

PEDAGOGICAL INPUT

for the adventure of family life



51_Help, my child is being bullied!

Tim is nine years old. He is not feeling good. At school he gets teased and verbally abused. Tim suffers because of this. He hardly has any friends. When he comes home and tells his parents about his suffering, they try to comfort him: "Having friends isn't that important." "Look, you're doing well in school, that's the most important thing." "It'll be fine." But Tim doesn't feel comforted. He thinks his parents don't understand him, therefore he is lonely and has the feeling he cannot share his suffering with anyone.

Children need adults who recognise their suffering.

Recognition means: "I can see you are very sad and hurt by not having friends. Can I help you?" "This is how Tim feels seen and is no longer alone in his pain. In addition, his confidence grows because he can tell his parents everything. This strengthens his self-esteem.

For Tim, his father is very important at this age. Time spent together, in which the two have fun together, would strengthen Tim. A good idea is the shared playful scuffle. Tim can feel his powers and gets good contact with his father. If Tim feels he is valuable to his father just as he is, it will also strengthen his self-esteem.

Why is strengthening self-esteem so important?

Because it makes Tim feel like he's alright just the way he is. He is valuable just as he is. People with a healthy self-esteem do not run so much risk of being bullied. It is important for Tim that he is encouraged to show his limits, that he learns to say "no" loudly and clearly, as well as "stop it, I don't like that." He should also be encouraged to tell his teachers about it. The child concerned must be told the situation is not his fault.

Encourage the child to do something itself.

Parents should encourage friendships for the child. Friendships give strength. Hasty advice on what the child should do usually does not work. It is better to ask the child: What have you done in such situations so far? What could you do differently? Help the child come up with ideas of what to do when it is bullied.

Bullies suffer too and need help.

Inwardly, they often feel the same as the victims. They also feel undervalued. But instead of resigning themselves, they act out their frustration and aggression by finding a group member to hurt. By putting the victim down, they don't feel their own weakness and fear. At least for a short time. Aggression is always a child's cry for help.

Bullying is also a leadership issue

The problem is gladly handed over to the children. But the person who leads - boss, principal, teacher, parents - has the responsibility for the culture prevailing in an organization. Therefore, the people who lead have to rethink their leadership style and ensure a respectful atmosphere. Statements like, "Bullying has no place here" are important. This point is often overlooked. Bullying mainly occurs when it is allowed to happen or goes unnoticed.

When bullying is happening, it is important that it is talked about. Silence makes the problem worse. Also, in Tim's class or at school the topic must be made public. Adults need to decide how to create a respectful atmosphere in the school.

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Further information on the subject of bullying can be found at www.forum-p.it