

Bullying and Internet Safety: How Parents Can Help

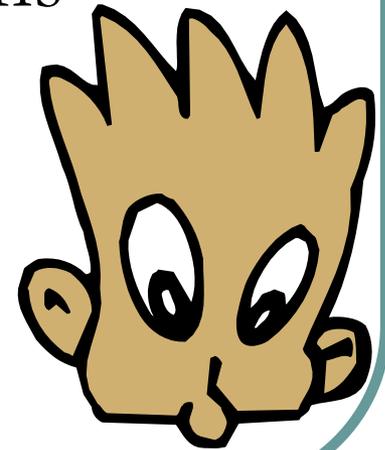


Presented by:

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Bullying: What is it?

- Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. It can include:
 - Physical violence and attacks
 - Verbal taunts, name-calling, put-downs
 - Threats and intimidation
 - Stealing of money and possessions
 - Exclusion from the peer group



Bullying vs. Childhood Conflicts

- **Bullying is intentional.** The target does not knowingly provoke the bully and may have made it clear that the behavior is unwelcome.
- **The behavior is often repetitive.** Bullying is generally a repeated action, but can sometimes be a single incident.
- **There is an imbalance of power.** The notion that the powerful have the right to intimidate the powerless.



Bullying vs. Childhood Conflicts

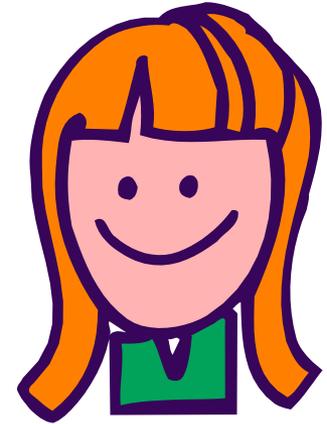
- **The act is committed by one or more people against another.** Bullying can be done by a single person or by a group.
- **There is a real or perceived imbalance of power.** A child without power cannot bully. Power can be defined as intimidation, physical strength, or social status.



Myths vs. Facts

- **Myth: Girls don't bully.**

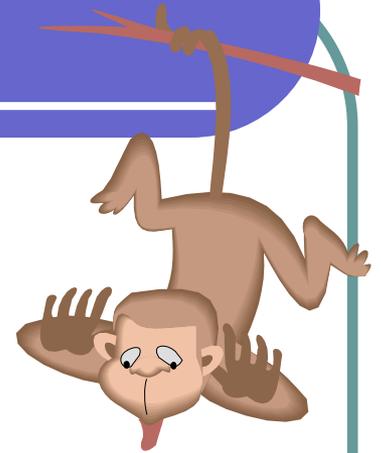
Fact: Girls can and do bully, but often in a different way. Girls often use verbal and social bullying. Bullying for girls escalates during the middle school years.



- **Myth: Words will never hurt you.**

Fact: Even though words don't leave bruises or broken bones, they can leave deep emotional scars.

Myth vs. Facts



- **Myth: It was only teasing.**
Fact: Teasing in which a child is not hurt is not considered bullying. Teasing becomes bullying when the intent of the action is to hurt or harm.
- **Myth: Bullying will make kids tougher.**
Fact: Bullying does NOT make someone tougher. It often has the opposite effect—lowering a child's sense of self-esteem and self-worth. Bullying creates fear and increases anxiety for a child.

Myth vs. Facts

- **Myth: Bullying is a normal part of childhood.**

Fact: Bullying may be a common experience, but this type of aggression toward others should not be tolerated.

- **Myth: Children and youth who are bullied will almost always tell an adult.**

Fact: Most studies find that only 25%-50% of bullied children report to an adult. They may fear retaliation or that adults won't take their concerns seriously.

