



A Conversation with Kati “Jazz” Gray-Sadler Founder, [Fifty Shades of Purple Against Bullying](#)

What is Fifty Shades of Purple?

FSP is a nonprofit that provides resources for individuals, families, organizations, and schools related to bullying and bullying prevention.

Why did you start Fifty Shades of Purple?

In 2015, I was sitting with my son Trevor, who was preparing for his college graduation the following year. I asked him if he could have one gift for his graduation, what would it be? He replied, “I wish I could share you with the whole world. That’s what I would want.” I didn’t know what he meant by that, until he elaborated. He had been bullied since the age of 8, brutal experiences that sometimes had him lying awake at night wondering if he should just end it all. But the one thing that he remembered through it all was me advocating for him, going head to head with apathetic teachers, counselors, principals, over and over again. I looked at my strong, amazing, son standing there before me, getting ready for the rest of his life and thought about him as a child wanting to cut it short. I thought about all the kids lying there at night, thinking the same things he did, who might not make it to where he was. And I knew that I had to do something.

Where did you go from there with your idea?

Trevor--who is my visionary and heavily involved with FSP-- and I started talking about what had been missing from our own experiences. What did we wish had happened all those times we tried to get him help? We decided we wanted people to have a safe place, somewhere they could go to be heard and understood. We wanted to create a place where people whose pain and desperation had fallen on deaf ears could go and speak to experts that could help them. My background is in research and communication, and so I reached out to Marchee who became our executive director and others. The first ten people I asked to be involved said yes immediately, because bullying is that pervasive that everyone knows it’s a problem.

How is FSP different from other anti-bullying organizations?

Many other organizations focus on bullying in schools but we encompass the entire spectrum of bullying. We don’t just deal with it at the juvenile level, we work with adults who are the victims of bullying at home or in the workplace. When needed, we also focus on the after effects of bullying. Just because someone may be physically safe now doesn’t mean there isn’t some form of PTSD.

In addition, we believe that everyone is a victim, including the bully. When you look at their circumstances, there is always a reason. How is a child supposed to process the question of why do they bully? I think most people aren’t cruel, though they may do cruel things. So when we look at the individuals who bully, and we take in the larger picture socially and economically for instance, you know what they say about fear and what it makes you do. We introduce healthier ways of communication and support, changing that paradigm. FSP has ambassadors who were bullies themselves. They now understand the devastation they left behind. We have people contacting us now who say, “I bullied this person 30 years ago, can you help me find them and make it right?”

We are whatever someone being bullied, or even a bully, needs us to be. We are advocates for victims being protected at home, school, or work, and champions for bullies who we know are better than their actions.

What do you want everyone who has ever been bullied, or who is being bullied right now to know?

You have options, and giving up and giving in are not one of those options. You are not alone. There are people who will stay by your side, who will walk into battle with and for you.