

Combating Bullying Through Leadership Development

Peers may prove to be highly effective in fighting bullying amongst children. The inner strength and confidence gained through leadership programs create strong children who are ready to stand up to bullies.

(Middleburg, VA) August XX, 2017 – Bullying is a social epidemic that affects many in the American culture; especially when young. According to one large study, around 49% of children grades 4-12 experienced bullying by other students at least once during the previous month.¹ The same study indicates that 30.8% of children reported bullying others within the past month.¹ In a 2007 study published in *School Psychology Review*, middle school students reported being bullied in various ways, including: name calling (44.2 %); teasing (43.3 %); spreading rumors or lies (36.3%); pushing or shoving (32.4%); hitting, slapping, or kicking (29.2%); leaving out (28.5%); threatening (27.4%); stealing belongings (27.3%); sexual comments or gestures (23.7%); e-mail or blogging (9.9%).¹ Bullying may have far reaching, negative effects on a victim's life and health. Although most children who are bullied do not become suicidal, persistent bullying can lead to or worsen feelings of isolation, rejection, exclusion, and despair, as well as depression and anxiety.¹

As bullying awareness increases, parents and educators are looking for ways to combat the epidemic. Unfortunately, only about 20 to 30% of students who are bullied notify adults, which make efforts to curtail bullying challenging.¹ According to [leadership development](#) expert Joe DeRing, Founder of [Empower Adventures](#), teaching leadership skills may create brave and confident children who are more likely to intervene when one of their peers is bullied.

“When children are taught leadership skills, they develop the inner strength and courage needed to stand up to bullies,” says DeRing. “Proper leadership development also includes guidance on empathy and judging right from wrong.” The positive qualities associated with a good leader – such as respect for others, bravery and high self-esteem – may combine to create a child who is unafraid to stand up for themselves and others when being bullied. According to a study on peer intervention, bullying stops within 10 seconds 57% of the time when a peer intervenes and stands up to a bully.¹

To encourage peer intervention, children should be taught to identify when a child is being bullied and how to respond. Some key indicators if a student is being bullied include: frequent truancy or tardiness, avoiding changing rooms or bathrooms, being subject to name calling, being subject to rumors, being left out of activities, spending break or lunchtime alone, and being subject to hurtful phone texts or Facebook posts.²

Once a child becomes aware of someone being bullied, they should be encouraged to be kind to the victim and talk to a parent, teacher or another trustworthy adult to let them know what is happening.³ Children can also help a victim of bullying feel better by trying to include them in activities or simply spending time with them so they know they are not

alone.³ Finally, being a leader and standing up to the bully will let the bully know that their behavior is not acceptable.³

“Leadership is the best way to prevent bullying,” adds DeRing. “Learning leadership skills through real experiences that test courage, such as [zip lining](#) or [survival courses](#), will help children develop the mentality needed to stop bullying”

About Joe DeRing:

Joe is a true American hero. Having served multiple tours of duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, Joe returned from service seeking to use his leadership skills in a way that would allow him to contribute to society. Partnering with advisors Dev Pathik and Jason Clement, Joe developed Empower Leadership Sports in Middletown, Connecticut. Later, the team created Empower Adventures in Tampa Bay. The center and Joe’s incredible personal journey from battlefield to inspirational adventure operator has now been featured on CNN, FOX, and numerous other media outlets across the U.S.

About Empower Adventures:

Empower Adventures operates canopy tours, zip lines, ropes courses, and leadership development and adventure activities at the central location in Tampa Bay, Florida, Connecticut and Virginia (in the Washington D.C. area). At Leadership Sports in Connecticut alone, Empower Adventures has served over 75,000 guests since 2009. The company’s goal is to help guests overcome fears in order to gain confidence and empower themselves: In the past three years, 10,000 guests have visited the Virginia Empower Adventures location and only four did not continue to the Tree Top Zip Tour.

Empower Adventures utilizes best-in-class techniques to train guides and offers the highest standard of safety protocols within the outdoor adventure industry. Empower Adventures provides a guide for each adventure group, regardless of size. The adventure center guides at Empower Adventures aim to provide customers with a powerful, memorable and inspirational experience which engenders a positive attitude and encourages teamwork. Outdoor adventure guides are specially trained to cultivate the creativity and problem-solving skills that are necessary to overcome challenges and develop leadership skills. Special team building sessions are also available to facilitate bonding in any group.

1. “Facts About Bullying.” *StopBullying.gov*. Department of Health and Human Services, 13 Sept. 2013. Web. 03 Aug. 2017.
2. “How to Help Someone Being Bullied.” *Bullying UK*. Family Lives, n.d. Web. 03 Aug. 2017.
3. “What Kids Can Do.” *StopBullying.gov*. Department of Health and Human Services, 09 Mar. 2012. Web. 03 Aug. 2017.

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Media Inquiries:

Karla Jo Helms

JoTo PR

888-202-4614

www.jotopr.com