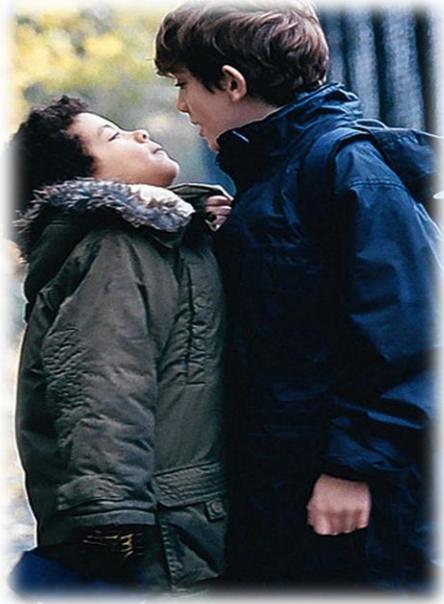


Myths vs. Facts



- **Myth: Children and youth who bully are mostly loners with few social skills.**
Fact: Many bullies are often the “cool” or popular students. These students have friends who provide support for their actions.
- **Myth: Bullied kids need to learn how to deal with bullying on their own.**
Fact: Some children have the confidence and skills to stop bullying when it happens, but many do not. Adults have critical roles to play in helping to stop bullying, as do other children who witness or observe bullying.

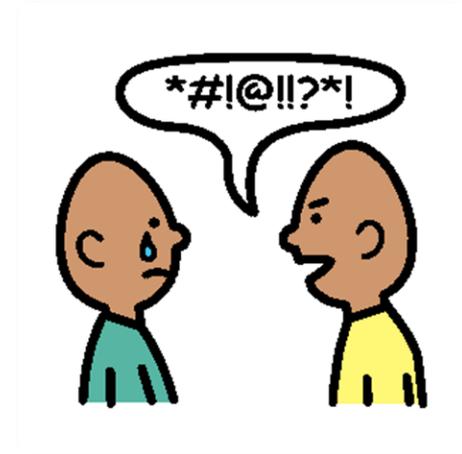
Traditional Bullying



Physical Bullying



Relational Bullying



Verbal Bullying

Bullying Today



Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying Similarities

- **Repetition**
- **Intentional**
- **Power Imbalance**



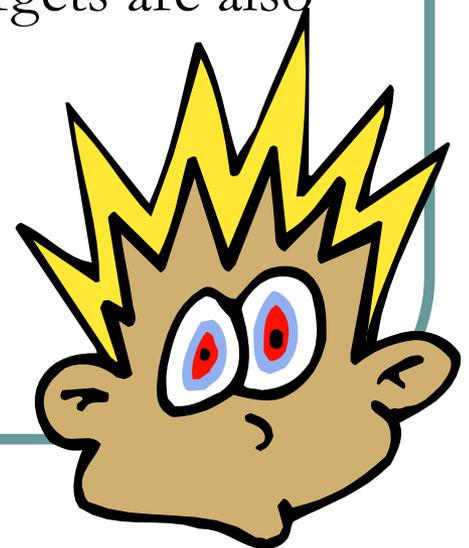
Cyberbullying Differences

- **Anonymity**- 50% of students reported they didn't know who bullied them.
- **Disinhibition**- "You can't see me I can't see you."
- **Accessibility**- 24/7
- **Punitive Fears**- victims don't report because fear having computer or phone/computer privileges taken away
- **Bystanders**- different for cyber bullying- don't witness actual face to face confrontation.

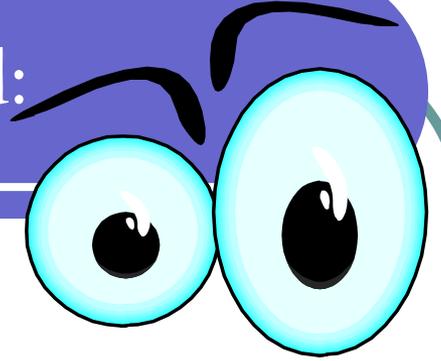
Who Bullies Target: 4 Common Traits...

