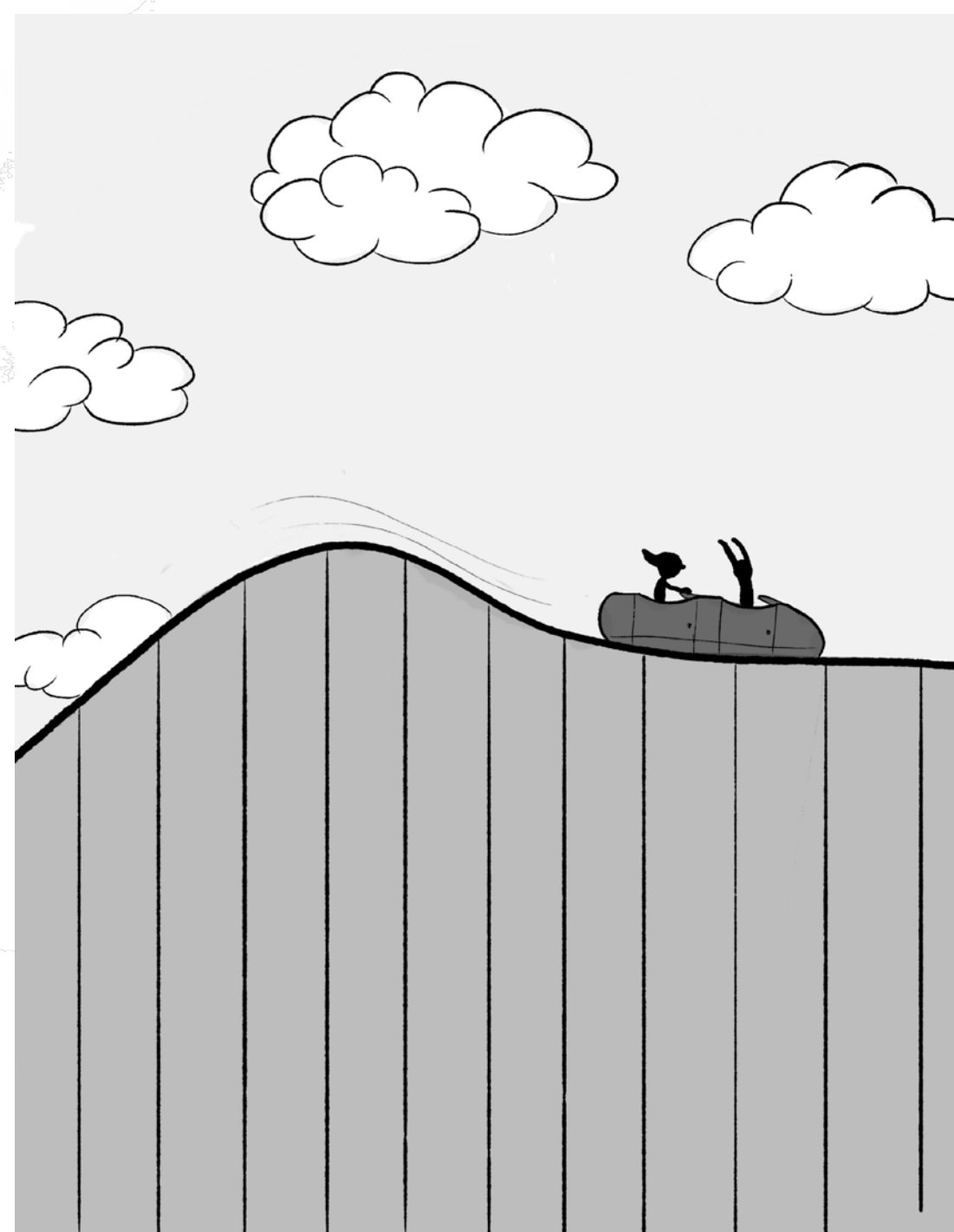
What if it stayed flat for the rest of the ride?



