

National Bullying Prevention Month

Disclaimer: *The following is intended as an information resource only; we are not a medical organization, and we cannot give medical advice. If you are experiencing a life-threatening situation, seek medical help or dial 911.*

What is Bullying?

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school-aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. Bullying can also take place through technology, known as cyberbullying. Examples of cyberbullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

There are many other types of aggressive behaviors that don't fit the definition of bullying. This does not mean that they are any less serious or require less attention than bullying. Rather, these behaviors require different prevention and response strategies.

Talk About Bullying At Home

Parents and caregivers can talk with their children about their school and digital life, and the many roles' students can play in Bullying. By asking open-ended questions, they can talk about their children's experience and communicate expectations about appropriate behavior – in person and in their digital world. Parents are the primary role models for their children, and when they model the behavior they expect from their children, they teach through actions.

6 Facts related to Bullying

1. **Bullying directly affects students' ability to learn.** According to the Center for Disease Control, students who are bullied are more likely to experience low self-esteem and isolation, perform poorly in school, have few friends in school, have a negative view of school, experience physical symptoms, and experience mental health issues
2. **Bystanders can be powerful allies.** More than half of bullying situations (57 percent) stop when a peer intervenes on behalf of the student being bullied. With that statistic, students have a unique power to prevent bullying.
3. **Bullying is not a "rite of passage" but a serious threat to student safety and well-being.** Some say bullying makes children tougher and is not a serious problem, but

the reality is that students who are bullied are more likely to report increased negative effects to their emotional and physical health.

4. **Anyone can bully, and anyone can be bullied.** Students can have multiple roles: they can be the ones subjected to bullying and the one who bullies. Strategies that focus on holding students accountable for their behavior- but also empower them to change that behavior- are more effective than punitive punishments and peer mediation in bullying situations.
5. **Bullying isn't about resolving conflict; bullying is about control.** In conflict, children self-monitor their behavior and generally stop when they realize they are hurting someone. When bullying, children continue their behavior when they realize it is hurting someone and are satisfied by a feeling of power and control.
6. **Effective bullying prevention efforts involve students, parents, teachers, and community members.** Involving community members such as law enforcement officials, faith organizations, community action groups, and others allow school officials and parents to address the bigger issues of disrespect, bias, and violence that can contribute to bullying issues in schools. A community-wide effort shows students that adults care what happens to them and that they are not alone.

Sources:

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/bullyingresearch/fastfact.html>

<https://www.ochumanrelations.org/programs/youth-and-education-programs/bridges/bullying-resources-and-information/>

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