



GOWANDA CENTRAL SCHOOL

Engaging students in learning through the development and use of communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking

PAWS For Your Mental Health

February 2019 Edition

In February we celebrate Random Acts of Kindness Week

We want to promote kindness in our students and in doing so we need to address bullying. It is important for parents to understand and talk about bullying with their children.

- Bullying is defined by the U.S Department of Education as unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. Bullying generally involves the following characteristics: an imbalance of power, the intent to cause harm, and repetition (it happens more than once). Types of bullying include: verbal, social, physical, and cyberbullying.
- Between 1 in 4 and 1 in 3 U.S. students say they have been bullied at school with the most bullying happening in middle school. The most common types are verbal and social bullying.
- Young people who are perceived as different from their peers are often at risk for being bullied, but there is not a single profile of a young person involved in bullying. Youth who bully can be either well connected socially or marginalized, and may be bullied by others as well. Similarly, those who are bullied sometimes bully others. Youth who both bully others and are bullied are at greatest risk for subsequent behavioral, mental health, and academic problems.
- Bullying affects all youth, including those who are bullied, those who bully others, and those who see bullying going on. Some effects may last into adulthood. Bullying is not usually a simple interaction between a student who bullies and a student who is bullied. Instead, it often involves groups of students who support each other in bullying other students. There is often a disconnect between young people's experience of bullying and what the adults see.
- **The good news: there are promising prevention strategies to address bullying!**
 - Bystanders who intervene on behalf of young people being bullied make a huge difference.
 - Studies also have shown that adults, including parents, can help prevent bullying by keeping the lines of communication open, talking to their children about bullying, encouraging them to do what they love, modeling kindness and respect, and encouraging them to get help when they are involved in bullying or know others who need help.

Did you know?

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month

About 1 in 10 teens who have been on a date have also been physically abused by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the last year. One of the most important things you can do is keep the lines of communication open with your kids.



Take steps to make a difference:

- Be a role model - treat your kids and others with respect.
- Start talking to your kids about healthy relationships early - before they start dating.

If you are worried about your teen, reach out to your school counselors or social workers or call the National Dating Abuse Helpline at 1-866-331-9474 or text "loveis" to 22522

Do you have additional questions about mental health supports in the area or concerned about your child? Please contact your child's school counseling office and ask to speak with a counselor or social worker.

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