Students who:

- **Act vulnerable.** When bullied, they become visibly frightened, cry, or do not have an appropriate response. This becomes an invitation to even more bullying.
- **Have few or no friends.** Children who are socially isolated are easy targets.
- **Are not assertive.** To the child who bullies, people who are not assertive seem weak or easily dominated. Targets are also less likely to tell someone about the bullying.
- **Have low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence.** Children with low self-esteem may feel they deserve the bullying.



Warning signs your child may be bullied:



- Avoiding or fear of going to school
- Sudden failing grades
- Frequent health complaints- headaches, stomachaches
- Withdrawing or losing interest in activities with friends
- Feeling, sad, moody, anxious, depressed, withdrawn, helpless
- Unexplained injuries

Warning signs your child may be bullied:



- Damaged or missing clothing or items
- Losing items of value- iPod, money, jewelry
- Trouble sleeping- or frequent nightmares
- Changes in eating habits
- Avoiding or spending excessive time on computer
- Significant mood changes after using the computer
- Become aggressive or disruptive
- May begin to bully other kids or siblings

What can parents do to help?

- **Talk with your child**

- Cultivate and maintain open, candid communication

- **Conversation starters**

“There have been a lot of news stories about people being bullied lately, do you know of people dealing with this?”

“Have you ever had any problems with people on the internet?”

“Has anyone ever bothered or threatened you?”

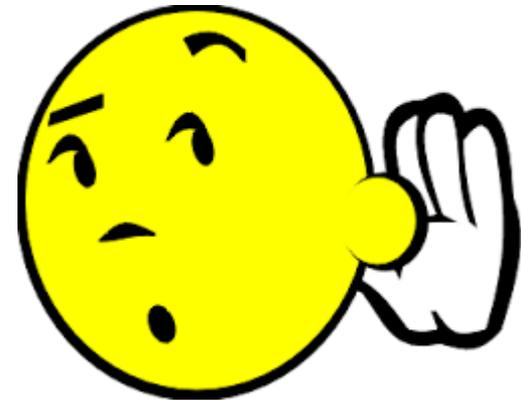
“Do you know of kids who are picked on in school?”

“How can I help you make it stop, without embarrassing you?”

What can parents do to help?

Your child may not always talk...so observe and listen

- Offer to drive your child and their friends to events
- Observe their interactions with friends
- Volunteer at the school
- Attend school events
- Chaperone field trips
- Pay attention to changes

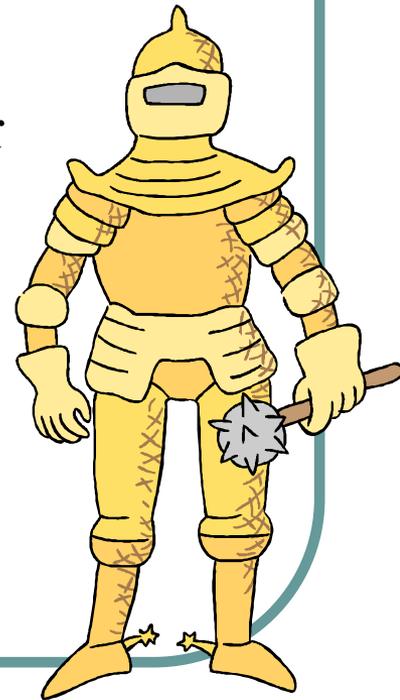


What can parents do to help?

- Empathize with your child. Help them understand bullying is wrong and it is not their fault.
- Document bullying incidents.
- Print out copies of inappropriate emails, Facebook posts, online communications.
- Be a role model.
- Encourage your child to pursue interest and activities to build more positive friendships
- Help your child develop strategies and skills for handling bullying.
- Keep in contact with your child's teachers
- Contact the school counselors for additional support and suggestions if the situation continues

