



**SAFE HARBOR
COUNSELING**

**Dr. Beth
Speaks**



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WSPY, *Your Life Matters* , Bullying Roles and Importance

Mike Williams

And its time now for our weekly feature, *Your Life Matters* , with Clinical Social Worker Dr. Beth Placketka from **Safe Harbor Counseling** and **Dr. Beth Speaks**.

Mike Williams

And Dr. Beth Placketka, thanks for joining us again. How are we doing?

Dr. Beth Placketka

Really good! It is great to be back.

Mike Williams

Yes, so we are going to be talking about an important topic that has been a negative thing for quite a while and maybe it's received even more notice over the past several years. It's bullying. And with the social media explosion over the last decade or so, whether it's online bullying, bullying in person, all kinds of different topics, here that we can dive into. So we'll just kind of let you maybe give our listeners a brief overview of the topic of bullying and how prevalent it is and how important it is that we address it.

Dr. Beth Placketka

Absolutely, and thank you. October is Bullying Awareness Month so I am really thinking it's important that people realize what bullying is and is not. I often get calls because I am an expert on workplace bullying. I get calls about whether or not what people's experiencing are actually bullying. So I want you to know that bullying takes place everywhere. We do, of course, see it on the playground among kids, we see it in schools, hospitals, churches, neighborhoods, any workplace, and any place where people gather. It happens to people of all ages.

Dr. Beth Placketka

Really there's three categories of people in the bullying scenario: One is the target, the person who is being bullied. The others, the witnesses, people who know what is going on, not necessarily participating, but they are very aware. And the bully who may have helpers.

Dr. Beth Placketka What I have found is it is up to four people who can be involved in the bullying scenarios. The interesting thing is, targets often are people that just go on about their business and assume everyone else will do the same. They may have done something that may have made someone mad, but generally speaking they are easy going, kind people. Witnesses are those on the playground or at the water cooler and see what is going on, but again don't participate. The bully has some kind of power, influence, they may be athletic, charismatic, and smart. It might be your boss. It might be your co-worker.

Mike Williams You always associate, or at least I do, when you think bully, you assume school, kid on the playground, he is beating up the other kid or he is verbally abusing him. You don't always associate it with adults and at the workplace. It is obviously a big enough problem there where we need to focus on this. In a situation, let's stay with work or adults here, if you are a target. And the witnesses it is up to them too try to say something and step in, but you might be hesitant to do that as well. If you want to be aware of bullying and try to get it stopped, what are some things to look for, and some of the things to do to try to address this problem?

Dr. Beth Placketka I think the first thing to know is that everyone is affected. If you are the target and often you do not know you are the target until well into the situation. You can be physically, mentally, emotionally sick, your work or your school suffers. Your family can become unsettled because they watch you be so unsettled and upset, and you start acting different.

Dr. Beth Placketka The witnesses are affected. I have actually had witnesses say, "I know what is happening, and I don't want it happening to me. I know he or she will come after me next." The other thing is bullies are affected too. They are learning and practicing relationship patterns that can prevent them from having real solid relationships.

Dr. Beth Placketka So the very first thing is if you start feeling that way want to know that there is something going on, and to start taking stock of what is going on and not trust absolutely everyone.

Dr. Beth Placketka I really think it is important to know that often the word bully or bullying is overused. Because someone is mean to you does not mean they are bullying you. It means they are just being mean, and they can be stopped. Someone who is doing bullying really doing it for a purpose, to make you feel miserable so you will be under their control and do what they want.

Mike Williams Especially if it is in a work situation, if it is your boss that is bullying you, you might feel that you have no options. You don't want to confront the boss because then you could lose your job or something bad like that. It is a tough situation, so for our final minute or so, how would Safe Harbor Counseling be available to help these bullying situations?

Dr. Beth Placketka

Well with Safe Harbor Counseling, I work with people who are not sure if they are being bullied or not because by the time they are recognizing it they may have symptoms of depression, anxiety, they can't sleep, they can't eat. So working through those and developing strategies and communication styles that will help not so much confront the bully because like you say that is a difficult and dangerous possible thing to do. But also to get them sidetracked, so that they chose to go another way. Also rebuild their self-esteem because our work is the way we interact in our environment and if our work is threatened, we feel personally feel threatened.

Mike Williams

Last thing if people do want to find out more, they can go to the website, **safeharboril.com**, also Doctor is there a phone number that folks can call.

Dr. Beth Placketka

Absolutely, the phone number is **630-466-8657**.

Mike Williams

We also invite listeners whether it is a topic about bullying or anything in general that you have a question about, you can submit your questions at **safeharboril.com**. Send along an email with **WSPY** in the subject line, and your question could be answered on a future show.

Mike Williams

Dr. Beth Plachetka, thanks again for joining us and we will see you again next week.

Dr. Beth Placketka

Thanks for having me!

Mike Williams

That's all the time we have for today. As it is our weekly feature, Your Life Matters, with Clinical Social Worker, Dr. Beth Plachetka from Safe Harbor Counseling and Dr. Beth Speaks. We will see you again next Monday.

