



TRUE STORY

Adama used to eat lunch in the bathroom to escape her bullies. Today, she is happy in school.

Vocabulary

target: someone who is made fun of

depressed: feeling extremely sad for a long period of time

counselor: a person who works at a school and talks with students about their problems

transferred: moved from one school to another

launched: started, got going

“I Survived Being Bullied”

A brave 15-year-old finds strength by telling her story

by Adama Kamara

I wasn't spectacularly popular in sixth grade, but I did have friends. In seventh grade, things changed—my friends started treating me badly, and before long I became the **target** of the popular girls.

Samantha* was the leader. She and her companions bullied me mercilessly. I was one of the few African-American students at my school in Kentucky, and the girls constantly called me names and told me to “go back to Africa.”

The ceaseless verbal abuse made me feel terrible. Being excluded and ignored was even more devastating; it left me feeling utterly isolated. I would frequently lock myself in a bathroom stall and cry my eyes out. Sometimes, I even ate my lunch there. It was the only place where I felt truly safe.

Breakdown

When eighth grade started, I hoped the situation would



Adama is no longer bullied. She has friends and her own Web site to help other bullied kids and teens.

improve. Instead, the bullying got significantly worse, and I became deeply **depressed**. After suffering through several days of abject misery, I went to the school **counselor** and expressed a wish to commit suicide. Naturally, he called my parents.

Telling an adult was the first step toward changing

my situation. My parents were immensely supportive and sympathetic, and they helped me decide on a course of action that worked for me. I **transferred** to another middle school, and although I didn't have many friends there, at least I was no longer bullied. I felt safe in the new environment.

*This name has been changed.

Showdown

At the conclusion of the school year, the chorus at my old school gave a concert, and I attended with my mother. Afterward, I ventured backstage to say hello to a friend—and found myself face-to-face with Samantha and her cohorts.

In the hope that we could put the past behind us, I approached the girls and attempted to speak with them—but Samantha interrupted me. “Shut up, Adama,” she commanded. “No one here likes you. Go back to your other school.”

She called me every offensive name imaginable, and her friends all laughed. I stood there with tears in my eyes. Finally, I left.

My Bully Story

Later that year, I got an idea—by creating a Web site, I could share my story and also

provide other bullied teens with a forum in which to tell their stories.

During ninth grade, I diligently contacted every Web-site-building company I could locate. Most of them wanted discouragingly expensive fees, but eventually I found an affordable service. I invested \$1,000 of my own money, painstakingly saved from years of babysitting, allowance, and birthdays.

Moving On

When I started high school last year, everything improved dramatically. Today, I never sit alone at lunch—in fact, I rarely even walk down the halls alone. I receive countless texts on my phone. People know me and like me.

Last spring, I finally **launched** my Web site, **www.yourbullystory.com**. A boy who posted his story wrote to me, telling me that

sharing his story with others had improved his outlook.

I hope thousands of kids, teens, and even adults will post their stories on my Web site. Opening up can have great emotional benefits; sharing my experience made me realize I’m tougher than I thought I was. I’m proud that I survived being bullied.



Can You Help Stop Bullying?

- If you get a text or see an Internet post that makes fun of someone, don’t reply. Tell an adult.
- If your friends are teasing or insulting someone, tell them to stop. It’s not OK, and it’s not funny.
- If you see someone being left out, try to include that person.



“I’m tougher than I thought I was,” says Adama today.



LINKS: A video of Adama, plus expert anti-bullying advice: scholastic.com/actionlink