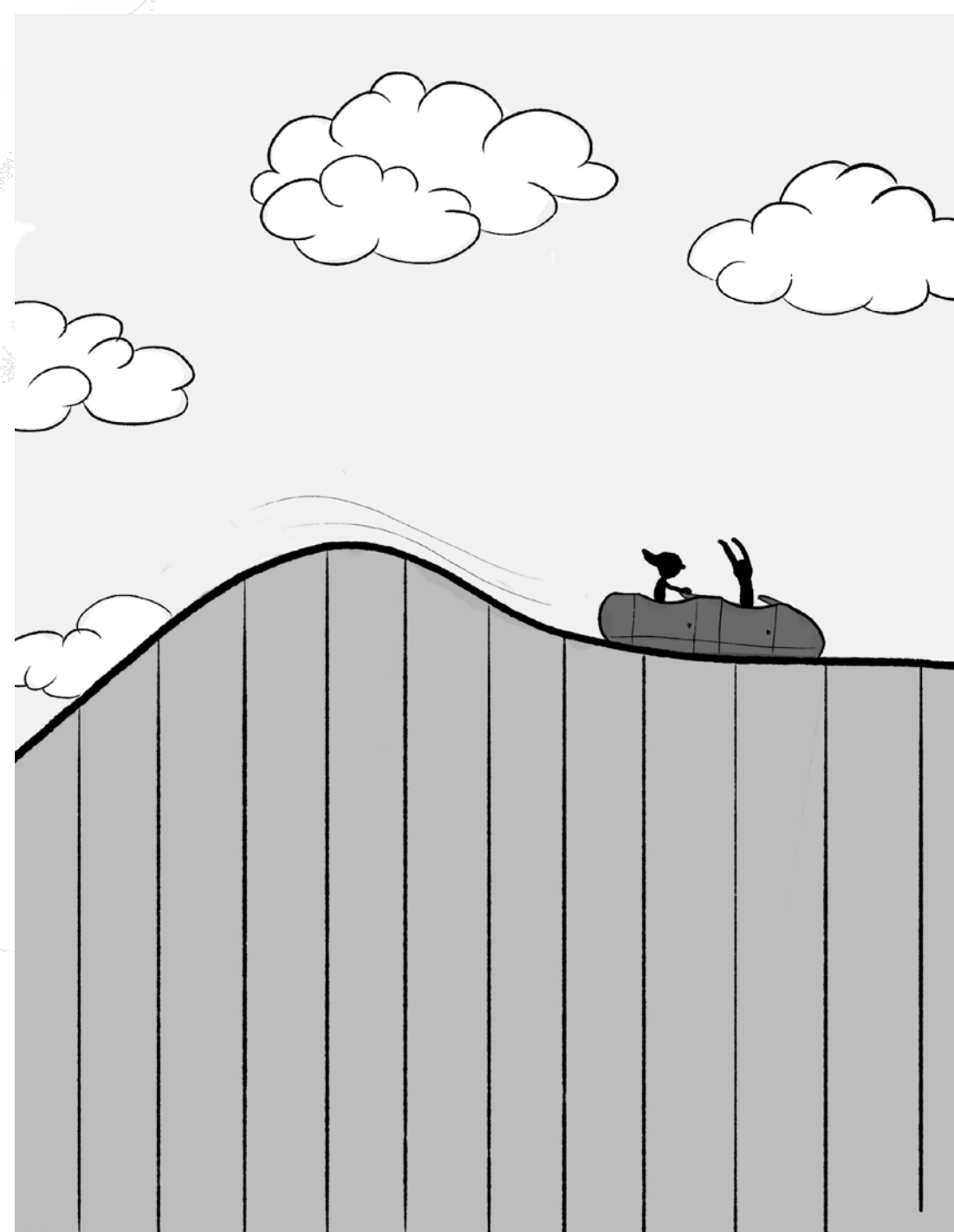
Even worse, what if after a short, boring, flat ending at the top of the first peak, the coaster then went up another hill? Would your expectations change for this slope?



Then how would you feel if every slope after this kept leading to only flat, slow rails, AND THEN THE RIDE ENDS?



Sounds like a very boring ride, right? Would you want to go back for a second ride on this same coaster? Or a third?



This is ***exactly how a bully would feel*** if he doesn't get the exciting reaction he expects when he tries to make a joke at your expense.

He expects to get a rush from getting you upset; but when his expectations are not met, it gets boring.



Persistent bullies may try a couple more times, like the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> slopes on the boring coaster described.....

