

Background on *Broken Toy*

Broken Toy is the result of a fifteen year effort from writer-director Tom Brown. Tom began work with the idea of producing a powerful film that would address the physical and emotional harm that the bully problem causes. He knew that the story would have to be believable and hard-hitting in order to reach the children viewing it. His goal was to utilize a dramatic story on video to educate children as to the harm that is caused by tormenting and bullying other children. This harm is often not realized by the instigator or others.

Tom's work on the film stems from the torment he experienced during several years of his life and what he has observed during his many years as a professional camp counselor and child-care worker. Early versions of *Broken Toy* were tested in Ohio classrooms with positive results and valuable feedback from the children. The feedback prompted Tom to add and eliminate elements to the film with the end result being a powerful and moving video that may help make school a safer place for children.

Bully/ Victim Facts

- Three out of four students from non-urban schools report they have been bullied during their school career.
- Ninety percent of students felt being bullied caused social, emotional, or academic problems.
- Sixty percent of victims report being bullied by boys but forty percent report that they were bullied by girls also.
- Bullying is reported as most severe in grades 7-9 with grades 4-6 next.
- Sixty-nine percent of students believe schools respond poorly to bullying and victimization.
- Ridicule/teasing, verbal harassment, and practical jokes are the most frequently reported forms of bullying. Physical attacks are reported less frequently.
- Forty-four percent of teachers believe disruptive school behaviors are getting worse.

- Each month, over ¼ million students report being physically attacked.
- One in five high school students report avoiding restrooms out of anxiety about safety.
- Both bullies and victims have problems in later life related to their experiences.
- Everyone plays 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 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 explore means for youth and adults to prevent, control and/or correct bullying and victimization problems.

Using *Broken Toy*: Preparation Activities

Leader —

1. Read the description of the film.
2. Preview the film.
3. Consider presentation and follow-up plan of action.

Student — (5-10 minutes)

Provide students with a definition of bullying followed by a brief discussion. It is important to keep the discussion brief and focus on the ideas of the students. The discussion should not deal with any specifics of the film.

Bullying may be defined as:

“Any activity from teasing to physical attacks where one or a group of youngsters pester a victim over a period of time.”

Hazler-Hoover-Oliver, 1991

Questions for Students Before Viewing *Broken Toy*

“Kids being bullied is a problem in schools today. Three out of four kids say they have been bullied in school. Has it ever happened to you?”

1. How have you seen this happen?
2. Where do you see this happen?
3. How does it make someone feel?
4. Why do kids bully other kids?

Then say: “This is a film about bullying called *Broken Toy*. It will deal with the things we've talked about. We will talk more when it is finished.”

Show Film (approximately 25 minutes)

You may want to allow the extended credits at the end to play. This will allow students time to reflect on their own feeling about the film.

Summary of *Broken Toy*

Raymond is a twelve year-old boy who lives with his grandmother. No one at school knows much about this quiet and shy boy. Raymond is often used for a source of amusement and entertainment by a group of bullies led by two popular boys. Raymond is made fun of and teased on the playground, in the halls, in the classroom—anywhere a teacher is not around or when teachers have their backs turned.

A new boy arrived who is cheerful and chubby. Louie has gotten used to the physical and verbal torment often afforded children with his physical appearance. Raymond and Louie became friends, and for a while their friendship helps. Their friendship ends when Louie's dad is transferred to work in another state. Raymond is alone again.

The next day at school Raymond is accosted by Mike, Troy, and their friends. Raymond pushes through the crowd of jeering boys and runs into the street where he is hit by a car. Nobody meant for it to go this far... but it did.

Later that afternoon, a school official tells Mike and Troy some things that neither they nor their friends ever knew. Raymond lost his parents and little brother in a car accident three years earlier. The official stresses what a good friend could have meant to Raymond.

Mike, the bully, returns home to another disturbing event. His little brother was beaten at school because he wouldn't give an older boy his lunch money. Mike painfully reflects on his own behavior towards others.

It is learned the next day that Raymond is going to be okay. The emotional stresses on Troy and Mike are clearly shown as in their relief at the news... the children are very surprised to see Mike and Troy, these two tough guys crying.

It's easy to cry... when you're really sorry.

Following Presentation of Video

The focus of this discussion should be on student awareness and exploration of the issues, rather than explaining or preaching to them.

Sample Questions for Students

Following Viewing of *Broken Toy*

1. What are one or two words that describe your feelings. (Write responses on the board, flip chart, etc. for future discussion.)
2. Tell me about a specific scene that had important meaning for you. Why and how did it affect you?
3. How does being bullied in school affect people—both at school and away from school?
4. How can being bullied as a child affect someone as an adult?
5. What are the problems that bullies experience?
6. How can teasing lead to bigger problems?
7. How has the film changed your ideas about bullies and victims?
8. What can other kids do to improve a bullying situation?

9. What can bullies do to help themselves?
10. What can victims do to help themselves?
11. How can school staff and parents help?

Follow-up Activities

1. Have students role-play bullies, victims, and observers.
2. Use artwork or creative-writing exercises to explore feelings of students.
3. Action Plan for Classroom: Have class agree on specific things they can do differently that will lessen this problem. Follow up to determine classroom success. A school-wide “action-plan” could be initiated as well.
4. Social Studies Follow-up: Have children identify historical figures who could be considered bullies or victims. Have children consider the outcomes of their behavior.

Additional Resources

Inbox Film: A 27-minute film covering the issues of cyber-bullying, relational aggression among girls and child abduction.

No Putdowns (Grades K-2, 3-5 & 6-8): A comprehensive curriculum for violence prevention, character development and life-skills building.

The Power of One Film: A 24-minute film that deals with three stories, school bullying towards new children and the lessons they learn about respect and fairness.

The ABC's of Bullying Prevention: A resource that can be used as a major tool in the reduction and ultimate elimination of bullying in schools today by presenting necessary information, training, and guidance needed by various stakeholders.

**All resources are available thru www.ncyi.org*

**“Children cannot learn...
if they're afraid to go to school.”**

Broken Toy

Study Guide



**National
Center for
Youth Issues**

Practical Guidance Resources
Educators Can Trust

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