



Counselor's Corner

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The Difference between Conflict and Bullying

It is important to recognize that conflict and bullying are not the same thing. Conflict between individuals can sometimes be misinterpreted as bullying. However, conflict and bullying are very different. This article will outline some key components that define both peer conflict and bullying.

Peer Conflict:

1. Equal balance of power, everyone is more or less evenly involved.
2. There may be a disagreement or argument. Individuals involved may react due to anger or frustration.
3. Individuals involved are remorseful and take responsibility for their actions.
4. There is effort to solve the problem and change the behavior.
5. A normal part of human development and relationships.

Harassment, Intimidation, & Bullying (HIB):

1. An imbalance of power, it is one-sided.
2. Individuals involved intentionally want to hurt another individual or group of individuals.
3. There is intention to cause emotional or physical harm.
4. There is lack of remorse, effort to solve the problem or change the behavior.

Additionally, New Jersey's Anti-Bullying Bill of Right's defines HIB as:

Any gesture, written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by an actual or perceived characteristic such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability or by any other distinguishing characteristic;

That takes place on school property, at any school-sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds, that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students; and that:

1. A reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property; **or**
2. Has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; **or**
3. Creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

**Adapted from state.nj.us from the New Jersey Department of Education*

For further details or information, please contact your child's guidance counselor:

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