

*Words Can Work* offers information, communication strategies and the words to help keep kids safe.

**Build communication daily.**

Parents can say, “Wow, I had a tough time at work today. Here’s what happened.” Or “I had a really interesting experience at my meeting.” When parents share something about themselves, kids are more likely to share honestly too. **Dr. Beresin**

**Stand up to bullies.**

Someone being bullied can say, “What’s your problem? Stop doing this to me. I’m not going to take it anymore.” That’s not fighting, that’s confronting. Words can be very powerful. Use them. **Dr. Beresin**

**Encourage by-standers to defend a bully’s target.**

Parents can help kids think this through: “If you saw someone being cruel, would you speak up?” “Who would you tell?” “What are the reasons you might hesitate?” “Tell me how you’d feel if you were being hurt and no one defended you.” **Dr. Beresin**

Read more communication strategies in this *Words Can Work* booklet.

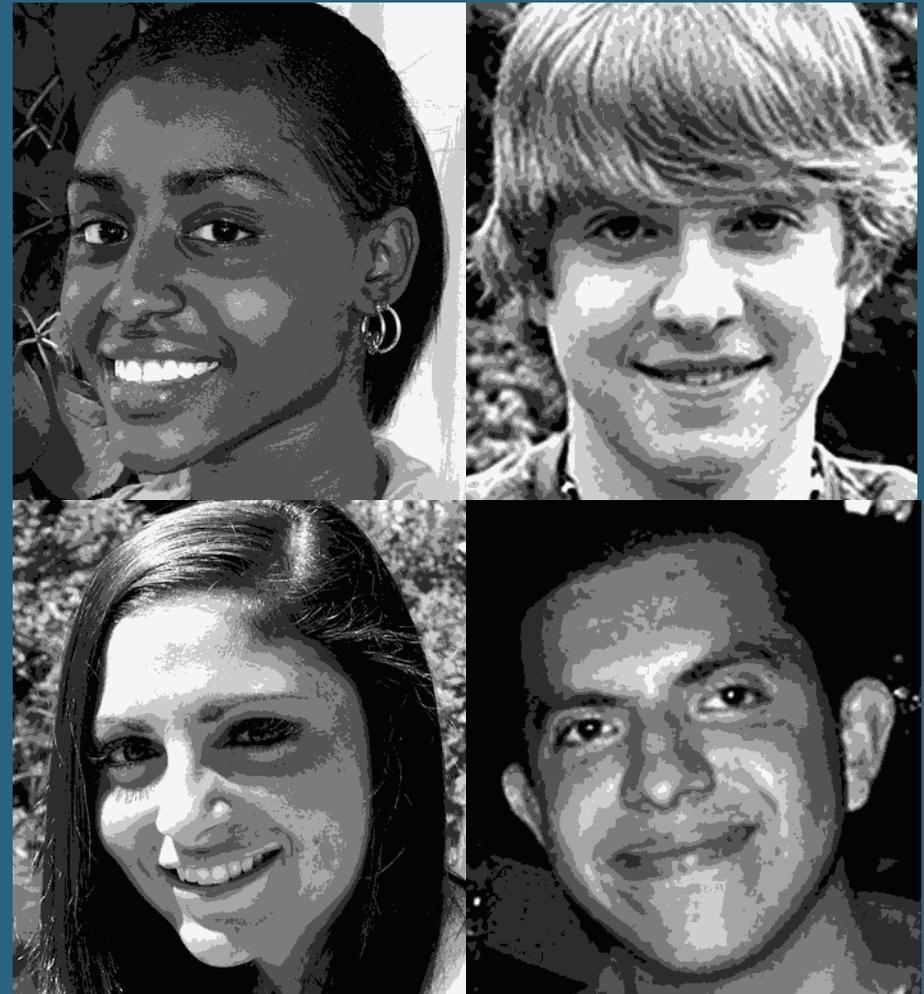


**WORDS CAN WORK®**  
*When Talking About Bullying*  
Published by Blake Works Inc.  
PO Box 1402  
Gloucester, MA 01930 U.S.A.  
978.282.1663  
info@wordscanwork.com  
wordscanwork.com

# Words Can Work: When Talking About Bullying



A guide for young people, parents, and other caregivers



# About Us

## **WORDS CAN WORK®** *When Talking About Bullying*

Published by Blake Works Inc.  
PO Box 1402 Gloucester  
Massachusetts 01930 U.S.A.

