



Written by Mrs. Lisa DeBoer & Mrs. Liza Smith

When A Student Feels Left Out or Lonely...

We've all seen it: the girl sitting by herself at lunch while all the other girls are involved in animated conversations, the boy leaning against the wall alone while the other boys throw a football or chase each other around. For many students making friends and socializing comes fairly easily, especially while at school – even in the classroom (much to the teachers' dismay). However, there are some students who have difficulties socializing and finding friends, making the school hours long and lonely. Many children who describe themselves as lonely may suffer from:

- Poor self-esteem
- Self-consciousness
- Awkwardness with others
- Harsh self-criticism

All of these issues make students less likely to join in activities and form friendships, isolating them further and making it all the more difficult for them to improve their self-esteem. This can become a self-defeating cycle. Kids who are challenged with socialization and are frequently lonely tend to be more vulnerable to peer-pressure when they do find friends. These students need support and encouragement from caring adults in their lives in order to overcome loneliness, learn social skills, and develop meaningful relationships with their peers. Here are a few suggestions to help a lonely student:

Be There to Listen: Listen to the student with acceptance and compassion. Too often, children learn from others to discount or ignore their feelings. You may not be able to do anything to help your student but simply giving them your attention and encouragement can make a difference.

Suggest New Activities: being involved in various activities both at school and off campus can help to build confidence and foster new relationships.

Help practice Social Skills: have a discussion with your student about social conduct and healthy relationships. Talk to your student about your own relationships, especially those when you were his/her age. Discuss the up's and down's, the good times and not-so-good times. Let your student know that relationships take effort and time.

Seek help for persistent problems: If your student always seems sad, withdrawn, anxious, or down on him/herself, he or she may be struggling with depression. Talk with him/her about how he/she is feeling and keep communicating. If you feel that your student may be struggling with depression talk to your family health care provider.

Conversation Starters:

- What comforts you when you feel lonely?
- What is most important to you about spending time with friends?
- What is most important to you about spending time by yourself?
- What do you find most difficult about getting to know a new friend?

Biblical Virtues to Pray for your Children:

Salvation: "Lord, let salvation spring up within my children that they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory." (Is. 45:8, 2 Tim. 2:10)

Love for God's Word: "May my children grow to find Your Word more precious than pure gold and sweeter than honey from the comb" (Ps. 19:10)

Faithfulness: "Let love and faithfulness never leave my children, but bind these twin virtues around their necks and write them on the tablet of their hearts" (Prov. 3:3)

A Bit about Bullying:

Some interesting statistics-

- Almost 9 out of 10 kids say they've seen someone being bullied.
- For every 25 middle school students, an average of 2 kids are harassed daily and another 2 to 3 are bullied weekly
- Most bullying (40-75%) occurs in school hallways, bathrooms, lunch areas, playgrounds, and classrooms.
- Modern technology has added new ways to bully- cyberbullying.
- Bullying is often a sign that children/teens are heading for trouble and are at risk for serious violence

How do kids bully?

Direct bullying is any form of physical abuse or violence that harms or frightens kids, such as hitting, shoving, pushing, etc. Indirect bullying occurs when one or more students use threats or intimidation. Further, forms of teasing, deliberate exclusion, and 'picking on' a student are all forms of emotional harassment. Cyberbullying occurs via cell phone (text messages, camera phones), instant messenger, Internet (Facebook/MySpace/email/etc.) This type of bullying can occur at anytime without the need for face-to-face interaction.

What if my child is being bullied?

Support your child, don't laugh or shrug it off or explain "that's just how kids are at this age". Be prepared to talk to teachers, coaches, administrators and counselors because they may not be aware of the situation or noticed a change in behavior. Encourage your child to find supportive friends to walk the hallways with and sit with during lunch/break and always tell an adult immediately when bullying occurs, not days later.

Parents and teachers can talk to students about bullying behavior and teach them not to take part in any form of bullying. Make sure the student knows standing by as another student is being bullied is condoning bullying behavior. Discuss different ways your child can help combat bullying. Bullying hurts everybody!

Signs of being bullied:

- Acting depressed
- Withdrawing socially
- Complaining of frequent illness
- Not wanting to go to school or avoid certain classes
- Bring home damaged possessions
- Reporting things being "lost"
- Stating that he/she feels picked on
- Displaying mood swings, including frequent crying
- Attempting to take protection to school, such as a stick, rock, knife, etc.



Who are we?

Lisa DeBoer and Liza Smith are the counselors at Redlands Christian School.

Their goal is to implement a comprehensive program that will meet the social/emotional needs of every student at RCS.

Lisa DeBoer is currently finishing her Masters of Education in School Counseling/Guidance at Azusa Pacific University. She is married to Matt DeBoer, 6th grade teacher, and has one son, 20 month old Luke and another baby on the way. Lisa is on campus Tuesday through Thursday from 8am-1pm.

Liza Smith holds a Masters Degree in Counseling & Guidance. This is her second year working part-time as a school counselor at RCS. She is married and has three children, Ashlee, Chloe and Noah. She is currently finishing a School Psychology credential. Liza is on campus Monday and Friday from 10-1pm.



On Improving Reading

Comprehension

Children often struggle with reading difficulties. Here are some tips for parents and teachers to help children improve their reading comprehension:

Monitoring-Have student read aloud to someone (e.g., parent) and stop the student after each sentence or paragraph to assure the student understands what he/she is reading.

Look-backs-Direct student to reread any text that contains information not initially comprehended.

Verbal Rehearsal-After reading a sentence or paragraph have the student talk to themselves aloud about what they are reading.

Visualization-Have student stop periodically and create a mental picture or a “movie” about what they are reading.

Previewing-Have student read everything except the regular printed text (e.g., titles, subtitles, captions, chapter review).

RESOURCE: Dehn, M.J. (2008). Working Memory and academic learning: Assessment and intervention. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc

1. Assign additional responsibilities to the child (e.g., chores, errands, etc.) to give him/her a feeling of success and accomplishment.
2. Emphasize individual success or progress rather than winning or “beating” other students/siblings.
3. Deliver a predetermined signal (e.g., hand signal, verbal cue, etc.) when the child begins to demonstrate impulsive behaviors.
4. Provide child with adequate time to perform activities in order to reduce his/her impulsive behaviors.
5. Provide the child with a routine to be followed when making decisions (e.g., place a list of decision-making strategies on the student’s desk).
6. Provide child with clear, simply stated explanations, instructions, and directions so that he/she knows exactly what is expected.
7. Reduce the opportunity to act impulsively by limiting decision making. Gradually increase opportunities for decision making as the child demonstrates success.

Dealing with Impulsive Behavior

As educators and as parents, we have encountered children who are highly impulsive with their behaviors. Often we ask how we can handle these behaviors, and many times we opt for punishment. Although punishment may seem effective, it is only temporarily effective. In order to help children to become less impulsive, there must be structure and consistency in our interactions with them. Here are some ideas for classroom interventions or behavior modifications at home:

RESOURCE: Mc Carney, S.B., Cummins Wunderlich, K., and Bauer, A.M. (1993). The Pre-referral intervention manual. Columbia, MO: Hawthorne Educational Services, Inc.