But if the outcome is just as much of a disappointment as the first attempt, it will become more evident that this ride is no fun

(in other words, **YOU ARE NOT A FUN TARGET FOR BULLYING!!!**).



# Breakdown of a Bully: Reasons Why This Strategy Works

***Reason # 1:*** No thrill = Boring

***Reason # 2:*** No laughter = No motivation

***Reason # 3:*** Unexpected reaction = Confusion & fear of looking stupid

***Reason # 4:*** Looking for easy targets

***Reason # 5:*** Little patience with failure due to lack of self-confidence

# The Wrong Reactions



# Important to Note

- Strategy can be used as a preventative measure, even if the child is not being picked on.
- Techniques being taught today are *best used in conjunction with therapy/counseling or help from a parent*, especially if the child is young or if the bullying has gotten severe.
- It is important that the child or teen talk with a parent or trusted adult about how the comments have hurt them.
- **The techniques that follow are behaviors that lead to the frequency of bullying being reduced.**

# Easy Targets

- Common characteristics of *Easy Targets*
  - Social withdrawal
  - Symptoms of anxiety or depression
  - Negative view of self
  - Lower self-esteem
- If the child/teen has any of these characteristics, work may need to be done in these areas before or parallel to teaching the techniques
- Suggested interventions may be:
  - Social skills training and exposure
  - Coping skills training
  - CBT skills to challenge inaccurate negative self-perception
  - Self-esteem training to embrace and accentuate their existing positive attributes

# The **S-T-A** Method

- Three simple steps
- All very simple, but the **A** takes more practice
- Can be used separate, but best when used all together consecutively
- The techniques may sound “crazy,” but that is why they work; because we are going to do the opposite of what is expected.
- Kids/Teens sometimes have a hard time buying into the strategy until they see it in action, which is why the workbook will make this task so much easier!

*Fools show their annoyance at once,  
but the prudent overlook the insult.*

- Proverbs 12:16

Whether you are religious or not, this  
proves that this strategy has been  
recommended for a very long time.

