

END PEER CRUELTY, BUILD EMPATHY

The Proven 6Rs of Bullying Prevention That Create Inclusive, Safe, and Caring Schools
By Michele Borba, Ed.D.

Violence prevention expert, Dr. Michele Borba, offers evidence-based bullying-prevention principles, policies, and practices to reduce peer cruelty and create safe, caring schools.

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me” is a myth that needs to be dispelled. Bullying is viewed as one of the most serious public health problems in our school systems. The effects of peer cruelty are far-reaching and can cause immense stress and may result in serious mental health issues for children. We need to put an end to childhood aggression, and [End Peer Cruelty, Build Empathy: The Proven 6Rs of Bullying Prevention That Create Inclusive, Safe, and Caring Schools](#) by Michele Borba, Ed.D. (Free Spirit Publishing; On Sale February 12, 2018) provides a concrete plan to do so. Borba offers a comprehensive guide to bullying prevention that offers the most effective proven strategies to stop bullying and create safe, caring school climates. The practices, policies, and procedures are culled from a review of hundreds of studies on bullying as well as Dr. Borba’s thirty-year career working in violence prevention in schools around the world.

Based on a practical, six-part framework for reducing peer cruelty and increasing positive behavior support, *End Peer Cruelty, Build Empathy* presents the proven 6Rs of bullying prevention: *Rules, Recognize, Report, Respond, Refuse, and Replace*. The book tackles a range of topics including:

- Creating a safe, caring culture based on respectful relationships as the foundation for prevention
- Using restorative justice to repair relationships, boost empathy and replace aggression
- Helping students be respectful with peers and empowered to shift school norms from cruel to kin
- Engaging *all* stakeholders—staff, students, parents, and community—in prevention efforts
- Teaching problem-solving, conflict-resolution to reduce friction and help students get along
- Implementing bullying prevention practices that are proven and evidence-based
- Mobilizing student compassion to stand up and speak out against bullying
- Using a three-tiered approach that addresses school-wide, classroom-wide, and individual student
- Replacing aggression and bullying behaviors with prosocial behaviors by teaching SEL skills

Preventing school violence and bullying is always about creating safe, respectful learning climates with caring adults at the helm. Implementing the strategies **END PEEER CRUELTY, BUILD EMPATHY** will help educators create the kinds of schools that *all* children deserve: secure, considerate places where they feel cared about and connected so they can learn and succeed.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Michele Borba, Ed.D. is an internationally renowned educational psychologist and an expert in parenting, bullying, and character development. One of the foremost authorities on childhood development in the country, she is a regular NBC contributor who appears regularly on *Today* and has been featured as an expert on *Dateline*, *The View*, *Dr. Phil*, *NBC Nightly News*, *Fox & Friends*, *Dr. Oz*, and *The Early Show*, among many others. She lives in Palm Springs, California, with her husband, and she is the mother of three grown sons. More information: micheleborba.com Twitter: [@micheleborba](https://twitter.com/micheleborba)

A Conversation with Dr. Michele Borba

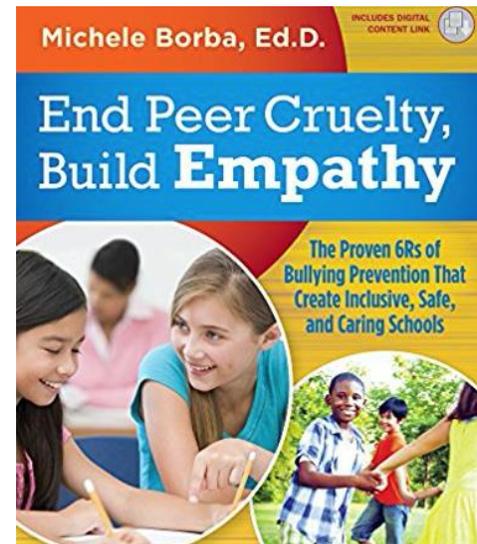
Author of **END PEER CRUELTY, BUILD EMPATHY:**

The Proven 6Rs of Bullying Prevention That Create Inclusive, Safe and Caring Schools

“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.” —Frederick Douglass

Q: Why should educators take bullying seriously?

Bullying means that a child is intentionally causing another child pain. That pain may be inflicted emotionally, verbally, physically, or electronically, and it is *always* harmful. Whether a child is bullying others, witnessing bullying, or the target of bullying, the behavior wreaks havoc on children’s development; demolishes feelings of safety; and, if not stopped, can shatter young lives. The effects of peer cruelty are far-reaching and can cause immense stress, anxiety, health problems, depression, and humiliation that may result in serious mental health issues and impact concentration, academic achievement, and learning performance. In fact, bullying is viewed as one of the most serious public health problems in our school systems. It’s all why educators must make an earnest effort to prevent bullying.



