

LEARNING LESSONS FROM BULLYING, SUICIDE

The Boston Globe

Psychologist's attempt to help was misguided

April 27, 2009

WHAT DISTURBS me the most about the tragic suicide of 11-year-old Carl Walker-Hoover is the psychologist's misguided attempt to help ("[Constantly bullied, he ends his life at age 11](#)," Page A1, April 20). In response to the last incident before Carl committed suicide, the psychologist required Carl and the girl involved to "sit together during lunch for the week" with the psychologist. Conflict resolution and peer mediation are not appropriate responses to bullying. Don't ask children to "work things out" for themselves. Bullying is different from an argument or conflict; it involves a power imbalance that requires adult intervention. It's not a conflict, it's abuse. The victim needs to know that no one deserves to be bullied, adults can help, and there are strategies that work to stop bullying. The bully needs to know to stop the bullying immediately, that bullying behaviors will not be tolerated. Misguided attempts to help can make matters worse.

*Kim Storey**Newton**The writer helped create the [Eyes on Bullying](#) multimedia project. ■*