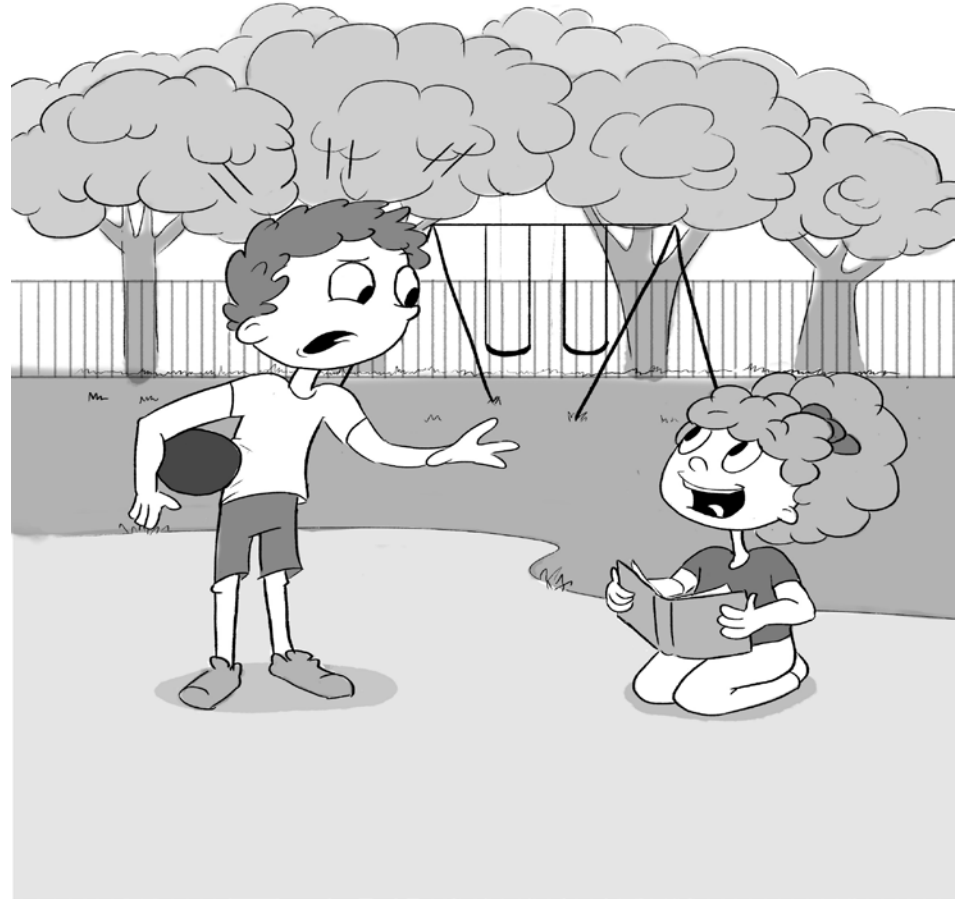
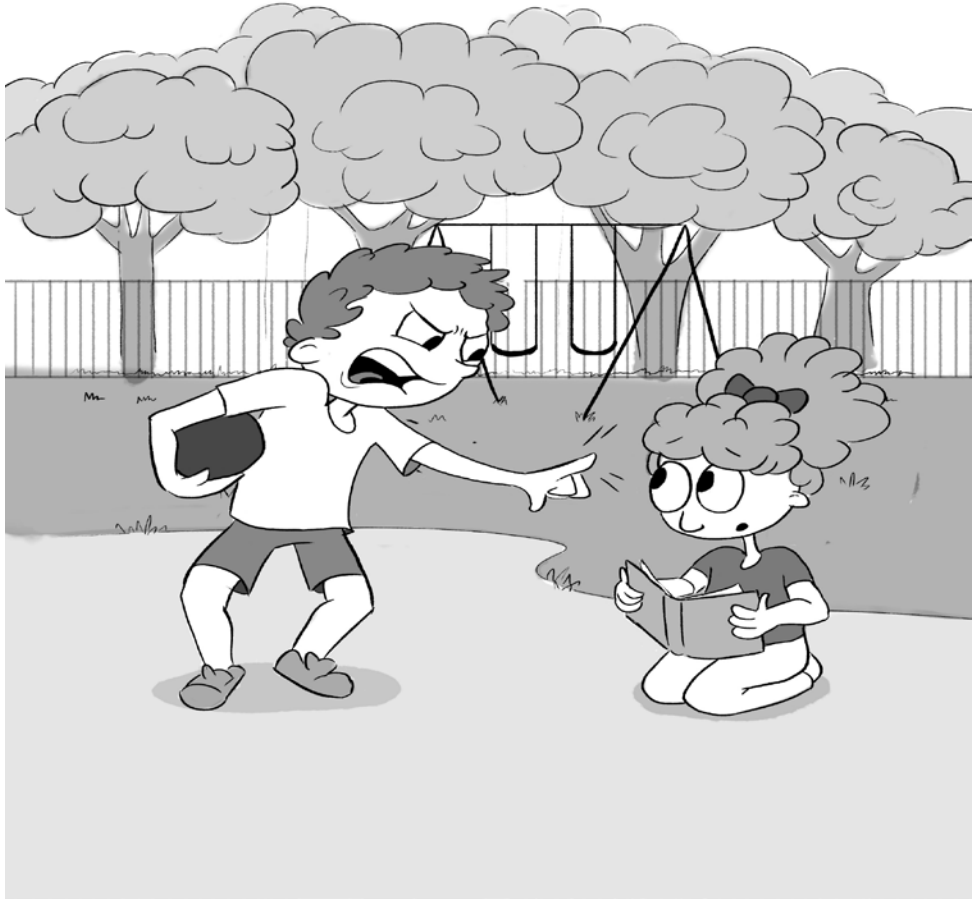
S =

