

# The Silent Struggle: Understanding the Mental Health Effects of Bullying

*Join Stand for the Silent in Their Mission to Support Affected Students and Foster Resilience.*

OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLA. , OK, UNITED STATES, May 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- May is National Mental Health Awareness Month, making it a great time to put an issue in the spotlight that is leading many of our nation's youth to suffer mentally. While some share what they are going through with being bullied or doing the bullying, many others suffer silently, leading to serious issues that may be life threatening. The more we can bring this issue out into the light, the less silent suffering young people will be led to doing.

"Bullying is something that needs to get a lot of attention so that people can prevent and recognize it," says Kirk Smalley, co-founder of Stand for the Silent. "It's the only way we can help those who are suffering from being involved in bullying. We owe it to our youth to be proactive with this."

Smalley knows all too well the silent suffering that those who are bullied endure. At age 11, his son Ty committed suicide due to being bullied. That unimaginable loss led him and his late wife to create Stand for the Silent, in hopes that they could help keep other parents from going through the same situation.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), bullying has serious and lasting negative effects on mental health and overall well-being of youth involved in bullying in any way. Negative outcomes from being involved in bullying include depression, anxiety, substance abuse, poor social functioning, poor school performance, lower grade point average, poor school attendance, and involvement in interpersonal violence or sexual violence.

The CDC also reports that bullying behavior and suicide-related behavior are closely related. Any



Photo courtesy of Stand For The Silent

involvement in bullying puts someone at a higher risk for feelings of helplessness and raise risks of suicide. A report published in the Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, advised that bullying victimization is a strong deterrent of adolescent health, including suicidal behavior, depression, anxiety, sleep problems, substance use, and other adverse impacts on health and well-being.

One issue that desperately needs more attention is that of social media usage and its impact on mental health. The CDC reports that high school students who frequently use social media are more likely to experience bully victimization, persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness, and suicide risk. This is a major concern, as they report that 77% of students surveyed report that they frequently use social media.



Photo courtesy of Stand For The Silent

Stand for the Silent

While the information seems like a lot of bad news, the good thing is that there are things that can be done. According to Mental Health America, bullying can be addressed by starting early, teaching children to be assertive, stopping bullying when it is identified, listening to and supporting children who speak up about bullying, and teaching kids to take action when they witness bullying. It's important that our youth know there are consequences for bullying others.

“

Bullying is something that needs to get a lot of attention so that people can prevent and recognize it. We owe it to our youth to be proactive with this.”

*Kirk Smalley, co-founder of  
Stand for the Silent*

“Together we can help prevent and address the bullying issue in the country,” added Smalley. “When we do that we will help to improve mental health, too. It’s all connected.”

Smalley and his wife, Laura, started the organization following their 11-year-old son, ending his own life due to bullying. They turned their pain and loss into a mission of helping others. He travels the country giving presentations

about bullying to schools, providing bullying prevention, giving out scholarships, offering

intervention strategies, and more. Those interested in getting involved can start a chapter of the group in their area, obtain a free [K-2 bullying prevention curriculum](#) or [cyberbullying handbook for parents](#), host a presentation at their school, intro of how all started video, and donate to help support the cause. To get more information, visit the site at: <https://standforthesilent.org/>

#### About Stand for the Silent

Started in 2010, Stand for the Silent is an organization on a mission to help eliminate bullying nationwide. Kirk and Laura Smalley founded the group after their child took his own life due to bullying. They offer free resources for parents and educators and travel to schools to host presentations. They have been to over 6,700 schools and spoken with more than 4.50 million students. To get more information, visit the site at: <https://standforthesilent.org/>

###

#### Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Relationship Between Bullying and Suicide. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/34163>

Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry. National Trends and Disparities in Bullying and Suicidal Behavior Across Demographic Subgroups of US Adolescents. December 2022. <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/174541>

Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention. Frequent Social Media Use and Experiences with Bullying Victimization, Persistent Feelings of Sadness or Hopelessness, and Suicide Risk. October 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/73/su/su7304a3.htm>

Mental Health America. Bullying: Tips for Parents. <https://mhanational.org/resources/bullying-tips-for-parents/>

Cher Murphy

Cher Murphy PR

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[YouTube](#)

[X](#)

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.