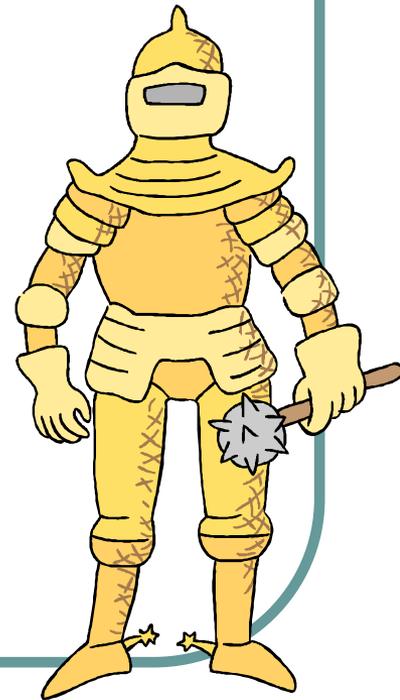
How to Protect Yourself from a Bully

- Don't respond or show a reaction. Students who bully like to see that they can upset you.
- Calmly and assertively tell the student to stop...or say nothing and then walk away.
- Use humor, if this is easy for you to do.
- Avoid areas where there are not many students or teachers around.
- Don't bring expensive things or money to school.



How to Protect Yourself from a Bully

- Sit with a group of friends at lunch or on the bus.
- Walk with friends or a teacher to your classes.
- Join activities you like to make more positive friendships
- Always **REPORT** any bullying that does not stop or makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe to your parents, teacher, counselor or an adult you trust.



An Important Note...

The list of solutions to bullying **DOES NOT** include telling your child to 'fight back.'

This can be **MORE** dangerous for your child (especially if the bully is older and stronger). This could also

get your child into trouble with the school,

because your child may be seen as the instigator of a fight, as opposed to the victim.



If you are bullied online.....

Stop



Block



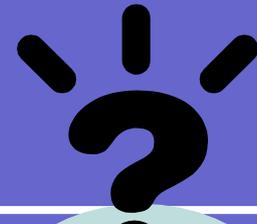
Tell



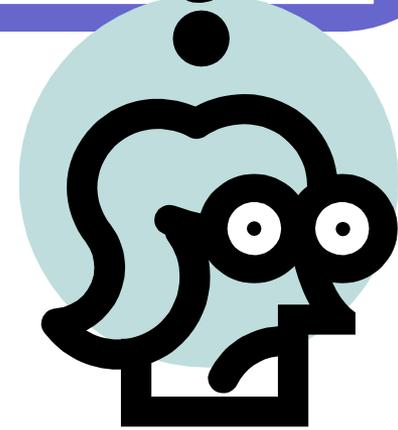
If you are bullied online.....

- Cyber bullying violates terms of service (TOS) agreement
 - Sites in violation should be reported
 - Facebook and Instagram will also take down sites that violate the minimum age requirement -**13 years old for both sites.**
- If known, cyber bullying should also be reported to the bully's Internet Service Provider.
 - Cyber bullying is a violation of the ISP's Terms of Service agreement and the account (**or parent's account**) may be closed.

Could my child be the bully?



- Has difficulty fitting in
- May look/act differently and be bullied themselves
- Recent traumatic event? (divorce/death of loved one)
- Bullying behavior witnessed at home/without friends: bullying becomes a way of controlling someone else



What if my child is the bully?

CAUTION

- Don't ignore the situation: ask teacher/counselor about behaviors seen at school.
- Ask your child about giving other students a hard time: Be direct but not accusatory.
- Ask your child to tell you about what they wish their school day was like: Look for clues. Is your child lonely? Struggling academically?
- Decide whether you can work with the child to correct the behavior, or if outside help is needed.

Children Who Bully Are More Likely To:

- Get into frequent fights
- Be injured in a fight
- Vandalize or steal property
- Drink alcohol
- Smoke
- Be truant from school
- Drop out of school
- Carry a weapon



How Else Can I Help?

- Help build your child's self confidence:
 - Don't call out your child's faults
 - Compliment specifically and sincerely
 - Encourage involvement in outside activities/friendship-building activities
 - Help your child "fit in": consider appearance; communication skills, etc.