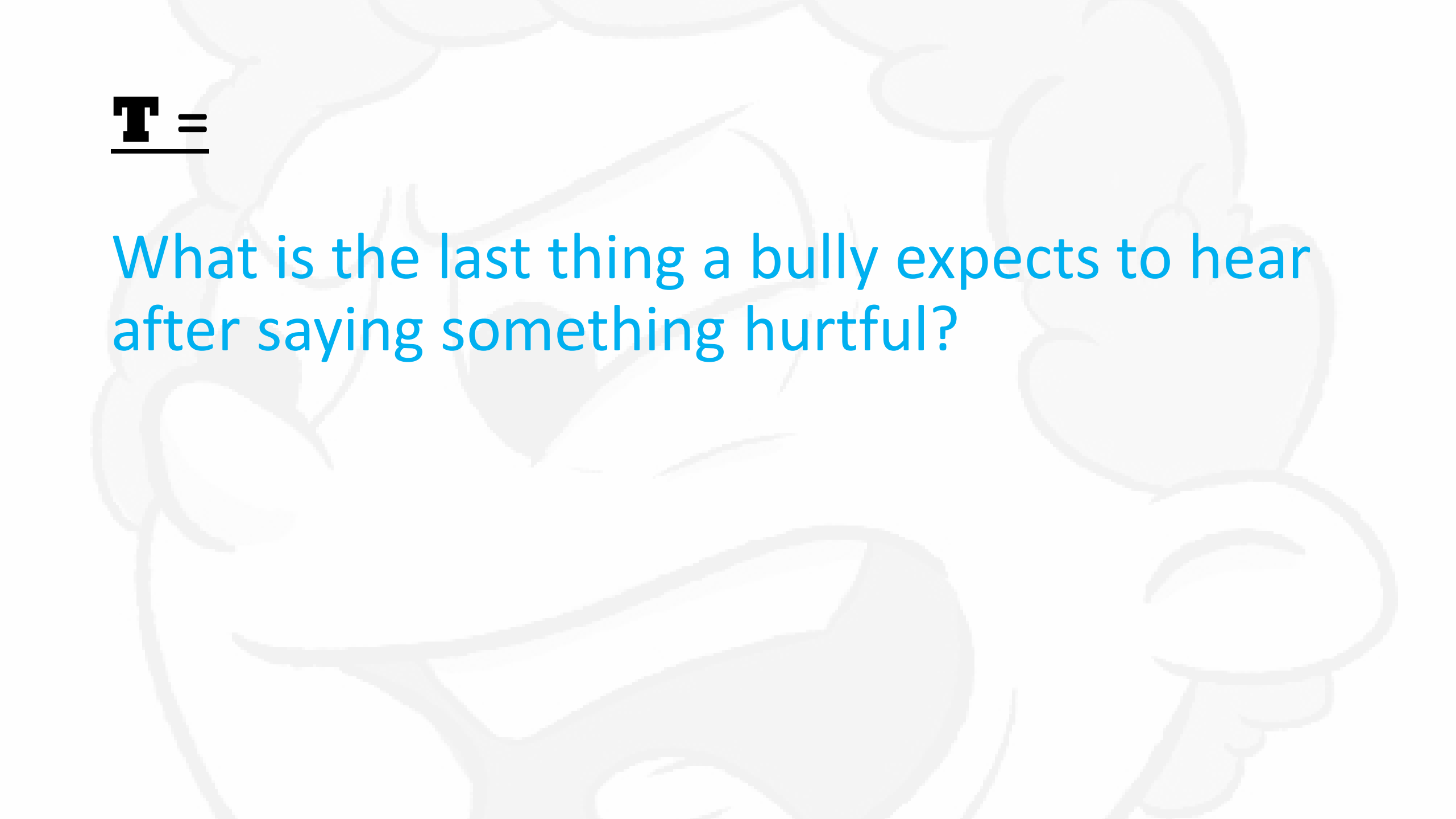
- What face would you make if a bully was saying things to upset you?
- What is the last face a bully expects to see in response to an insult?

# **S = SMILE**

- When a bully calls you a name, talks about your family, or says anything to hurt your feelings, just smile and maybe even let out a little laugh.
- Then, go on ignoring him by doing something else like talking to a friend, reading, or whatever you were doing before he targeted you.
- If the bully keeps taking shots at you, be persistent and only glance in his direction with a smile.
- **Tip:** Try your best to make your smile look genuine. If it looks too fake, the bully could take this as sarcasm. It may even be useful to practice this in a mirror or with someone you trust.

**S = SMILE**





**T** =

What is the last thing a bully expects to hear after saying something hurtful?

# **T = THANK**

- If you really want to blow the bully's mind, say, "**Thank you**" after the insult. They'll never know what hit them!
- **Can be used in reaction to ANY INSULT!!!**
- **Note to Parents**: It is important to point out that your child is not agreeing with the bully on the *inside*, but when they say "thank you" it just shows the bully that these comments don't bother them.

