

Bullying

WHAT IS BULLYING?

According to the National Bullying Helpline (UK), bullying is a, “behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that is intended to hurt another individual or group either physically or emotionally.” Also, “bullying is any form of unacceptable treatment, or discrimination or behaviour intended to hurt or harm the reputation of another.”

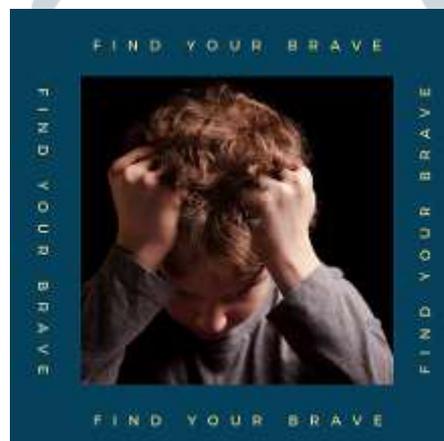
Whoever, however or wherever, bullying can have a hugely detrimental effect on a person’s mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. And if you are a person who has been through it or witnessed someone else going through it, you will know just how much of an impact it can have.

IF A CHILD IS BEING BULLIED TOP TIPS

- Remind the child that it is not their fault, and that there is nothing they need to change about themselves.
- Encourage the child to tell a trusted adult about the bullying.
- Try to keep a log of the bullying as it occurs.
- Encourage the child NOT to retaliate with hurtful words.
- Try to teach the child to respond assertively to the bullying by asking the bully to stop, and telling them that they don’t like it.
- Encourage the child to spend time with people who do make them feel good about themselves. If it is a supposed friend who is doing the bullying, help the child recognise that they are not a true friend.
- Encourage your child to be kind to others. Teach them that just because someone else has insecurities and feels the need to bully, they don’t need to act this way themselves.

If you know or think that your child is being bullied, or is bullying, there is an incredible amount of useful information on the National Bullying Helpline’s website:

<https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/>



FLOURISH WITH JO

We had the absolute pleasure of interviewing the amazing: Jo Morton-Brown. Jo is incredibly passionate about what she does. She works as an Emotional Health Practitioner and is a committed advocate for the improvement of mental health, especially in children and young people. Amongst many invaluable roles, Jo works as a school-based counsellor, a family support worker and a youth mental health first aid instructor.

Please click on the link below to watch our interview with Jo, in which she guides us through her knowledge and advice about bullying.



FIND YOUR BRAVE

Nobody should ever have to endure bullying, of any kind. It is hurtful, disabling, debilitating, crushing and demoralising. Both the National Bullying Helpline Website and Jo Morton-Brown have provided some excellent insight and advice.

We wanted to expand on this and focus on difficult obstacles in general, and the bravery and strength that are needed to overcome them – and we certainly feel that bullying can be described as a ‘difficult obstacle’. We feel that the following advice can be applied to any struggle your child may be battling.

Encouraging Children To Be Brave

The definition of ‘brave’ is the “ability to face and endure danger or pain”. We think it is fair to say that everyone will come face-to-face with something dangerous or painful, at some point in their lives. It is almost unavoidable. To try and completely shelter a child from this, or shy away from these difficult moments, whatever they may be, is to teach a falsehood. Children need empowering and equipping in life, for all that it may throw at them. Bravery is

an essential life skill. It is the part of us that is unconquerable, unbreakable and unstoppable. It is the part of us that we can call upon and use, to help us keep moving forwards, in times of need and hardship. When children know they have this part of themselves that they can call upon, they will understand that, no matter what they face, they will be able to conquer and get through it.

What Being Brave/Having Courage Means To Us

To us, being brave is not the absence of fearful situations in life. Rather, it is a deep-rooted belief that we will be able to face, with strength, whatever lessons or events may come our way. It is an internal trust that there will always be a path to improving our lives, and that there will always be an action we can take to begin that improvement. It is accepting that the bumps, mistakes, setbacks and disappointments are all part of it. It is saying 'yes' when we could have said 'no', being a true friend to ourselves and placing value on our lives. It is saying, "this hurts a lot, but my strength is bigger."

Encouraging Children To Discover Their Inner Bravery

We can do this through our own openness and honesty, and mirroring our own courage back at them. What better way to foster this life skill in children than to surround them with a network of people who also value it, and aspire to nurture it within themselves? We can help children to discover it further by having calm, truthful conversations with them about the tougher topics in life, such as bullying. We can provide safe, non-judgemental spaces for them to off-load and process their BIG feelings and emotions. We can also encourage them to try and succeed at things that may currently appear out of reach, or too difficult.



Helping Children To Develop Their Own Inner Strength

Inner strength is built on a belief in and knowledge of yourself, a genuine fondness for who you are as a person and a level of certainty in your own decision-making. It is putting one foot in front of the other with confidence, and trusting the outcome, whatever that may be. For children to develop their own inner strength, the key life skills needed are the ability to practice self-reflection without judgement or criticism. Children need to be able to forgive themselves, learn how to communicate their strengths with pride, but also ask for help when struggling. They need to know that it's OK to ask for help, that this is, in fact, a strength, and not a sign of failure. Children need to be taught how to choose events/activities in life which reflect who they are as a person: their morals and beliefs. We also need to teach children the difference between a decision that just 'looks good on paper' versus one that 'feels' right in their gut. This will help to lessen the decisions which are made to please and/or fit in, and increase the decisions which are made for their own best self.