How Else Can I Help?

- Make sure your child knows what is fair and acceptable behavior.
- Make sure your child can recognize the sneakier types of bullying and intimidation.
- Your child also needs some guidance on how to react when things go wrong.
- Be a good example.
- Build your child's confidence and self esteem so that these attempts to undermine them have less impact.
- Get things into the open.

How Else Can I Help?

- Talk to other parents but avoid hostility.
- Talk to your child and clarify what sparked the incident.
- Increase your own child's power by making them feel important.
- Ensure that they know that people will listen
- Notice and value their achievements.
- Help develop a strong social network with peers.
- If your child's difficulties persist - don't give up.

Cell Phone Strategies

- Talk to your kids about cyber bullying and why it is wrong. Tell them if they ever are the victim that it's not their fault and they won't be punished. They should not respond to the bullying, but instead should save it to report to a parent. If the message is sexual or threatening in nature they can report it to the police.
- Consider having a cell phone use contract with your teen that forbids cyber bullying, including forwarding mean messages, even if someone else starts it. Take away the cell phone for a set period of time if they bully anyone.
- Instruct your child to have strong passwords for all sites especially social media. Know your child's phone/computer logins and their passwords.
- Require them to turn it off at night, and reserve the right to ask questions about whom the teen is texting and what they are texting about.
- If your child does not yet have a cell phone, wait until they are in high school to allow it.
- Encourage your child's school to ban cell phones during school hours.

Cell Phone Strategies

- Teach kids not to accept calls from someone they don't know.
- Encourage kids to think before sending messages, and not to send a message they wouldn't want everyone else to see since they don't know if the person they send a message to may forward it to others, or if they are even texting the person they think they are.
- Help to block numbers that are sending mean text messages.
- Tell kids not to let anyone else use their phone to send messages.
- If the bullying is serious, contact the cell phone company to get a new phone number and have them be very careful about who they give it to.
- If they know who the bully is, let the bully's parents know what they are doing. If the text bullying doesn't stop, make the parents aware that they may face legal action if it doesn't stop, and be prepared to consult an attorney if necessary.
- It is important for teens who are the victims of cyber bullying to know that they should not blame themselves for it, and that you care about them and think they are worthwhile regardless of what the bully says.

Internet Safety Tips

- Keep personal and professional information limited.
- Keep your privacy settings on.
- Practice safe browsing and be careful what you click/tap.
- Make your internet connection is secure. Use a secure VPN connection and do no connect to unknown or untrusted WIFIs.
- Be careful what you download.
- Choose strong passwords that cannot be easily guessed.
- Make online purchases from secure sites.
- Be careful what you post.
- Be careful who you meet online.
- Keep antivirus programs up to date.
- Set up two-step verification whenever possible.

Resources

- www.dontlaugh.org
- www.kidscape.org.uk
- www.pacer.org
- www.stopbullyingnow.com
- <https://www.cybersmile.org/advice-help/category/who-to-call>
- <https://www.safekids.com/bullying-cyberbullying-resources/>
- <https://www.stopbullying.gov>
- Stop Bullying Now Hotline and National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1-800-273-8255
- <https://usa.kaspersky.com/resource-center/preemptive-safety/top-10-internet-safety-rules-and-what-not-to-do-online>

Tech Support for Devices

- <https://support.apple.com/> 1-800-APL-CARE (800-275-2273)
- <https://support.google.com>
- <https://support.microsoft.com>

★ *Everyone* ★
you meet
is

— FIGHTING —

a battle

YOU KNOW NOTHING ABOUT

Be Kind

→ *Always*

A dramatic sunset over a beach. The sky is filled with dark, heavy clouds, with a bright orange and yellow sun setting on the horizon. The foreground shows a wet, reflective beach with puddles of water. The overall mood is contemplative and inspiring.

Be the change that you
wish to see in the world.

Mahatma Gandhi

Contact Information

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Questions and discussion

