

Play by the Rules

Worksheet 3-2: Bullying Case Study

Part 1:

Eric and Dylan were the best of friends. They had been in school with each other most of their lives and were now in high school. They both enjoyed playing video games, computer games and making films for school projects.

Many of their classmates considered them to be “outcasts.” They were teased by the athletes for being computer geeks. The athletes called them names, left threatening messages on their lockers and made prank phone calls. As time passed, the bullying seemed to get worse. Eric and Dylan were slowly withdrawing from school activities and were no longer participating in class as usual.

Finally, after several teacher conferences, Eric and Dylan told a counselor about the bullying. The counselor referred them to the assistant principal. This only made matters worse. The student athletes then became physically aggressive. They met up with Eric and Dylan in the student parking lot and kicked them, spit at them and cursed them for going to the principal. Before and after school became very tense times for Eric and Dylan. They feared that the athletes would continue to rough them up.

Several months passed and the bullying continued. Eric and Dylan were growing tired of the teasing and aggression, so they told their parents. Eric’s father told him to “be a man,” and Dylan’s mother called the principal. This only made Eric and Dylan feel worse and they decided that something had to be done.

Questions:

1. What is bullying? Give examples.

2. Can bullying ever be a crime? If so, what crime(s)?

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Part 2:

On a sunny April day, a suburban high school found itself under attack by two of its own students. In less than 15 minutes of the first lunch period, two student gunmen killed 13 people and injured 21 others before turning the guns on themselves. This was the most devastating school shooting in U.S. history.

The evening before the shootings, Eric and Dylan gathered two sawed-off shotguns that had been purchased for them by an 18 year-old friend a few months earlier. They also called a friend who then sold them a 9mm pistol and two boxes of ammunition.

That sunny day in April was the last day Eric and Dylan would see, along with 13 other innocent lives. The two young men made several pipe bombs and placed them in the cafeteria and other strategic places throughout the school, going unnoticed that morning. At 11:17 a.m. the cafeteria was at its maximum capacity. The custodian had gone to change out the school's surveillance videotape when the first explosion occurred. Eric and Dylan were watching from their cars and had planned to shoot the students who might escape the bombs. They also put bombs with timers in their cars to go off when they reentered the school. At 11:19 a.m., Eric and Dylan reentered the school and began shooting with no specific targets. By this time, four people were dead and they were still shooting. One witness heard Eric say, "This is what we always wanted to do. This is awesome."

The tragedy continued as Eric and Dylan moved from the cafeteria to the library, shooting and killing eight more students and one teacher. Many students who heard the pop of the guns thought it was a senior prank that usually happened this time each year. But it was not a prank. These two young men terrorized an entire city, state and even the nation for several hours that day in April.

After the shootings, it was revealed that Eric and Dylan had been planning this attack for over a year. They planned to kill as many students and faculty as possible. Detectives found lists at each of the boy's homes totaling 67 people they intended to kill.

Questions:

1. What actions were the result of the bullying?
2. Who was affected by this incident? Discuss how each group was affected.
3. Who could have prevented this tragedy?
4. Were there any warning signs?