

Rationalizing bullying doesn't make it right

Most people agree on the need to eradicate bullying in our schools.

Yet, according to a letter Friday by Bob Talley in the Daily News, "sometimes those being bullied have brought it upon themselves. Sometimes, the picking stems back to their actions and some kids have to learn there are consequences for their behavior when dealing with their peers."

I think I understand what the author is saying. People should be aware of, and prepared to deal with, the consequences of their actions.

What bothers me, however, is that this explanation seems dangerously close to "blaming the victim" when it comes to bullying. The writer also appears to be advocating violence as a potential solution to the problem.

Respect for individual differences is essential in a civilized society.

Everyone has the right to be different – to dress different, to act different and to hold different beliefs. At the same time, nobody has the right to ridicule, humiliate or threaten those who don't conform to their particular notion of what is "acceptable."

If I am minding my own business and not bothering you, and you purposefully make me feel uncomfortable or attempt to intimidate me in any way, then you are a bully – plain and simple.

The way a woman dresses never absolves the rapist from the consequences of his actions. Anyone who attempts to even remotely justi-

fy this horrific act by saying "she was asking for it" should immediately apologize for having such a repulsive thought.

Similarly, anyone who claims those being bullied have somehow "brought it upon themselves" is essentially rationalizing intolerable behavior. The conduct of the person being ostracized in no way explains or excuses the perpetrator from taking full responsibility for their deeds.

Bullying in any form is unacceptable under any circumstance and should be dealt with immediately and decisively.

Aaron W. Hughey
Bowling Green

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