



TEEN TRUTH: BULLY

In the last ten years, a series of school shootings in America have prompted many urgent questions from parents, teachers and students: Are our schools safe? What can be done to protect our young people? But the most pressing question may be: What drives a teen to bring a gun to school and open fire upon his classmates?

The answers are far from simple. Teens point to a culture of pressure, alienation and bullying in their schools as one of the primary causes. For many young people, the pressure to fit in with their peers can be emotionally crushing. Anyone who doesn't fit the mold is at risk for loneliness and isolation. In an environment rife with cliques and exclusivity, teens who are pushed to the social fringes often suffer feelings of alienation and detachment from their peers.

This epidemic of bullying has serious consequences for both the targets and the bullies. Students who are tormented by classmates are more likely than other students to be depressed and anxious, have low self-esteem, feel physically sick, and consider attempting suicide. Bullies themselves are more likely to get into fights, steal, vandalize, smoke or drink, drop out of school, and perform poorly in school. In rare but devastating cases, bullying can fill a student with so much anxiety and rage that he will resort to the ultimate revenge—killing his peers.

TEEN TRUTH: BULLY examines the phenomenon of school violence and bullying through hard-hitting footage, interviews with real teens, and a dramatic look inside the head of a violent teenager. Viewers will be ready for a discussion on changing the alienating culture of high school, stopping bullies, and making school a safe and supportive place for all young people.

After viewing TEEN TRUTH: BULLY and participating in the activities contained in the Teacher's Resource Book, students will be able to:

- Examine the social pressures that high school students endure
- List many of the behaviors that constitute bullying
- Understand that bullying is unacceptable and often has devastating consequences for the target
- Appreciate the importance of treating others with respect
- Distinguish between assertive and aggressive reactions to bullying
- Understand how to control their anger
- Appreciate the need for social connections and support networks
- Discuss the roots of teen violence and school shootings
- Analyze problem-solving strategies as they relate to bullying
- Design a policy to reduce bullying in their schools
- List ways to reach out to and support any classmates who may be bullied or isolated by peer exclusion

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