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What is bullying?

Bullying is aggressive behavior that's intentional, hurtful, threatening, and persistent.

What does bullying look like?

- Physical: pushing, shoving, tripping, kicking, hitting, slapping, pinching
- Verbal: racist, sexist, or bigoted remarks; threats; name-calling; teasing
- Emotional: intimidation, coercion, exclusion, spreading rumors or lies
- Cyberbullying: mean emails or texts, impersonation, hateful websites

What's NOT true about bullying?

- Some people deserve to be bullied. **FALSE!** No one ever deserves to be bullied.
- Bullying is a normal part of growing up. **FALSE!** Being threatened is not normal.
- The best way to deal with bullying is by fighting or getting even. **FALSE!** This makes it worse. And most schools have a “zero tolerance” policy for physical aggression. Suspension is generally the punishment for fighting (regardless of what caused the fight).
- People who are bullied will get over it. **FALSE!** Bullying hurts for a long time. It can cause kids to drop out of school. It can lead to ongoing depression. It can even result in suicide.

What IS true about bullying?

- An estimated 160,000 U.S. children miss school each day to avoid being bullied.
- More than 70% of U.S. students say that bullying is a problem in their schools.
- It is reported that 1 out of 4 teens is bullied. And as many as 9 out of 10 LGBT students are bullied.
- Bullying has always been present in our camps and schools, but only recently, after a rash of suicides, has it become part of our national dialogue.

What should you do if your child is bullied?

- **Find out what happened:** Ask questions and believe what your child says. Never blame your child for the bullying. Blaming shuts down communication and may leave your child feeling helpless.
- **Stay calm:** Tell your child that you, your child, and the school will work together to try to resolve the situation. Never encourage your child to fight back. Fighting back will only put your child in further danger. Identify adults in the school to whom your child can go for help. Determine where the bullying took place and try to find alternative locations where your child can go (the guidance office/counseling center, for example). Encourage your child to travel with friends.
- **Contact the school as soon as possible:** Ask for a meeting. Talk about specifics of what the teachers, the school, and your child can do to try to stop the bullying. Do not call the bully's parents. Parents of children who bully often become defensive, and confronting them might make things worse for your child.

I welcome opportunities to visit schools, libraries, organizations, and book clubs (in person, by phone, or via Skype) to discuss my novels (*CAMP* and *DANNY'S MOM*), the writing process, the road to publication, and my commitment to making our camps and schools safer for all children. Send me an email (elaine@authorelainewolf.com), and let's talk!