



From the creator of *Broken Toy*
A story of a 13-year old bullied child...
slowly going over the edge.

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**The Second Edition of
"Joey" was completed
through the generosity
of an anonymous
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Video and facilitator's guide were written and produced by Thomas Brown and edited by National Center for Youth Issues.

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STUDY GUIDE

Background on Joey

Joey is the third film created by Thomas Brown on the subject of bullying. Tom felt it was time for a film designed for late elementary and middle school age students that addresses the issues of verbal, emotional and physical bullying. Through Tom's extensive work in the area of bullying and school violence, he understands that most of the perpetrators of previous, highly publicized events of school violence (such as Columbine, CO) have been victims of bullying and torment. Tom believes that bullying and harassment played a key role in these tragedies. *Joey* is a not-so-subtle reminder of that fact. While *Joey* does not depict a child bringing guns to school, it suggests that tormented children are capable of doing so. The bullied child in *Joey* is wrestling between harming his adversaries or himself.

Joey also raises the question of what those who witness violence can do. Not "standing up" for those who are victimized is a form of enabling...in other words, sending a message that this form of violence is acceptable and tolerated as a norm for children. "Standing up" for those who are tormented by bullying and harassment is empowering to the victims and witnesses and is a direct intervention on the forces of enabling.

Joey deals with an adult man that is haunted by the fact that as a young man he stood by and just watched his friends make life miserable for another student.

Already extensively and carefully tested with adults, including educators, and children in grades 5-9, *Joey* leaves most of its audience feeling deeply moved and troubled, and always wanting to ask a lot of questions. We strongly recommend that you make necessary time available at the end of the showing of *Joey* for viewers, especially children, to ask questions and discuss the film. It is absolutely essential to allow viewers time to process the film immediately afterwards.

Bully/Victim Facts

- In nearly all of the school shooting tragedies, it was learned soon afterwards that the 'shooters' were school outcasts; bullied and tormented children.
- Three out of four students from non-urban schools report they have been bullied during their school career.
- Over 160,000 bullied children purposely miss school every day in the U.S. alone.
- Almost all bullied children feel that being bullied caused social, emotional or academic problems.
- It is pretty much split down the middle as to the ratio of boy bullies vs. girl bullies.
- Bullying is reported as most severe in middle-school grades, usually 5-8 with grades 2-4 next.
- Many children, especially boys, tell no one, especially their parents, that they are being bullied.
- Ridicule/teasing, verbal harassment and cruel jokes are most frequently reported forms of verbal and social bullying. While physical attacks and torment do occur, they are reported less.
- At least half of teachers believe that disruptive school behaviors are getting worse.
- Each month in the United States alone, over 1/4 million students report being physically attacked in school.
- One in five middle and high school students report avoiding rest rooms out of anxiety about safety.
- Most bullies and victims have problems in later life related to their experiences.
- Everyone, especially the children who are NOT the bullies, NOT the victims, play a role in allowing bullying to go on and everyone can play a role in helping reduce the problem.

Overall Goal: *To make school physically and emotionally safe for all children.*

Objectives:

1. To educate students, school staff, and parents about the harm that is caused by verbal, physical and emotional abuse of children.
2. To make children aware of the role peers, who are not the bully or the victim, can play in promoting or preventing such problems.
3. To make children aware of the fact that bullying in one form or another can seriously affect the happiness and security of adults.
4. By thoroughly discussing the characters and events in *Joey*, this allows the opportunity to come up with ideas to prevent, control, significantly reduce and/or correct bullying and victimization problems.

Using Joey: Preparation Activities

Leader –

1. Preview the film, including in your audience school administration officials. Make sure everyone is comfortable with the subject matter and the content of the film.
2. Consider sending home permission slips explaining that the film contains strong subject matter in focusing on the bullying problem and the issue of contributing factors to school shootings and school violence in general.
3. Consider not including any students that might be adversely affected by the showing of the film. At the very least, prepare these students for the film they will see. Explain that this is not a true story per se, but based on several actual events that have taken place worldwide, as well as documented facts on the emotional consequences of bullying.

Student – (5-10 minutes)

Other than asking the suggested questions upcoming in this guide, show the film to students “cold.” Do not read the description of the film. Allow children to experience the film as it progresses, rather than anticipating specific events. Simply explain to students in advance that *Joey* deals with the subject of bullying and the effect this problem has on all concerned, including the victim, the bully and those that choose to stand by and allow this behavior to happen.

Questions for Students Before Viewing Joey

1. Do you consider bullying a problem in your school?
2. Where do you see this kind of behavior happen?
3. How do you think that bullying makes victims feel?
4. In your opinion, why do some kids bully other kids?
5. Can you think of any recent incidents that affected this country that involved bullying?

