Essential Tremor Bullying Prevention

DIANN SHADDOX FOUNDATION
FOR ESSENTIAL TREMOR

1: Essential Tremor (ET) is a Neurological Disease—Not Nervousness.

Fast Facts to Build Understanding
• What it is: a progressive, highly prevalent neurological disease causing involuntary, rhythmic shaking.
• What it is not: It is not fear, anxiety, a lack of confidence, or clumsiness.
• Who it affects: Millions of people worldwide, including children, teens, and adults.
• The primary target: Hand tremors are most prominent, but the head, voice, and legs can also shake.

The Problem: Why Stigma Leads to Bullying
Because public awareness is low, people easily misunderstand involuntary movements. Individuals with ET are often teased, mimicked, or falsely accused of being hyperactive, nervous, or under the influence of substances. This social rejection causes severe anxiety and isolation.

2: School Guide (Educators & Classmates)

Shaky Hands, Strong Minds: Supporting Students with ET.
Recognizing ET in the Classroom
• Large, shaky handwriting or difficulty drawing straight lines.
• Spilling water, dropping pencils, or struggling with fine motor tools (scissors, rulers).
• A trembling or quivering voice during public reading or presentations.

Action Steps for Teachers and Administrators
• Normalize, Don't Single Out: Address physical differences neutrally. Explicitly teach classmates that neurological conditions are just how a person's body works.
• Zero-Tolerance Teasing: Intervene immediately if a student is teased for shaking, dropping items, or speaking with a tremor.
• Implement Formal Accommodations: Support the student by helping families establish a 504 Plan or IEP to grant extra testing time, digital typing options, or adaptive drinking cups.

3: Conversation Starters (Parents & Youth Groups)

Talking About Essential Tremor Bullying.
For Parents of Children with ET (Building Self-Advocacy)
What to say: "Your tremor is just a small part of who you are. It's a medical condition, not something to be
ashamed of."
Action: Practice a short, confident response they can give peers: "My hands shake because of a neurological disorder called Essential Tremor. It just means my muscles get mixed signals, but I'm completely healthy otherwise."
For Parents of Peers
What to say: "Some people have conditions that make their bodies move in ways they can't control. If you see someone shaking, don't stare, laugh, or make fun of them."
Action: Encourage your child to invite a classmate with ET to sit with them at lunch or partner up during group activities.

4: Call to Action (How to Help Team DSF)

Join the Fight: End the Stigma of Essential Tremor.
Get Involved Locally

- **Share Your Story:** Visit **diannshaddoxfoundation.org/advocacystory** to submit written or video testimonials about living with or supporting someone with ET.
- **Join the Community:** Connect with others for moral support and advocacy strategy in the Diann Shaddox Foundation Essential Tremor Worldwide Facebook Group.
- Join Team DSF: Visit **diannshaddoxfoundation.org/team-dsf** to become an ET advocate.
- **Spread the Word:** Take copies of these sheets to your local school boards, HR departments, and community center bulletin boards.

"These are your neighbors, classmates, and friends. Join today if you have Essential Tremor or know someone who does and would like to become an ET advocate. Stand firm in supporting Essential Tremor disease! Advocate passionately for the rights and needs of all Essential Tremor patients."