# T = THANK



Haha! You failed  
that test... You  
are ssssoooooo  
STUPID!!!



Thank you!



Huh??



What's wrong  
with your face?  
You are so  
UGLY!!



Thank you so  
much, dude!



Whatever...



Yo Mama is  
sssssoooooo  
FAT



Thank you  
man!



But I said  
...ugh...  
...ch...  
forget it...

# **T** = THANK

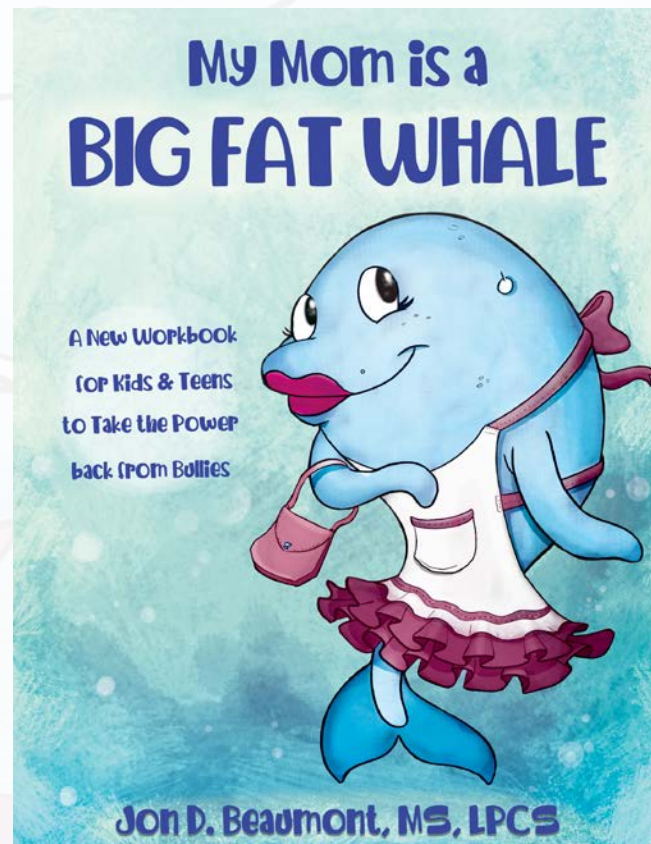
You can also vary the way you say, “thank you.” Other forms of this phrase work just as well, such as:

- Thanks!
- I appreciate that
- Thanks a lot!
- Thanks for noticing!
- Or use whatever lingo you feel comfortable with, as long as it means “Thank You”

**A =**

- To get the bully to leave you alone, you basically have to do the opposite of what he or she wants you to do

- My story



# **A** = AGREE

- You just have to AGREE with the Bully!
- That might sound wild, but only because it is the opposite of what we have always been taught. **This is why practice is so important!**
- Creates **Cognitive Dissonance** - the state of having inconsistent thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes, especially as relating to behavioral decisions and attitude change.

# **A** = AGREE

- *In your head*, you do not and should not agree with the bully whatsoever.
- Use self-control so that you don't show the emotion that the bully is aiming for, even if what he or she says hurts
- Add a joke about yourself (or the person targeted by the bully) for an added effect!
- Again, you can always talk to someone you trust if the bully's words actually hurt your feelings; but revealing your pain to the bully does absolutely no good.

# A = AGREE



Your legs are so  
**SKINNY**, I'm  
surprised you  
don't fall over!



Glad you noticed!  
I like to call them  
toothpicks for  
giants.



What???



You are the  
**DUMBEST** kid  
in class!



I know! I'll  
probably even fail  
recess!



Um???  
Uh???



Your Dad is a  
**HUGE LOSER**!



You're right! I think  
he might be allergic  
to winning.



But...  
I said...???

