

Addressing Bullying: Scripted Conversations

Author: Switchboard

*Addressing bullying is a **critical component of ensuring a child's safety and well-being**. It is essential to have ongoing discussions with both the child and their caregiver to reinforce awareness, encourage open communication, and provide guidance on how to handle such situations effectively. Below is a structured script designed to facilitate these conversations, helping caseworkers navigate discussions with both the caregiver and the child. Please note that each case is unique, and the approach should be tailored to fit the specific needs and circumstances of the child and their caregiver.*

When addressing serious matters such as bullying—like in any conversation—language barriers can prevent clients from fully understanding their rights and responsibilities, as well as key aspects and processes of service provision. To avoid misunderstandings, caseworkers should ensure that a qualified interpreter is present to facilitate clear communication. Using family members as interpreters can lead to misinformation for both caseworkers and clients. To learn more about working with interpreters, caseworkers can review the following Switchboard resources: [Introduction to Working with Interpreters](#); [Overcoming Challenges in Interpretation](#); [Scripts for Working with Interpreters](#); and [Making Sense of Mobile Apps: A Collection of Interpretation, Translation, and Integration Apps for Newcomers](#). They can also review this tip sheet from the National Accreditation of Educational Translators and Interpreters of Spoken Languages: [What to Expect from an Interpreter: Communicating Effectively with Your Child's School](#).

Addressing Bullying: A Conversation with a Caregiver Script

Olivia: Agency Caseworker

Benjamin: Caregiver

Caseworker (Olivia): Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I want to talk about an important topic which is bullying and how you can support [Child's Name] if they ever experience it.

Caregiver (Benjamin): What do you mean by bullying?

Olivia: Bullying is when someone is hurt repeatedly by mean, unwanted, or hurtful words or actions from another person. It happens a lot with kids in school. Bullying can be physical, like pushing, hitting, or pinching. It can be verbal, like name-calling or spreading lies, or social, like intentionally excluding someone from events. Some kids also experience cyberbullying, which is when someone uses social media, email, or text to intimidate or hurt someone else.

Benjamin: Oh, now I understand. Please tell me what to do so that [Child's Name] feels safe.

Olivia: Of course! If [Child's Name] ever tells you they are being bullied, the first step is to ask specific questions to understand what's happening. You will want to ask:

1. *What date did it happen?*
2. *Who was involved? This can include any children or adults who witnessed or are otherwise aware of the incident.*
3. *What exactly happened? Was it verbal threats, physical harm, online bullying, or something else?*

These details will help determine which steps need to be taken based on the nature of the situation.

Benjamin: That makes sense. What would I do next?

Olivia: If [Child's Name] confirms there is bullying, or even if you just have your own suspicions, you need to make sure the school counselor or principal is aware. Schools have protocols in place to address bullying, and they need to be involved to help keep [Child's Name] safe.

Benjamin: Okay, so I should report it to the school. What if the situation keeps happening?

Olivia: If the bullying continues or gets worse, make sure you also inform me so we can provide additional support.

Benjamin: Got it. And what if it turns into something more serious, like a fight or physical harm?

Olivia: If there is any physical assault such as pushing, hitting, or anything that causes harm, you may need to contact the school as soon as possible, and potentially the police,

to ensure proper action is taken. Safety is the top priority, so we want to make sure any serious incidents are handled appropriately.

Benjamin: The police? I'm not sure we should talk to the police. I don't want any trouble with them or immigration.

Olivia: I understand why you might feel scared or unsure about reporting bullying to the police. You've experienced a lot, and I know that talking to law enforcement might not feel safe. But I want you to know that you and [Child's Name] have a right to be safe and no one should be hurting you or [Child's Name]. Also, as a case manager, I have a legal responsibility to report if there is any harm being done to [Child's Name].

Benjamin: I hear what you are saying, but I am still concerned.

Olivia: I understand your concerns. Maybe I can help you by going to the police with you, or maybe we can find other organizations that specialize in this type of support, so you do not go through it alone.

Benjamin: Yes. That would be helpful.

Olivia: Great! So, let's review what we have discussed so far. Can you tell me what to do if [Child's Name] tells you they are being bullied?

Benjamin: First, I ask for details, then I report it to the school, and then, if it gets more serious, I tell you and we can report it to the police.

