

BULLYING

Bullying is ongoing physical or verbal aggression by one person or group to another

It can have detrimental effects on all involved, including the bully. Parents can help by supporting their young person, taking them seriously and helping them to develop coping techniques. Bullying can include threatening, teasing, name-calling, preventing others from going where they want to or doing what they want to, pushing or hitting, and all forms of physical abuse.



Boys tend to bully using physical means and girls use verbal taunts or exclusion to intimidate each other.

CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying is carried out through an Internet service such as email, chat room or instant messaging. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as short messaging service (SMS).

Examples of cyber bullying include:

- teasing and being made fun of
- sending unwanted messages
- spreading rumours

WHY ARE SOME YOUNG PEOPLE BULLIED?

Teenagers who bully generally pick on those who seem easy to hurt. They may pick on those who:

- Look or are different in some way.
- Are stressed, either at home or at school.
- Have a disability.
- Wear their hearts on their sleeves
- Lack confidence.
- Are anxious.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Young people who are being bullied don't always tell adults so it is important to keep an eye out for signs of being bullied.

These include:

- Reluctance to go to school or avoidance of school
- Evidence of physical hurt such as bruising
- Change of route to school
- Deterioration of school work
- Withdrawal from school activities
- Being very tense, tearful and unhappy after school.
- Refusing to tell you what happens at school.

Look for general signs of anxiety or unhappiness that are outside the normal range, such as problems with sleep. Bullying can have long-term affects on young people so it needs to be addressed by supportive adults, rather than allowed to continue.

HOW TO HELP:

Parents can assist young people when bullying occurs in the following ways:

- Listen. Get the facts from your young person and avoid over-reacting.
- Deal with their feelings. Young people who are bullied are often scared or fearful so validate their feelings and take them seriously.
- Help them work out their own strategies and ideas about coping with the problem. Help them stay in control so avoid going to their school without their permission.
- Get the school involved to find a solution rather than apportion blame.
- If the bullying is verbal teasing, you may be able to help your child to learn to ignore it. Practise at home ways to help your child gain confidence (for example, walking past

with their head up).

- Build their support networks. Young people need friends to support them when they are bullied.
- Build their self esteem and confidence by focusing on things they do well.
- Help your child think of ways to avoid the situation (for example, by going home a different way or staying with a group).
- Discuss avoidance strategies if a young person experiences cyber bullying. Staying out of questionable chat rooms, keeping emails from harassers as evidence, refusal to reply to bullying email are some strategies to discuss with young people.

KEEP IN MIND

1. Let your young people know that bullying is wrong, take your child's fears and feelings seriously, and help work out ways of dealing with it.
2. Let them know that being bullied is not their fault, and that something can and will be done about it.
3. Insulate your young person by encouraging them to be involved in the life of their school or a club and help them experience success and happiness in other areas of life.
4. Keep some perspective. While bullying is an awful thing, many others experience it and get through it.



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