Copyright © 2010 Blake Works Inc.  
All rights reserved.

Blake Works Inc. is an authorized  
licensee of the trademark Words  
Can Work® owned by Jeanne  
Blake.

ISBN-13: 978-0-9753147-5-3  
ISBN-10: 0-9753147-5-0

Printed in the United States of  
America

No portion of this publication may  
be reproduced, stored in or intro-  
duced into a retrieval system or  
transmitted, in any form, or by any  
means (photocopying, electronic,  
mechanical, recording or other-  
wise), without the express prior  
written permission of Blake Works  
Inc. and Jeanne Blake.

The scanning, uploading and distri-  
bution of this booklet on the Inter-  
net or by any other means without  
the express permission of Blake  
Works Inc. and Jeanne Blake is il-  
legal and punishable by law.

The content of this booklet is for  
informational purposes only. It is  
not intended to replace profes-  
sional advice. For specific issues,  
please consult a medical or health  
professional.

Some names in this booklet have  
been changed to protect identities.



Author Jeanne Blake is a medical  
reporter and the creator of *Words Can  
Work*®. She is also founder and president  
of Blake Works Inc. (certified as a  
Woman Owned Business) and Family  
Health Productions, which produce mul-  
timedia about the public and mental health challenges  
young people face growing up.

Blake is an affiliated faculty member of the Division on  
Addictions at Harvard Medical School, and a trustee of  
McLean Hospital, Harvard's largest psychiatric facility.  
She has earned the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Jour-  
nalism Award and has appeared on *Oprah*, *The Today  
Show*, *The Cristina Show*, and CNN, and has been  
featured on NPR and Bloomberg Radio.

Jeanne Blake speaks nationally to parents, healthcare  
professionals, educators, and work/life professionals  
about how adults can help kids make healthy decisions.  
She is a consultant to communities and corporations on  
how to implement programs to support effective  
parent/child communication.

### **wordscanwork.com**

At [wordscanwork.com](http://wordscanwork.com), you can learn about other *Words Can  
Work* booklets and DVDs that help young people face chal-  
lenges growing up. You can read *Issues and Answers* columns  
in which young people, parents, and experts share their experi-  
ence dealing with substance abuse, bullying, depression, and  
more. You can also read Jeanne Blake's blog.

# Contents

Note From the Author.....	2
High-tech Bullying.....	3
What is Bullying .....	7
Jose's New Beginning .....	9
Bullied: Jeremiah's Lifelong Wound .....	12
Beyond the Bullies .....	14
Being the Bully.....	18
Bullied Into Quitting.....	23
Additional Resources.....	26
Contributor .....	Inside Back Cover
Endnotes.....	Inside Back Cover

# Words Can Work

When Talking With Kids About Bullying



## Note From the Author

Too often, bullying is excused as a joke or just something kids do. The truth is, bullying is cruel behavior that often has long-lasting negative effects. Both the target of the harassment and the bully may be harmed.

The stories in this booklet are relayed as told by young people and parents I interviewed. They wanted to talk about their painful experiences so others could learn from them. Maybe after reading these stories, young people will intervene to stop a bully, or be more inclined to turn to an adult for help. And more young people might think twice before treating someone cruelly.

In writing *Words Can Work: When Talking About Bullying*, I realized once again the power of communication. This booklet will inspire young people and adults to talk about bullying and consider the steps they can and must take to stop it when they see it. I'm grateful to Breanna, Jose, Trejonda, Daniel, and Kevin for telling their stories, and to Eugene Beresin, M.D., for so generously sharing his expertise.



# High-tech Bullying

When Breanna was in 8th grade, another girl wanted to go out with Breanna's boyfriend, Joe. So she told him Breanna cheated on him.

Joe believed the lie and broke up with Breanna. He and his friends started picking on her and calling her horrible names. They put gum in her hair and tripped her in the hallway. One night, they called to say they were at a party. "Oh wait," they said. "You aren't invited."

Girls were mean to her, too. "They called me names just because the boys were doing it," Breanna says. Someone made a website called "I Hate Breanna." And Breanna received instant messages calling her degrading names.

Her mom Debbie called the boys' parents. They said their children would never do something like that. "You know how boys are," they said. "It was just a joke."