Parents And Their Bravery Parenting Tool-Kit

First and foremost, parents need to be working on their own bravery, so they can teach their children with conviction. They need to be encouraging but not forceful, empowering but not dominant. They also need a strong belief in their own parenting skills, and the ability to ignore judgement from others. If they can stand strong behind their own values and ethics, it won't even occur to them to think about how their children's actions/behaviour/difficulties may reflect on them. Parents also need the valuable tool of TIME, and the space to provide a little each day for their child to engage in something they are good at. Having the opportunity to improve their skills, and experience success, will build a child's confidence and self-esteem. Parents need to be able to communicate openly with their children, and encourage the same in return. If a child feels they have a safe space to talk freely about how they're feeling, and that they aren't going to be corrected or belittled, they are more likely to explore their emotional world with confidence. In these moments, it is a parent's 'job' to just listen...and use one of their other tools...that of patience.

Bravery Within The Family Unit

Family communication is incredibly important when fostering bravery. Your family is your tribe, your own little community, and there is power in numbers. It is so much easier to tap into your own courage when you can see those around you doing the same. There may be times when, for example, one member's bravery and support is needed for the wellbeing of another, and times when you can all achieve so much more together, with your collective bravery. Many problems are caused by miscommunication or an inability to understand that communication. Children, in particular, are very good at reading the conversation that isn't being spoken, especially non-verbal children. Parents therefore need to ensure that their spoken message is aligned with their unspoken message, as this is sometimes an area of communication that is overlooked. Families need to understand how best to connect with their individual child, and with each other. A tribe can accomplish so much more when each member is attuned to the needs of the other members.



Our 4 Top Tips For Helping Children To Find Their Brave

Tip 1: Make each day playful, in some form or other. It's good for adults as well as children. Bravery starts with self-esteem, and this includes laughter! Thank goodness!

Tip 2: Listen to your children, but don't try to fix things immediately. Offer your child the space and opportunity to process their feelings so they feel heard. Remember - each child is an individual, and will therefore have their own likes, dislikes, goals, strengths and weaknesses. They will therefore have a very different definition of what 'brave' means to them. Just because an action or a decision might not look brave to us, it doesn't mean that it wasn't brave to that child. Celebrate and support their uniqueness.

Tip 3: Try not to worry too much about whether you are doing a good job or not. Children are very resilient and adaptable. Trying to avoid life lessons will not prepare them for adulthood. But helping them navigate through these lessons means that when they are old enough, and they go off to explore this beautiful world, they will already be equipped to manage the ups AND the downs. Your child will have their own journey to take, and life lessons that are specific to them. Your job is to be their guardian.

Tip 4: Allow your children to make mistakes and face setbacks. They will gain more and more confidence from experiencing disappointment, turning that situation around and trying again. But, more importantly, they will learn that the setback did not need to define the next decision. Allow them the freedom to evolve and grow from these lessons that they have come here to learn. And try not to see who they are as a person, as a negative reflection of you or your parenting style.

RAISING A WARRIOR Activities To Help Children Find Their Brave

Taken from Raising A Warrior: The book (The Activity Guide section):

Activity 1: Feelings Letter: Encourage your child to either write or talk about a difficult or upsetting situation. The more they learn to express and feel their feelings, the more they will feel comfortable doing so. Each time, they will be able to use more and more of their inner bravery to move through these episodes.

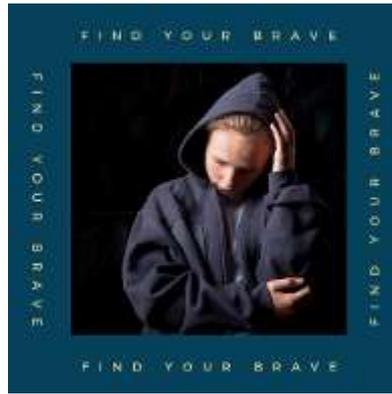
Activity 2: Fire Drill: Encourage your children to design a step-by-step plan to follow, for when they feel their emotions getting too big to handle. They will be able to carry out each step, and use their inner strength to overcome a highly-charged situation.

<https://www.raisingawarrior.co.uk/Shop.php>

Taken from Raising A Warrior: The 'I Found My Brave' On-Line Course:

Activity 1: Stuck In The Riverbed: Watch as your child learns how to recognise and identify the obstacles that may be in their way, but also the warrior strengths that they have, to knock those obstacles out of the way.

Activity 2: Processing Feelings: Here, your children will learn how to process their BIG feelings and emotions in proactive, warrior ways. There's a dragon in this activity, too!



Final Thoughts...

Humans are complex. We have been given the gift of emotions, which means that some actions may not be logical, but emotional. As a society, we are evolving very rapidly. Your job as parents is therefore getting tougher. But, children are strong and adaptable. They can cope with far more than we realise, if given the right support and environment to do so. We can't shelter them from all the challenges and problems life gives us. The best we can do is give them the tools to be able to cope with the ups and downs, at an early age, so that they never feel overwhelmed, unconfident or lacking in power. One of the most influential skills we can nurture in a child is the ability to bravely face and move past the obstacle they may face.