# **A** = AGREE Examples

- Shaggy
- Client at funeral
- Comedians
- 8-Mile
- Nick Jonas

# **S-T-A**

The Ultimate Solution to Bullies is to combine all three of these techniques

- Smile
- Thank
- Agree

# CyberBullying

- Statistics cannot even begin to measure how often this happens
- Bullies with less courage
- Words can often be more malicious due to bullies having more time to carefully construct their insults/comments
- **24/7 opportunity for bullies**

# CYBERBULLYING

## AND ITS EFFECTS IN 2021

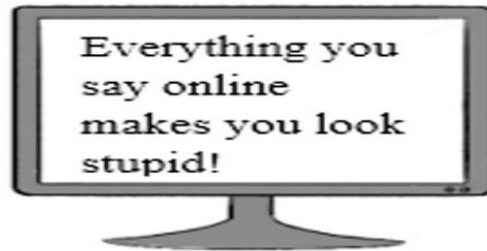
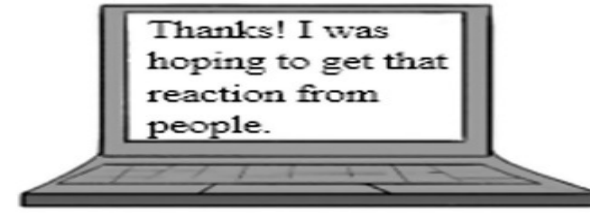
### ISSUES KIDS FEEL RESULT FROM CYBERBULLYING



- Developed social anxiety
- Developed depression
- Had suicidal thoughts
- Deleted their social media profiles
- Engaged in self harm
- Stopped using social media altogether
- Started skipping class

# CyberBullies

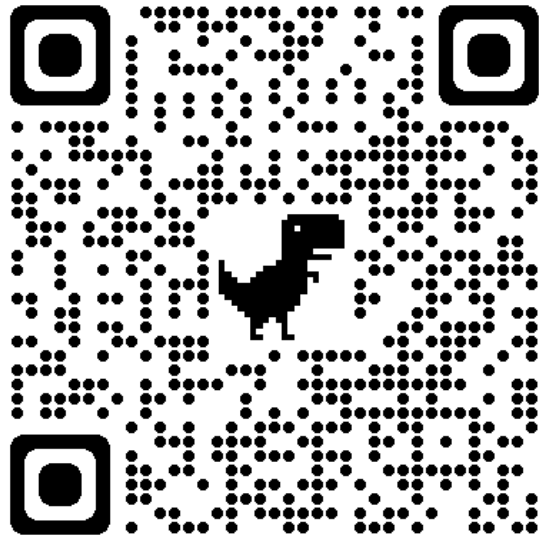
- Same technique works!



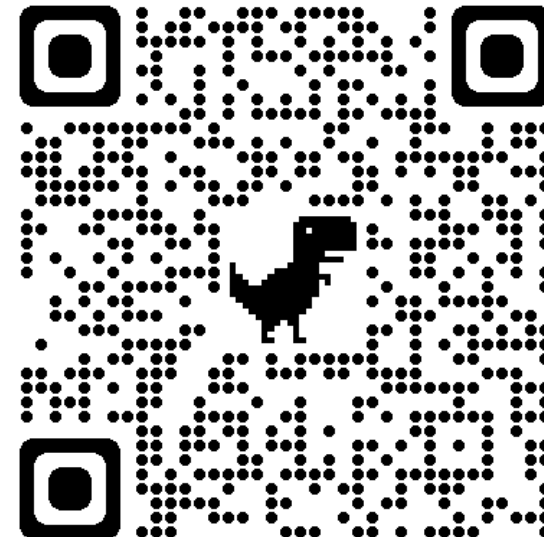
# Conclusion

- We will never be able to totally separate bullies from others, so we must work to **minimize the consequences**
- These techniques **emphasize problem solving over avoidance**
- **Extras included in the workbook:** Easy-to-use [Go-To Responses](#) , [Advanced Responses for Most Common Insults](#), Reproducible practices pages at the end

Scan this code with your phone's camera for a direct link to the workbook



Scan this code to join the Newsletter list (every 7-10 days) and get free content, tools, tips, etc.



# References

1. National Center for Education Statistics. "Bullying: Fast Facts." Accessed Aug. 21, 2019.
2. Bureau of Justice Statistics, The National Education Association. "Indicators of School Crime and Safety." Accessed Aug. 21, 2019
3. Youth Truth Student Survey. "How Are Students Experiencing Bullying?" Accessed Aug. 21, 2019.
4. StopBullying.gov. "Facts About Bullying: Statistics" Accessed Aug. 21, 2019.