Q: How widespread is bullying?

Bullying has no borders. Though it is more prevalent in the middle school years, it affects all school-age students of both sexes. **End Peer Cruelty, build Empathy** offers the latest data about school bullying and show the urgent need for educators to find solutions. Bullying happens every 7 minutes in every kind of school: private and public; rural, urban, and suburban. Over 70 percent of students say they have seen bullying in their schools. Nearly 50 percent of students report being bullied at least once during the past month. More than 40 percent of students say they are *frequently* involved in bullying (two or more times in the past month).

Q: Why did you write this book?

I’ve spent nearly three decades studying youth violence and bullying and working with hundreds of educators, counselors, and law enforcement officials around the world. I know the horrors of school shootings and I’ve held the hands of too many parents whose children have ended their lives because of peer cruelty. I’ve also spoken to countless kids who have witnessed or been involved in bullying at their schools for years and feel powerless to stop it. Bullying is learned, and it can be unlearned. Caring, committed educators using research-based strategies can turn this terrible trend around and we must. **End Peer Cruelty, Build Empathy** shows how.

Q: What works and doesn’t work to reduce bullying?

Educators *can* make a difference and bullying *can* be reduced. But there is a caveat: only certain procedures and approaches work to reduce aggression. All those eye-catching “stop bullying” posters and buttons, T-shirt contests, or packaged worksheets—while they may mean well—are not effective solutions. The best way to reduce bullying is with the ongoing, homegrown, data-

driven efforts of a committed, informed school community trained in anti-bullying and consistently using a few key evidence-based bullying prevention principles, policies, and practices. When adults exert a joint effort to make all students feel respected and welcomed at school, wonderful transformations take place.

Q: Is there a strategy that reduces bullying that adults overlook?

Bullying is situational and does not happen everywhere on a school site; rather it happens in certain areas that usually have less adult supervision like hallways, stairwells, and lockers. Boosting adult presence in that spot is one of the simplest and often least-used strategies. A middle school principal shared one of the best ideas: she identified a hallway as a top hot spot, and made a full-size cardboard cutout of herself to put in the middle of the hall. She taped a note on it, "I'm watching you, and you'll never know when the real me will show up." The kids loved it, and bullying in that spot was eradicated.

Q: What are the 6Rs of Bullying Prevention?

For more than three decades I've researched how to stop the cycle of violence, which led me to develop the 6Rs of preventing bullying. The 6Rs together offer a blueprint to implementing the best research, policies, and practices for effective prevention and reducing peer cruelty.

- **R1: Rules—Establish an Anti-Bullying Policy and Expectations for Respect.** This creates an anti-bullying policy that fits the school values, focuses on prevention, features strong parental involvement, builds a respectful climate, and gets *everyone* onboard.
- **R2: Recognize—Teach Stakeholders How to Recognize Bullying.** All stakeholders must understand what bullying is, recognize indicators, and receive ongoing training so they can intervene appropriately and consistently.
- **R3: Report—Create Procedures to Report Bullying.** This offers efficient, easy, and effective options for stakeholders to report bullying incidents and for staff to analyze the reports, which provide crucial evidence of bullying frequency, locales, and participants, and boosts student security.
- **R4: Respond—Teach Witnesses How to Respond to Bullying.** This R mobilizes students' compassion and teaches specific skills so witnesses can safely step in to help reduce bullying incidents, and change school norms so "it's cool to be kind."
- **R5: Refuse—Help Targets Refuse Provocation and Cope with Victimization.** Everyone in a school community learns to identify and support targets and potential targets of bullying. Strategies for targets to reduce future victimization and learn coping strategies are provided.
- **R6: Replace—Help Students Replace Aggression with Socially Acceptable Skills.** It help students displaying bullying behaviors adopt prosocial habits and beliefs.

Q: Does a certain school type-public, private, charter-more or less successful in your approach?

Bullying happens in every culture and in every school type. I've shared this model with hundreds of educators worldwide, including in the United States, Canada, Germany, South Korea, Colombia, Mexico, the Philippines, New Zealand, Egypt, and on U.S. Army bases as well as public, private, and charter schools across zip codes with success. The key is that all 6Rs of effective bullying prevention must be consistently implemented by caring, committed educators in a respectful climate.

Q: Why do you offer so many different bullying prevention strategies?

Bullying prevention doesn't have a "cookie cutter" approach: the specific needs of each student involved in the bullying dynamic need to be identified and the appropriate intervention applied.

Each bullying incident differs in motivation, type, and dynamics, just as each student's learning needs differ. The key is to find the strategy that works for each student so that aggression or victimization is replaced by prosocial behaviors. Only then will we have real and lasting positive change.

Q: How do we help students respect one another?

