JOSEPHSON INSTITUTE
CHARACTERCOUNTS!

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LARGEST STUDY EVER SHOWS HALF OF ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WERE BULLIES AND NEARLY HALF WERE THE VICTIMS OF BULLYING DURING PAST YEAR

Study of more than 43,000 shows high school experience is more glum than glee

LOS ANGELES (October 26, 2010) — According to a new study by the Josephson Institute of Ethics (the largest ever undertaken of the attitudes and conduct of high school students), half of all high school students (50 percent) admit they bullied someone in the past year, and nearly half (47 percent) say they were bullied, teased, or taunted in a way that seriously upset them in the past year. The study reports the responses from 43,321 high school students. The margin of error is less than 1%.

"If the saying, 'sticks and stones will break my bones but names will never harm me' was ever true, it certainly is not so today," said Michael Josephson, founder and president of the Institute and a national leader and radio commentator on ethical issues. "Insults, name calling, relentless teasing, and malicious gossip often inflict deep and enduring pain," he added. "It's not only the prevalence of bullying behavior and victimization that's troublesome. The Internet has intensified the injury. What's posted on the Internet is permanent, and it spreads like a virus – there is no refuge. The difference between the impact of bullying today versus 20 years ago is the difference between getting into a fist fight and using a gun."

The Institute's study also found that one-third (33 percent) of all high school students say that violence is a big problem at their school, and one in four (24 percent) say they do not feel very safe at school. More than half (52 percent) admit that within the past year they hit a person because they were angry. Ten percent of students say they took a weapon to school at least once in the past 12 months, and 16 percent admit that they have been intoxicated at school.

"The combination of bullying, a penchant toward violence when one is angry, the availability of weapons, and the possibility of intoxication at school increases significantly the likelihood of retaliatory violence," Josephson said.

What can parents do? Three online surveys to determine whether one's child is being bullied, whether one's child is a bully, and whether parents are doing all they can to prevent bullying can be found at http://charactercounts.org/bully-quiz.

Tables with study highlights attached.

The nonpartisan, nonprofit Josephson Institute of Ethics has conducted a study of the Ethics of American Youth every two years since 1992. The Institute also administers the national CHARACTER COUNTS! program, a values-based school climate initiative to build character and positive life skills, promote social and emotional learning, and enhance academic performance. Data was gathered through a national sample of public and private high schools. Surveys were conducted in 2009 and 2010. A complete set of data generated can be found at CharacterCounts.org.

Tables

Physical violence is a big problem at my school.

Type of School	Boys	Girls	Overall
Public Schools	43%	34%	39%
Religious Private schools	9%	7%	8%
Non religious private schools	6%	6%	6%
All Schools combined	37%	30%	33%

I feel very safe when I am at school. (Percentage that disagree)

Type of School	Boys	Girls	Overall
Public Schools	27%	27%	27%
Religious Private schools	7%	7%	7%
Non religious private schools	7%	5%	6%
All Schools combined	24%	24%	24%

I was bullied, teased, or taunted in a way that seriously upset me at least once within the past 12 months.

Type of School	Boys	Girls	Overall
Public Schools	44%	50%	47%
Religious Private schools	47%	50%	48%
Non religious private schools	42%	48%	45%
All Schools combined	45%	50%	47%

I bullied, teased, or taunted someone at least once in past 12 months.

Type of School	Boys	Girls	Overall
Public Schools	55%	43%	49%
Religious Private schools	60%	48%	44%
Non religious private schools	55%	41%	58%
All Schools combined	56%	43%	50%

I mistreated someone because he or she belonged to a different group least once in past 12 months

Type of School	Boys	Girls	Overall
Public Schools	26%	16%	21%
Religious Private schools	27%	20%	23%
Non religious private schools	16%	13%	15%
All Schools combined	26%	17%	21%

I hit a person because I was angry at least once within the past 12 months.

Type of School	Boys	Girls	Overall
Public Schools	57%	48%	53%
Religious Private schools	57%	38%	47%
Non religious private schools	44%	35%	40%
All Schools combined	56%	47%	52%

It is sometimes okay to hit or threaten a person who makes me angry.

Type of School	Boys	Girls	Overall
Public Schools	38%	21%	29%
Religious Private schools	31%	11%	20%
Non religious private schools	29%	11%	20%
All Schools combined	37%	19%	28%

I took a weapon to school at least once in the past 12 months.

Type of School	Boys	Girls	Overall
Public Schools	15%	5%	10%
Religious Private schools	8%	3%	5%
Non religious private schools	9%	1%	5%
All Schools combined	14%	5%	10%

I am prejudiced against certain groups.

Type of School	Boys	Girls	Overall
Public Schools	29%	18%	23%
Religious Private schools	24%	15%	19%
Non religious private schools	29%	18%	24%
All Schools combined	28%	18%	23%

I used racial slurs or insults at least once within the past 12 months.

Type of School	Boys	Girls	Overall
Public Schools	51%	33%	42%
Religious Private schools	54%	32%	42%
Non religious private schools	44%	23%	34%
All Schools combined	51%	33%	42%

I have been under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol at school at least once in the past 12 months

Type of School	Boys	Girls	Overall
Public Schools	19%	15%	17%
Religious Private schools	10%	7%	8%
Non religious private schools	7%	5%	6%
All Schools combined	18%	14%	16%

If I wanted to, I could get drugs.

Type of School	Boys	Girls	Overall
Public Schools	65%	63%	64%
Religious Private schools	59%	58%	59%
Non religious private schools	45%	40%	43%
All Schools combined	64%	62%	63%

If I wanted to, I could get alcoholic drinks (liquor, beer, wine).

Type of School	Boys	Girls	Overall
Public Schools	68%	69%	68%
Religious Private schools	69%	71%	70%
Non religious private schools	63%	58%	61%
All Schools combined	68%	69%	68%

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