

# How To Respond To Bullying

Every day, hundreds of thousands of adolescents are victims of bullying. Bullying is a concern for many, not just the boys victims. But because parents, teachers and other adults can not always witness it, often do not understand how extreme bullying can get.

## Bullying Is Serious

Bullying occurs when a person is tormented by an individual or group with more power, either physical strength or social standing. Two of the biggest reasons for the bullying are the appearance or social status of the victim.

Bullies torment the children they deemed not fit into their group because of their appearance, behavior (eg boys are painful or reserved), race or religion, or because the bullies think the victim might be homosexual.

Some bullies attack their victims physically, ie, with pushing, punching, hitting, or even sexual assault. Others use psychological control or verbal insults to get in control of the situation. For example, people in popular groups or cliques often bully people they categorize as different by excluding them or gossiping about them (psychological bullying).

They can also provoke or torment (verbal bullying). Verbal bullying also includes cyber sending cruel messages, or write insults on the victim in a website - practices that are known as cyberbullying.

One of the most painful aspects of bullying is its ruthlessness. It seems endless, the victim is scared constantly and often affects his school work and health. When Amber began having stomach pains and diarrhea, was diagnosed with a digestive disorder called irritable bowel syndrome as a result of the stress that was being intimidated when they are in ninth grade. Mafooz spent his afternoons hungry and unable to concentrate in class because I was too afraid to go to the school cafeteria at lunchtime.

Studies show that people who are abused by their peers are at risk for mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. They also think more about suicide.



Bullies are also at risk for problems. Bullying is a form of violence and often results in violent behavior as the bully grows. Not less than one in four children who were bullies in elementary school have a criminal record before age 30 years old.

Some teen bullies end up being rejected by their peers and lose friendships as they grow. Bullies also fail in school and have a career or relationship success that other people have.

## Who Bullies?

Both boys and girls can be bullies. Bullies can be expansive and aggressive. Or, they may appear to be reserved and try to manipulate others in a subtle and deceptive, for example starting a vicious rumor to see

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the result.

Many bullies share common characteristics. They like to dominate others and only think of themselves. Often lack of sociability and make bad decisions in their social life.

Although most bullies think they are superior and have the right to intrude on others, others are unsafe. They make others look bad for them look more interesting and powerful. Some bullies act that way because they have been victims of bullies - maybe in his own family is a bully, as a parent or other adult. Some bullies have personality disorders that enables them to understand normal social emotions like guilt, empathy, compassion or remorse.

### What Can You Do?

The best way for younger children to solve the problem of bullying by telling an adult. For adolescents, the decision to tell an adult depends on the type of intimidation. When intimidation threatens to result in physical danger or that the victim suffers injury, it is imperative that you report to an adult.

Many school students have died as a result of stalking, threats and attacks not reported, and this silence allowed the bully would become increasingly violent. Adults in positions of authority - parents, teachers or sports coaches - often seeking ways of resolving the serious problems of intimidation without the bully know that they were aware of the situation.

If you're in a situation where you're being bullied so that the situation may become physically violent, try to avoid being alone (and if you have a friend in this situation, going as long as possible accompanied). Try to join a group to walk back to their homes after school with others or by staying close to friends or classmates during the times when bullying takes place.

Here are some things you can do to combat psychological and verbal bullying. They are also good tips to share with a friend and show your support:

- **Ignore the bully and walk away.** This does not mean you're a coward - is sometimes more difficult to lose patience and get angry. Bullies are excited to see the reactions of their victims, and to walk away or ignore cyber messages insulting, you're letting them know you're not interested. Sooner or later the bully will get tired of trying to bug you. Walk with your head high. This lets you know you're not vulnerable.

- **Do not get angry.** Who does not want to upset with a bully? But that is the response he or she wants to see. Bullies want to have control over your emotions. If you're in a situation where you can not walk away calmly, try to use humor - it can catch him by surprise. Solve your anger in other ways - for example by exercising.

- **Do not use physical force.** Whichever way you decide to confront the bully, do not use physical force (like kicking, hitting or pushing). So are you just showing your anger, and do not know how they will react.

- **Talk about the problem.** Talking with a counselor, teacher or friend will give you the support you need. So you can vent their fears and frustrations that build up when you're being bullied.

- **Find buddies (true).** If you have been bullied with rumors or malicious gossip, you can use any of the above tips (especially ignoring and not reacting). But take it a step further to alleviate your feelings of grief and isolation. For one or two true friends and trustingly that gossip has offended you. Clarify the situation, telling them in confidence that what you have said is not true. When a friend says "I know that the rumor is not true. I did not pay attention," you realize that most of the time people see gossip for what it is - despicable, rude and immature.

### What If You're The Bully?

Everyone has had to face difficult situations and emotions. Some people, when they feel stress, anger or frustration, torment others to escape their problems and stop thinking about them. Some bullies have had direct experience with bullying. Perhaps they have nicknames, or have neglected their families has been customary to use physical force with them. Whatever the reason, the bully is inexcusable.

If you find hard to resist the temptation to bully, talk to someone whom you admire. Try to think how they feel when people tease or insult. If you can not logarlo for your own account (as in the case of many bullies), ask someone to help you get in the place of another person.

Bullying has a counter-reaction, and everyone, even the bullies, they are unhappy. People can feel intimidated by them, but nobody respects them. If you would like others see your strengths and your character - and you look like a leader - looking for ways to use your power in a positive way, instead of

using it to belittle others.

Do you really wish that others think you are rude, abusive and malicious? Never too late to change, although it may seem difficult at first. Pídele a un adulto a quien respetes que te aconseje y ayude a cambiar.

## How To Stop Bullying In Schools

If the environment in your school promotes bullying, working to effect change. For example, they may have places where bullies harass others, such as stairs or patios that are not in sight of staff. Since many of bullying takes place in the presence of peers (the bully wants to be recognized and feel powerful), seek the help of friends or a group of peers is a good way to make the change and stand up to bullies.

Let him know the bully that their behavior is unacceptable and that's no way to treat others. This works well in groups, for example when you see a member of your group has started to tease or shun another.

Most people are hesitant to speak because it can be difficult. We must have confidence in yourself to stand up to a bully - especially if he or she is one of the leaders of the group. Most likely as other students who witness bullying to feel as bad as you, but do not say. Perhaps they think they are not so popular as to express its position, or think they are vulnerable and the bully will turn against them.

Staying quiet (even if they do not like the attitude of the bully) is a way to distance himself from the victim. When that happens, the extent of bullying is even higher, because not only the bully is bullying a person, but several members of the group. When a person speaks against the bully, the opposite happens. Let others offer their support and affirm their position too.

Another way to combat bullying is joining the school program against violence. If your school does not have one, you begin it.

Reviewed by D'Arcy Lyness, Ph.D.

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