

## **Bullying**

### **Why do kids bully?**

There are all kinds of reasons why young people bully others, either occasionally or often. Do any of these sound familiar to you?

- Because I see others doing it
- Because it's what you do if you want to hang out with the right crowd
- Because it makes me feel stronger, smarter, or better than the person I'm bullying
- Because it's one of the best ways to keep others from bullying me.

Whatever the reason, bullying is something we all need to think about. Whether we've done it ourselves ....or whether friends or other people we know are doing it....we all need to recognize the bullying has a terrible effect on the lives of your people. It may not be happening to you today, but it could tomorrow. Working together, we can make the lives of your people better.

### **What is the definition of bullying?**

A lot of young people have a good idea of what bullying is because they see it every day! Bullying happens when someone hurts or scares another person on purpose and the person being bullied has a hard time defending himself or herself. Usually, bullying happens over and over.

- Punching, shoving, and other acts that hurt people physically
- Spreading bad rumors about people
- Keeping certain people out of a "group"
- Teasing people in a mean way
- Getting certain people to "gang up" on others.

Bullying also can happen online or electronically. Cyberbullying is when children or teens bully each other using the Internet, mobile phones or other cyber technology. This can include:

- Sending mean text, e-mail, or instant messages
- Posting nasty pictures or messages about others in blogs or on Websites.
- Using someone else's user name to spread rumors or lies about someone.

### **Are you being bullied?**

No matter how bad it makes you feel sometimes, you should know you're not alone. That's right....there are plenty of kids all over the world who go through the same things you do every day. And, even though you may feel helpless sometimes, there are a lot of things you and others can do to help stop the bullying. Give these tips a try.

**Always tell an adult** - It's hard to talk about serious things with adults sometimes, but they can help put a stop to bullying. Tell an adult that you trust and can talk to - your parents, your teacher, your guidance counsellor, your coach, your neighbour. If you've told an adult before and they haven't done anything about it, tell someone else.

**Stay in a group** - Kids who bully like to pick on kids who are by themselves a lot - it's easier and they're more likely to get away with their bad behaviour. If you spend more time with other kids, you may not be an easy "target" and you'll have others around to help you if you get in a difficult situation.

**If it feels safe, try to stand up to the person who is bullying you** - If the person who is bullying you thinks you won't do anything about it, they are more likely to keep picking on you. This doesn't mean you should fight back or bully them back. Instead, tell the person bullying you that you don't like it and that they should stop! Keep it simple. You might just say, "cut it out, Miranda", and then walk away. If possible, try to talk to them in a calm voice. Kids who bully often like to see that they can make you upset. If you're afraid to talk to the person who is bullying you by yourself, then you might want to ask someone else to be there with you.

**If you are being bullied online, don't reply** - This may actually make the bullying worse. Instead, be sure to tell a family member or another adult you trust. If possible, block any more communications from this person. (For example, it might be a good idea only to accept messages from people you know). Save evidence of the bullying. If you get a nasty e-mail, print it out or save it so that you can show it to an adult.

**Join clubs or take part in activities where you'll meet other people** - Sometimes, it can help to join clubs or take part in activities that interest you. Think about joining a sports team, taking an art class for example. You can meet other kids who share your interests and you might make some good friends!

## What not to do if you are bullied..

### DON'T....

- Think it's your fault. Nobody deserves to be bullied!
- Fight back or bully a person back. This probably won't make things any better and it might get you into big trouble. Besides, you should try to act better than the person who bullies you.
- Keep it to yourself and just hope the bullying will "go away". It's normal to want to try to ignore bullying and hope that it will stop - or hope that the person will start to pick on someone else. But, often, bullying won't stop until adults and other kids get involved. So, be sure to report the bullying.
- Skip school or avoid clubs or sports because you're afraid of being bullied. Missing out on school or activities that you enjoy isn't the answer. You have a right to be there!
- Think that you're a "tattle tale" or a "snitch" if you tell an adult that you've been bullied. Telling is NOT snitching! It's the right thing to do.
- Hurt yourself. Some kids who are bullied get so sad and depressed that they may try to hurt themselves because they think there is nothing else they can do. This definitely isn't the answer. Talk with an adult immediately and tell them how you are feeling. They can help stop the bullying.

### Do you see bullying happen?

#### Are you a bystander?

If you see it happening to others, you can help put a stop to it. In order to stop bullying, everyone needs to lend a hand and get involved! And even though it might be easier to stand by and watch (or try to ignore the bullying), just remember, we all need a little help from time to time! Think about how you might feel if the bullying was happening to YOU. There are all kinds of great things you can do to help. So the next time you see someone being bullied, try one (or more) of these ideas and make a real difference!

**Report the bullying to an adult** - Many youth who are bullied are scared to tell an adult about it (especially a teacher or principal), because they are afraid the person bullying them will find out and the bullying will just get worse. That's where you come in. Even if it's a little scary for you to tell an adult about bullying that you see, it's the right thing to do. It's not tattling or snitching – you're helping someone out.

Who should you tell? You could tell your teacher, guidance counsellor, parents, coach, or any adult you feel comfortable talking with. It might be a little less scary if you ask a friend to go along with you. Be sure to tell the adult exactly what happened – who was bullied, who did the bullying, and where and when it happened. If you're not sure if another kid is being bullied but you think they probably are – it's good to report that, too.

**Support someone who is being bullied** - Sometimes the best thing you can do for a person who is being bullied is just to be there for him or her and be a friend. Whether this means agreeing to walk home with him or her after school, sitting with him or her on the bus or at lunch, trying to include him or her in your school or social activities, or just spending some time with him or her and trying to understand what he or she is going through, it will make a huge difference! Although these may seem like small things to you, they will show a kid who is being bullied that you care about him or her and the problems he or she is facing. And that can be a BIG help!

**Stand up to the person doing the bullying** - If you feel safe doing this, tell a person who is bullying that what he or she is doing is wrong and that he or she should stop. Keep it simple. You could just say, "Ben cut it out. Nobody thinks that's funny". If you can, get some friends to join you. When kids who bully see that other kids don't think it's cool, they are more likely to stop. Just be sure you don't bully them back! It's not easy to stand up to kids who may be bigger and stronger than you or really popular, so if you're not comfortable doing this, that's OK. (But be sure to tell an adult!).

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