Then say: "This is a film about bullying called *Joey*. It deals with everything we have talked about. Some events depicted in this film will seem odd, perhaps even confusing. We'll try to answer all your questions after the film."

Show Film (approximately 30 minutes)

Please allow the brief credit sequence with Billy Gilman's moving song “There's A Hero” to completely play. This will allow children the time needed to reflect on their own feelings about the film as well as quietly process a little of what they just saw. It will also provide an opportunity to listen to Billy's important lyrics and how they relate to the story.

Summary of Joey (*not to be shared with students*)

Joey is a bullied thirteen-year-old boy. He lives a simple life with his mom and dad and little sister. Joey is bullied almost daily. Although most of his torment consists of verbal put-downs and emotional abuse, he is sometimes physically assaulted as well. This withdrawn and lonely youngster chooses to keep his bullying a secret. Perhaps he's afraid that his torment will worry his parents or perhaps he's afraid that if they DO know what is going on and choose to confront the school, his school life will become even worse. Joey's parents are typical busy people. Joey's father in particular is usually hard at work, and he rarely has or takes time to spend with his son. Neither parent realizes that their son is being bullied daily, but they DO notice unusual behavior. An opportunity arises in the form of an evening adult session on bullying that could help Joey's parents recognize some bully victim traits, but dad is too tired after work to go to this meeting. He sums up his feelings, or perhaps in the means to justify the reluctance to go by saying, “I'm too tired to go, and besides, there's no violence at Joey's school and every kid gets bullied now and then.”

Joey's torment continues...and with it comes a sad, increasingly more unstable kid. He is starting to have dark fantasies about harming classmates among other unsettling thoughts. In the background is a boy named Andrew. Andrew is not a bully but hangs around those that are bullying Joey. Andrew, like so many kids, chooses not to stand up for the rights of others against his friends. But he's starting to think about the behavior of his friends and his own contribution to another's misery. Eventually, Andrew will let his friends know how much he disapproves of their behaviour.

Joey's parents are starting to think about their son as well. Perhaps his quiet nature is a symptom of something more serious. Perhaps it's time to get involved...and ask some important questions. Can Andrew and Joey's parents help this young man before he goes over the edge?

One afternoon Joey's mother returns from work to discover that Joey has shattered the bathroom mirror with his bare fists. It is a terrifying act of self-destruction...and it is an anguished cry for help. Later, after Joey is in bed, his parents angrily discuss what they can do to help their son. It is decided that they must discuss Joey's bullying problem with his Principal. The problem is that Joey is afraid that if they do go to school, his torment will only become worse. But his parents decide that action must be taken, but it must be done in such a manner that no further harm will come to their child. The meeting with Joey's Principal is successful. He assures them that although consequences must be administered to Joey's tormentors, it will be done in such a way as to actually help the bullies and Joey in the process. Later that day the boys face a very stern Principal and learn that they will be attending a special form of Saturday school...a Saturday school that will help them better understand how unfair it is to torment and bully others.

Andrew is moved and troubled by the Principal's strong words. He is disgusted with the behavior of his friends and openly confronts them that afternoon. Meanwhile, Joey's parents decide that a little "break" is needed and arranges for the family to go on a short vacation. Later...on a dismal and cold morning, Andrew anxiously greets the Principal as he arrives at school. The boy inquires as to where Joey has been. It is obvious that Andrew is ready to make amends. Mr. Romero has some bad news for Andrew. Something terrible has happened. There has been a tragedy involving Joey's family, and what Andrew learns on that morning will forever change and affect this young man's life.

Following Presentation of Video

(Allow ample time for discussion)

Sample Questions for Students Following Viewing of *Joey*

1. What are two words that best describe your feelings right now? (Write responses on the board, or flip chart)
2. Describe specific scenes that most affect you...held an important meaning to you. How did this scene affect you...and why?
3. Could Joey have done something to help himself?
4. Why do some children, especially boys, choose not to tell adults that they are being bullied?
5. Who could Joey have told that would have been most likely to successfully help him?
6. Why did Andrew as an adult have such a problem with the death of Joey, considering that as a child he never bullied the boy in the first place?
7. Why do many children choose to either watch or ignore the bullying of classmates?
8. What do you think the extent of the power is with people, who are neither the bullies nor the victims, in helping with the bullying problem in a school?
9. Why is it difficult for many kids to stand up for the rights of others, especially if it means they will have to confront their actual friends in the process?
10. Why did Joey have dark fantasies about harming his classmates?
11. Are these realistic segments in this film...that emotionally deteriorating kids could daydream about harming classmates and actually purposely harm themselves? (Explain that in many instances prior to a child becoming violent to others, they may harm themselves.)
12. If Joey was so close to his little sister, which he obviously was, why did he yell at her when she simply was having fun with him...and how did he feel immediately afterwards?
13. What were some of the signs in Joey's behavior that his parents noticed that might have indicated that Joey was being bullied? What signs did they miss?
14. What do you think are other contributing factors to violence in children?
15. What should we be concentrating on in finding answers to the school violence and bullying issue? Media violence...violent lyrics in music...availability of weapons...violent video games... bullying?
16. How do you think Dad was feeling as he sat in his study after the mirror-shattering incident?
17. Were the parents right to ignore Joey's feelings and go to school and talk to the Principal anyway?
18. Was their request for their son to be 'simply left alone' a realistic one?
19. In your opinion, was the Principal helpful to Joey and his parents?
20. Do you agree with the creative form of punishment that the Principal came up with, or do you think he should have been harder on the boys?
21. Is punishment the only way to handle a bully situation in school?
22. How does simply punishing a bully...help the victim...help the bully avoid this kind of behavior in the future?
23. What do you think Andrew was thinking about as he listened to the Principal in his office?
24. What did Joey's family taking a short vacation have to do with Joey being bullied at school?
25. How did the unexpected tragedy in this story make you feel?

