

BULLIED – A Teaching Tolerance Documentary

Discussing the Bullying Video Courage and Empathy

1. What did Jamie and his lawyers hope to accomplish by filing a lawsuit?

They hoped to draw attention to the life-threatening harassment and violence that Jamie experienced in middle school and high school at the hands of bullies who targeted him for being gay. Through their precedent-setting lawsuit, Jamie and his lawyers sought to hold school administrators accountable for providing a safe learning environment for all students.

2. What do you think Jamie felt on a typical day?

Jamie experienced feelings of fear, self-loathing, helplessness, stress and depression, as well as the pain of physical violence that was inflicted upon him. He dreaded going to school and often felt the need to hide from classmates, to arrive at school early and stay late, and to avoid using the school bathroom for fear of being assaulted there.

The Impact of Bullying: Dealing with Discrimination

1. What role did bystanders play in Jamie's bullying?

Many students remained passive onlookers who did nothing to stop the bullying despite witnessing violence against Jamie. One teacher offered Jamie safe refuge in her classroom and attempted to persuade administrators to intervene. Some students urged on the bullies.

2. What are some common misconceptions about bullying?

One serious misconception is that bullying is an inevitable part of the school environment—that “boys will be boys” and therefore bullying cannot be prevented. Another misconception is that the consequences of bullying are not severe; the reality is that bullying has driven students to take their own lives and has caused lifelong physical and psychological scars. Some people mistakenly believe that bullying harms only the victim; in fact, the bully, passive bystanders and those close to the bully and victim may all be affected for life. Yet another misconception is that some students bring bullying upon themselves through their actions and thus “deserve” to be bullied.