The foundation to bullying prevention is always based on building a culture of respect and changing destructive attitudes and behaviors by replacing them with healthier habits and views. After all, the base of bullying is a problem with relationships. If we really want to stop bullying behaviors, we need to teach students *how* to resolve conflicts and form healthy relationships so they feel safe to support one another. That's why the book also offers evidence-based practices to build students' empathy, restore respectful relationship and teach social skills to reduce bullying. Class Meetings, Cooperative Learning, Disagreeing Respectfully, Problem Solving are ways to achieve those goals.

Q: You say that mobilizing the compassion of students to help victims is crucial. Why?

I've long been convinced that the most effective and under-used strategy in bullying prevention is mobilizing the compassion of the student majority and teaching them Upstander skills. Doing so empowers children with tools to stop cruelty, help targets, create safer school environments, *and* reduce bullying. In fact, research finds that student witnesses are more likely to intervene if they know what to do and feel that they have the necessary skills and resources. Studies also show that when student witnesses do intervene correctly, bullying behavior stops more than half of the time. The 4th R of prevention provides Bully BUSTER skills to teach kids how to safely step in and reduce bullying. The skills do work, but it's crucial to keep in mind that *not all strategies work for all kids or all situations*. The best teaching method is to introduce all six BUSTER skills, ask students to choose the ones that best fit their comfort level and help them practice until they feel confident using the skills alone.

Q: You've spoken to over one million parents and educators. Is there one story that

Over the past three-plus decades, I've worked in too many communities torn apart by youth aggression or racked with grief when one of their own ended her or his life due to bullying. I still carry a photo of a sixth-grade boy who hanged himself when he could no longer endure the endless brutality of two peers. The boy's father handed me the photo after I had given a speech on bullying in Canada, and asked me to make a promise. "Please," he said. "Don't stop. Keep training adults about bullying. It would have saved my son. Hopefully it will save other children, too." Writing this book is one way I've kept my promise to that grieving father.

Q: What is the ultimate message hope readers gain from End Peer Cruelty, Build Empathy?

The good news is that while bullying is learned, so too are peace, respect, and compassion. Working together in a committed, sustained effort educators and applying proven practices to reduce bullying and create caring communities is the way forward. Our students deserve school experiences that provide them with the opportunity to grow into adults who are kind and respectful of others and who work to resolve their differences peacefully. We have work to do and not a minute to waste.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Michele Borba, Ed.D. is an internationally renowned educational psychologist and an expert in parenting, bullying, and character development. One of the foremost authorities on childhood development in the country, she is a regular NBC contributor who appears regularly on *Today* and has been featured as an expert on *Dateline*, *The View*, *Dr. Phil*, *NBC Nightly News*, *Fox & Friends*, *Dr. Oz*, and *The Early Show*, among many others. She lives in Palm Springs, California, with her husband, and she is the mother of three grown sons. More information: micheleborba.com
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Advance Praise for
END PEER CRUELTY, BUILD EMPATHY
By Michele Borba, Ed.D.

“Michele Borba presents key evidence-based practices that have been shown to reduce the impact of bullying, giving educators practical and tested strategies that will assist their schools or districts to strengthen an existing program or build a new one.”

—School Administrator

magazine

“This book provides real results for bullying prevention, awareness, and education and will make a difference not only in the lives of children, but in our communities. Dr. Borba’s expertise in bullying is second to no one: she is a leader in her field and this book will change lives.”

—Sue Scheff, internet safety expert and author

“Dr. Borba compiles and succinctly summarizes the weight of available evidence about what works to prevent bullying at school. Building safe and bully-free schools is not easy and there are no shortcuts. It takes coordination and collaboration by all concerned community stakeholders. This book offers a potent and pragmatic road- map to help schools achieve that goal.”

—Justin W. Patchin, Ph.D., codirector, Cyberbullying Research Center

“Dr. Michele Borba’s contributions to the field are always practical, relatable, and powerful. Her newest book is no exception and provides a valuable step-by-step guide to help school communities reduce peer harassment and hate from the inside out through policy and programming.”

—Dr. Sameer Hinduja, codirector of Cyberbullying Research Center and professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Florida Atlantic University

“An important addition to any educator’s toolbox for breaking the cycle of bullying violence and creating a more deeply caring school environment.”

**—Barbara Coloroso, educator and author of
*The Bully, the Bullied, and the Not-So-Innocent Bystander***

“Whether your school already has a bullying prevention program in place or you’re looking to implement one for the first time, *End Peer Cruelty, Build Empathy* can take your school to the next level in promoting a safer, more inclusive and caring school climate. It is chock-full of practical, evidence-based strategies and resources relayed in a concise, easily accessible manner. All schools would surely benefit by recommending this book as a staff must-read.”

—Trudy Ludwig, children’s advocate and bestselling author of *The Invisible Boy*