Olivia: Exactly. You're a key part of making sure [Child's Name] feels safe and supported. Always remind them that they can talk to you or someone that they trust.

Benjamin: Thank you for explaining this. I'll make sure to follow these steps if anything happens.

Olivia: That's great to hear. If you ever need guidance or support, don't hesitate to reach out. I am here to help.

A Conversation with a Child

Olivia: Agency Caseworker

Benjamin: Caregiver

Mia: Child

Caseworker (Olivia): Benjamin and Mia, thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. I want to talk about something very important: bullying. School should be a safe place, but sometimes kids might experience or witness bullying. Do you both know what bullying looks like?

Child (Mia): Um...like when someone is mean to you?

Olivia: That's right! Bullying happens when someone is repeatedly mean, hurts others on purpose, or tries to make them feel bad. It can be physical, like pushing or hitting; verbal, like name-calling; social, like someone spreading rumors; or even online. Have you seen or experienced anything like that at school?

Mia: I think so...sometimes kids make fun of others for how they look or talk.

Olivia: That's a good observation. It's important to know what to do in those situations. If you ever feel bullied, what do you think you should do?

Mia: Tell a teacher?

Olivia: Yes! That's one of the best things you can do.

Mia: But what if that makes it worse? What if everyone gets mad at me?

Olivia: No matter what, you should always tell a trusted adult, whether it's a teacher, counselor, or your caregiver. Standing up for yourself is important because it lets the other children know that you respect yourself and that you have adults around to support you. You do not have to fight back with them, but do your best to stay calm and walk away if possible. Now, Benjamin, how do you think you can support Mia if they tell you about bullying?

Caregiver (Benjamin): I'd listen and reassure them that they are not alone. Then, I'd talk to the school if needed.

Olivia: That's great! It's important to create a safe space where kids feel comfortable sharing. Also, remind them that they are not to blame for the bullying. Now, Mia, what if you see someone else being bullied? What can you do?

Mia: Should I tell a teacher then too?

Olivia: Yes! Telling a teacher can also help the other person being bullied.

Mia: But what if they start calling me names for telling the teacher?

Olivia: I know that it can be very uncomfortable to tell the teacher, but teachers and other trusted adults are here to help you, and they know how to handle these situations. They will support you and the other person so you won't be alone. You can also be a friend to

the person being bullied. Sitting with them at lunch, saying something kind, or just letting them know they are not alone can make a big difference. But always make sure you stay safe.

Benjamin: That's a good idea. Sometimes kids might be scared to speak up.

Olivia: Yes, and that's why it's so important to talk about this. If you ever feel unsafe, always reach out to a trusted adult. We are here to help and make sure school stays a safe place for learning.

Mia: Okay, I will try to remember that.

Olivia: You're doing great, and remember, kindness and respect go a long way. Thank you both for talking with me today. If you ever need help or advice, I'm here for you.

Benjamin and Mia: Thank you!

Additional Resources

To learn more about bullying prevention and intervention, please review the following resources:

Switchboard published a guide, [Bullying Prevention and Response when Supporting Students](#), to help community-based organizations, school staff, and resettlement agencies recognize bullying and its impact on refugee populations.

State of New York Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (BRIA) developed a guide, [Anti-Bullying Instructional Resources](#), to provide background on A. when bullying may be a civil rights violation and B. anti-bullying strategies for use before and after school.

U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) developed a guide, [Talking About Bullying with Children and Families](#), covering how service providers can talk to families and children about bullying.

The Kids Research Institute Australia provides [Bullying Infographics](#) to help children learn more about bullying and respond appropriately to bullying behaviors.

Dolly's Dream provides an [Anti-Bullying Toolkit for Families](#) to help parents and caregivers manage bullying within school and community settings.

Pacer's National Bullying Prevention Center has a host of resources for children and adults on how to navigate bullying, help others who are experiencing bullying, and generally address bullying within one's community.

- [What Youth Can Do if They Are Experiencing Bullying](#)
- [What Youth Can Do to Help Peers Who Are Experiencing Bullying](#)
- [What Adults Can Do to Help Youth Experiencing Bullying](#)
- [What Communities Can Do to Address and Prevent Bullying](#)
- [Notifying the School About Bullying](#) (template letter)
- [Student Action Plan Against Bullying](#)
- [What if Your Child is the One Showing Bullying Behavior?](#)

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