

# Bullying presents problems but communication is key

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Bullyinginformation from education.com

Bullying is a community problem, so are solutions

SALT LAKE CITY -- For many kids, the excitement of a new year awaits them as school starts back up. But for those who are the victims of bullying, it's a terrifying prospect to go back to school.

Sherry, whose son will be a freshman in high school this year, is hoping for the best. Her son had had problems with bullies through sixth grade into middle school. The family has since switched schools. With a new school, she hopes the bullying this year will stop.

"I was sick to my stomach every day. I would cry," said the Davis County mom.

Lori, the mother of a 14-year old, also cries when she thinks about her son going to school.

"You feel upset," Lori, also a Davis county mom says. "You can't help them to make them feel better."

Both mothers decided it would be best for their children if KSL did not disclose their last names. However, both desperately want to share their stories in an effort to help other parents going through the same issue.

"We didn't get a whole lot from the school. They just said they would take care of it. But it would start back up a few weeks later." -- Lori

While both turned to school administrators for help, the bullying wouldn't always stop.

"We didn't get a whole lot from the school. They just said they would take care of it. But it would start back up a few weeks later," Lori said.

"My son was marked," Sherry said. "And so, they would deal with one bully but that bully had friends or other kids would step in and bully."

Both boys didn't want to go to school. Each came up with reasons why they didn't want to go - migraines, an upset stomach, or nausea.

"He did not want to go to school," Sherry said. "But I knew he had to figure out how to handle stuff."

Sherry says she tried to help her son handle the situation by talking to him, keeping communication between the two open. She also talked to him about the bully.

"I helped him see from the bully's perspective. It's really his problem. It's not my son's problem. There has to be something going on in his life that makes him want to hurt other people or cause pain," Sherry said.

Lori's challenge was more difficult because her son indicated he was going to hurt himself after being bullied relentlessly. "He told me that it was hard. And he wondered why he was still here," Lori said. "When we found that out, we knew we needed to get him some help."

Lori said that happened on a Thursday and she and her husband got their son into counseling on Monday.

Enlarge image

Sherry's son, who has been the victim of bullying, will start high school this year

"We just had to make sure there were no knives available or a weapon he could use to hurt himself," she said. "That was the scariest part for me and, I'm sure, my husband too."

Lori said she and her husband insisted on changing the school her son attended. She says that helped, but acknowledges that is not the answer for everyone.

Both mothers agree that the best strategy is to communicate with their children, even though sometimes it is difficult to communicate with a teenager.

"Parents aren't usually a teenager's favorite person. Usually, you don't want to have anything to do with mom and dad," Sherry said. "But if a child doesn't have somebody to go to, what will happen to them?"

In addition to talking with their children, both parents say watch your child's behavior - such as attitude, sleep patterns, posture, and grade fluctuations. This is how each knew their child was having problems at school. "We can always pretty much tell when he's having a bad time," Lori said. "When we see that we say, 'Okay, let's go for a walk. Let's go find out what's going on.'"