Now allow children to ask their own questions...express their own comments and feelings about the film.

Follow-up Activities

1. Have students seriously role-play bullies, victims and observers.
2. Role-play students confronting their friends who are unfairly bullying another student.
3. Have students role-play in groups, confronting someone who is hurting another student.
4. Have students role-play a victim, explaining the situation and their feelings to grown-ups.
5. Discuss the feelings of everyone involved in each of these role-plays.
6. Construct an action-plan for the classroom in combating bullying in your school. An entire school plan should obviously be initiated as well.
7. Consider having a large mural placed in the entrance hall of your school. Have students sign their individual commitment to making their school a “bullying-free” learning environment.
8. Engage other school departments in follow-up activities: Art class: Drawing the feelings on the faces of bullies...bully victims and innocent bystanders. History: Discuss historical figures who used bullying tactics for self-gain. P.E.: Discuss and role-play alternatives to putting people down who are human and make mistakes during an activity.

BOTTOM LINE: CONTINUOUS FOLLOW-UP WITH 100% SCHOOL STAFF COOPERATION, COMMITMENT & INVOLVEMENT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL IN CREATING A SAFER LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN IN YOUR SCHOOL.

Annotated Resources

Students Perceptions of Victimization by Bullies in Schools. Hazler, Hoover, & Oliver (1991) Journal of Humanistic Education and Development. 29 (4), 143-150.

Breaking the Cycle of Violence - Interventions for Bullying and Victimization. Richard J. Hazler, Ph.D. - 1996 Taylor and Francis - Accelerated Development.

Less than Safe: What Students Say About School. Hazler, Hoover & Oliver (1992) Executive Educator (November) Quotes from students are provided as well as basic techniques for educators concerned with the problem.

The Parent's Book about Bullying: Changing the Course of your Child's Life. William Voors (2000) Hazelden.

Safe Schools and Quality Schools (1998) Encino, CA: National School Safety Center. A good book for starting to look at schools and the relationship between safety and quality in schools.

Set Straight on Bullies (1989) Greenbaum, Turner & Stephens. National School Safety Center. A straightforward publication and video that provides basic information, advice, strategies, and tentative survey forms for adults and students.

Bullies and Victims - Helping Your Child Through the Schoolyard Battlefield. Suellen Fried, A.D.T.R. and Paula Fried Ph.D., Clinical Psychology (1996) M. Evans & Company.

Bullies and Victims. Hoover & Hazler (1991)

Elementary School Guidance and Counseling Journal. 25 (4) 212-219. This article summarizes research, clarifies issues, and sets a stage for how schools can begin to attack the problem.

The Broken Toy Project - “Broken Toy,” “but names will never hurt me” and “Joey” creator Thomas Brown provides comprehensive national-international workshops for students in grades 1-10 and separate sessions including full and two-day seminars and training the trainers for parents, teachers and any adult interested in the bullying problem.

Call 740-455-2035 or e-mail Thomas at brokentoyproject@columbus.rr.com for more information and a quick response.

Bullying Resources from National Center for Youth Issues

"but names will never hurt me", Thomas Brown. Video presentation to help students think about how they treat one another.

Broken Toy, Thomas Brown. This highly requested video tells the story of a boy who is constantly picked on by his classmates.

Simon's Hook, Karen Gedig Burnett (2000). A story about teases and put-downs.

No Putdowns, Character-Building Violence Prevention Curriculum.

Hot Stuff to Help Kids Chill Out: The Anger Management Book, Dr. Jerry Wilde This empowering book is designed to encourage youth to handle their anger before their anger handles them!

Getting Along with Groark. This video series teaches students in grades K-3 to work out conflicts fairly and peacefully.