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Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS STEP UP STEP IN?

Led by the Georgia Department of Public Health and the Georgia Network to End Sexual Assault (GNESA), Step Up Step In is collaborative movement that engages schools, youth serving organizations, and communities to identify and stop sexual bullying from occurring between youth. The goal is to stop the potential for escalating sexual violence.

Step Up Step In provides schools/organizations with a Toolkit and prepared resources to help them implement the campaign. Schools/organizations are also encouraged to activate Step Up Step In however they feel will best motivate the students and communities they serve. The Toolkit and Resources are available for review and download at GASUSI.org.

WHAT IS SEXUAL BULLYING?

Sexual bullying can be violent or non-violent. Step Up Step In defines sexual bullying as:

“Any instance when youth use sexual words, acts, images, threats or any other behavior in any manner to distress, harm, taunt, demean, humiliate, and/or embarrass other youth who do not welcome, encourage, or want to participate in the exchange. Sexual bullying may occur once, or it may occur frequently. It encompasses a wide variety of behaviors and is perpetrated by youth against their peers. It can occur in person, online or digitally. In some instances, such as spreading rumors about a classmate, a victim may not even know it is occurring.”

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF SEXUAL BULLYING?

Sexual bullying includes a broad category of behavior, like unwanted touching and groping, sexting, spreading sexually charged rumors, picking on someone for his or her perceived sexual orientation and more. Examples are as follows. This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors:

Verbal - Conversation about sexual topics or acts; lewd, suggestive or demeaning remarks; derogatory names based upon real or rumored sexual activity; sex-based or demeaning rumors about individuals or groups; coercion by force or threat

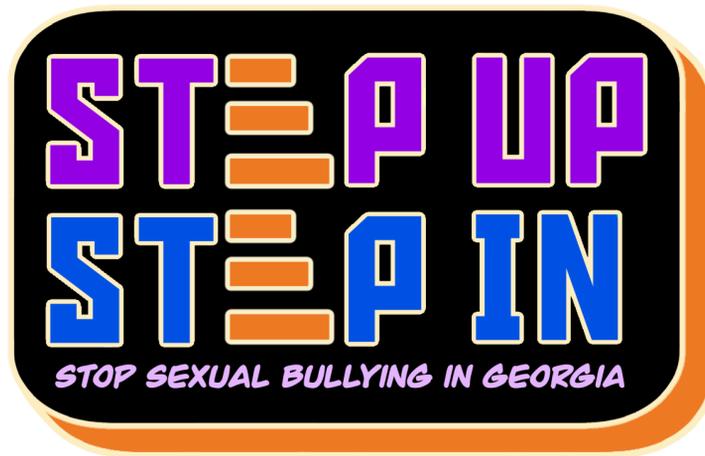
Written - Written correspondence about, or that suggests, sexual acts or that uses sex to demean recipients; Graffiti that appears on personal belongings or in public spaces

Images and Multimedia - Sexual photos; drawings; live or recorded video, audio, and any other format; sending, forwarding, or keeping sexually explicit content without permission

Touching and Groping - Non-violent or violent touching; groping and grabbing of a sexual nature; tugging, touching, or snapping undergarments

IS SEXUAL BULLYING THE SAME AS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

They are not the same, but there is overlap between the two. Sexual bullying includes behavior that is typically considered to be sexual harassment.



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WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR A CAMPAIGN LIKE STEP UP STEP IN IN GEORGIA?

Funded by a grant from the Georgia Department of Public Health, GNEA began examining sexual bullying among Georgia's youth in 2010, conducting 22 focus groups with adolescent males (11 to 14 years old) and the adults who influence them. From rural and urban communities to those in between, findings found, in part:

- Touching and groping, sexual rumors and bullying of perceived LGBTQ+ youth were among the most frequently reported acts – with many participants stating this type of behavior was a “daily” or “almost every day” occurrence at their schools.
- Participants overwhelmingly reported the school and school-related venues as the primary location where sexual bullying occurs – and, within schools, occurring most often in specific locations like hallways and cafeterias where groups of students congregate with minimal supervision
- Youth often dismissed sexual bullying – such as touching and groping or picking on a student for his/her/their perceived sexual orientation – as “not that serious,” “joking,” and even “flirting”

IS THIS CAMPAIGN SUITABLE FOR YOUTH?

Yes, Step Up Step In has been developed as a youth-centered campaign that brings the issues of sexual bullying and prevention to schools, youth serving organizations, and communities in a straightforward but age-appropriate manner.

Can only schools participate in the campaign?

No, at this time, middle schools, high schools and other youth serving organizations can implement Step Up Step In. Reach out to info@gnesa.org if you are interested in hearing about partners currently implementing this work or if you interested in signing up.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION ABOUT STEP UP STEP IN?

Visit GASUSI.org for more information about the campaign, as well as resources that schools/organizations can utilize to implement Step Up Step In to stop sexual bullying.

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