Debbie and Breanna didn't think it was funny. Breanna was devastated. Her mom had named her Breanna because it's Celtic for "strong." But she didn't feel strong now. She started skipping school.

Breanna says she told a school administrator what was happening, and that he said because it was happening outside of school, on the Internet, he couldn't do anything about it.

One day, Breanna found a note in her locker. It warned she'd be killed if she went on the school ski trip. "Someone else sent an instant message telling me I should just kill myself," she says, "that I had no reason to live."

Breanna walked down the hall, crying, not knowing who was going to threaten her next.

## FACT:

Nearly 20 percent of children (six to 11) and more than 33 percent of older kids (12 to 17) had threatening or embarrassing things said about them through e-mail, instant messages, Web sites, chat rooms, or text messages.<sup>1</sup>



# Additional Resources

---

## Recommended Resources

### **Boys on Bullying (20-minute DVD)**

Five boys address emotions resulting from bullying: depression, isolation, anger, and shame. They tell how support from peers, parents, or another caring adult made the difference. Includes discussion guide. For grades five through 12, parents, and other caregivers.

### **The Power of Girls: Inside and Out® (20-minute DVD)**

Five girls describe how they dealt with bullying, eating disorders, low self-esteem, early sexual activity, and loss. They tell how strong, nurturing connections with peers, parents or other caring adults helped them cope. Includes discussion guide. For grades 5 through 12, parents and other caregivers.

*“Boys on Bullying and The Power of Girls: Inside and Out are some of the most powerful, engaging resources I’ve seen. They go straight to the heart of what young people think and struggle with in responding to their own emotions and the actions of others. The stories portray the resilience of young people making positive decisions that affect their mental health and wellness, and the importance of key friends and adults upon whom they can depend. Every adolescent, teacher, counselor, and parent should see and discuss these videos.”*

**Kenneth E. Nye, Ed.D., Executive Director**  
**Office of School Health Programs**  
**Tennessee Department of Education**

## Also available at [wordscanwork.com](http://wordscanwork.com)

### **Words Can Work® Booklets**

Words Can Work:  
When Talking About Alcohol

Words Can Work:  
When Talking About Bullying

Words Can Work:  
When Talking About Depression

Words Can Work:  
When Talking About Drugs

Words Can Work:  
When Talking With Kids About Sexual Health

Words Can Work:  
When Talking About Steroids

### **DVDs**

Alcohol: True Stories Hosted by Matt Damon

Boys on Bullying

Depression: True Stories

Drugs: True Stories

In Our Own Words: Teens and AIDS

The Power of Girls: Inside and Out

Raising Healthy Kids: Families Talk About Sexual Health

Steroids: True Stories Hosted by Curt Schilling

**Quantity discounts available.**

**Call for pricing.**

**Telephone: 978.282.1663**

**Order at: [wordscanwork.com](http://wordscanwork.com)**

**E-mail: [info@wordscanwork.com](mailto:info@wordscanwork.com)**

---

# Contributor



**Eugene Beresin, M.D.** is the Director of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Residency Training at Massachusetts General Hospital and McLean Hospital, Co-Director of the Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Mental Health and Media, and a Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

---

## wordscanwork.com

At [wordscanwork.com](http://wordscanwork.com), learn about other *Words Can Work* booklets and DVDs that tell true stories about challenges kids face growing up. You can read *Issues and Answers* columns in which young people, parents, and experts share their experience dealing with substance abuse, bullying, depression, and more. You can also read Jeanne Blake's blog.



---

The Spanish translation of *Words Can Work: When Talking About Bullying* is provided by **Precision Translating Services Inc.** [www.pretran.com](http://www.pretran.com)

---

## Endnotes

1. Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, September 2006
2. 2001 - 2002 California Student Survey
3. Bullying Facts and Statistics, The National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center or they source it to Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at School: What We Know and What We Can Do*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, Inc., p. 19.
4. Bullying Facts and Statistics, The National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center or they source it to: Nansel, T.R., Overpeck, M., Pilla, R.S., Ruan, W.J., Simons-Morton, B., & Scheidt, P. (2001). Bullying Behaviors Among US Youth: Prevalence and Association With Psychosocial Adjustment, 285(16), 2094-2100.
5. The School Bully Can Take a Toll on Your Child's Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services