



Bullying

Bullying is repeated aggressive behavior that can be physical, verbal, or relational. Boys frequently bully using physical threats and actions, while girls are more likely to engage in verbal or relationship bullying. The results are similar:

- You are made to feel hurt, angry, afraid, helpless, hopeless, isolated, ashamed, and even guilty that the bullying is somehow your fault. You may even feel suicidal.
- Your physical health is likely to suffer, and you are at a greater risk of developing mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, or adult onset PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).
- You're more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school to avoid being bullied.

The most damaging aspect of bullying is its repetition. Bullies are often relentless, bullying over and over again for long periods of time. You may live in constant fear of where and when the bully will strike next, what they'll do, and how far they'll go.

Types of Bullying

PHYSICAL BULLYING

- Hitting, kicking, or pushing someone...or even just threatening to do it.
- Stealing, hiding, or ruining someone's things
- Hazing, harassment, humiliation. Making someone do things he or she doesn't want to do.

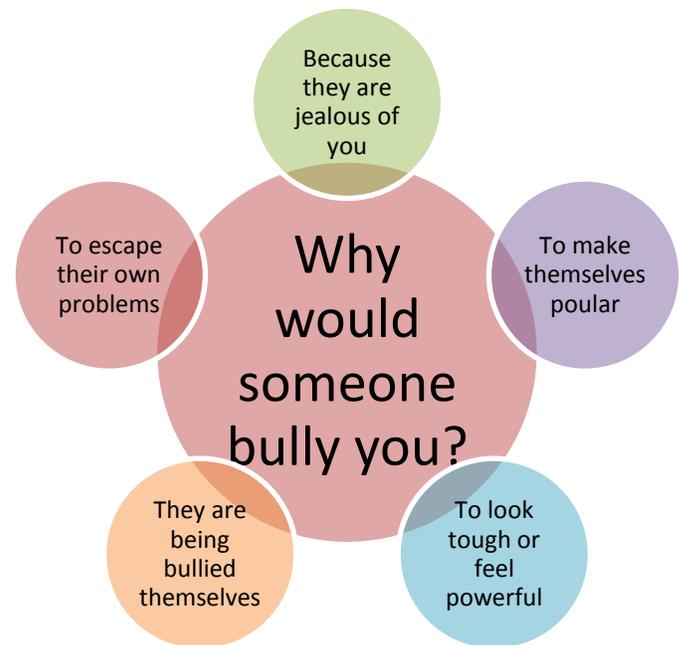
VERBAL BULLYING

- Name-calling
- Teasing, taunting
- Insulting or otherwise verbally abusing someone

RELATIONSHIP BULLYING

- Refusing to talk to someone
- Excluding someone from groups or activities
- Spreading lies or rumors about someone
- Hazing, harassment, humiliation. Making someone do things he or she doesn't want to do

Why Would Someone Bully You?





Research shows that about 25 percent of kids experience bullying, so you're not alone. While there are many reasons why bullies may be targeting you, the main reasons are usually your physical appearance or social standing within your peer group.

Bullies tend to pick on people who are "different" or don't fit in with the mainstream. It may be because of how you dress, act, or because of your race, religion, or sexual orientation. It may simply be that you're new to the school or neighborhood and haven't made friends yet.

If you are being bullied, remember;

- Don't blame yourself. It is not your fault. No matter what someone says or does, you should not be ashamed of who you are or what you feel.
- Be proud of who you are. Despite what a bully says, there are many wonderful things about you. Keep those in mind instead of the messages you hear from bullies.
- Get help. Talk to a parent, teacher, counselor, or other trusted adult. Seeing a counselor does not mean there is something wrong with you.
- Learn to deal with stress. Finding ways to relieve stress can make you more resilient so you won't feel overwhelmed by bullying. Exercise, meditation, positive self-talk, muscle relaxation, and breathing exercises are all good ways to manage the stress from bullying.

Advice if You Are Being Bullied

TIP 1 – Understand The Truth About Bullies

- Walk away from the bully. Bullies want to know they have control over your emotions so don't react with anger or retaliate with physical force. If you walk away, ignore them, or calmly and assertively tell them you're not interested in what they have to say, you're demonstrating that they don't have control over you.
- Protect yourself. If you can't walk away and are being physically hurt, protect yourself so you can get away. Your safety is the first priority.
- Report the bullying to a trusted adult. If you don't report threats and assaults, a bully will often become more and more aggressive. In many cases adults can find ways to help with the problem without letting the bully know it was you who reported them.
- Repeat as necessary. Like the bully, you may have to be relentless. Report each and every bullying incident until it stops. There is no reason for you to ever put up with bullying.

TIP 2 – Reframe The Problem Of Bullying

- Try to view bullying from a different perspective. The bully is an unhappy, frustrated person who wants to have control over your feelings so that you feel

as badly as they do. Don't give them the satisfaction.

- Look at the big picture. Bullying can be extremely painful, but try asking yourself how important it will seem to you in the long run. Will it matter in a year? Is it worth



getting so upset over? If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.

- Focus on the positive. Reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life, including your own positive qualities and gifts. Make a list and refer to it whenever you feel down.
- Find the humor. If you're relaxed enough to recognize the absurdity of a bullying situation, and to comment on it with humor, you'll likely no longer be an interesting target for a bully.
- Don't try to control the uncontrollable. Many things in life are beyond our control—including the behavior of other people. Rather than stressing, focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to bullies.

TIP 3 – Find Support From Those You Trust

- Find others who share your same values and interests. You may be able to make friends at a youth group, book club, or religious organization. Learn a new sport, join a team, or take up a new hobby such as chess, art, or music.
- Share your feelings. Talk to a parent, counselor, coach, religious leader, or trusted friend. Expressing what you're going through can make a huge difference to the

way you feel, even if it doesn't change the situation.

- Boost your confidence. Exercise is a great way to help you feel good about yourself, as well as reduce stress. Punch a mattress or take a kick boxing class to work off your anger.

- Don't beat yourself up. Don't make a bullying incident worse by dwelling on it or replaying it over and over in your head. Instead, focus on positive experiences you've had.

Tips For Parents

Learn about your child's life. If your behavior at home isn't negatively influencing your child, it's possible his or her friends or peers are encouraging the bullying behavior. Your child may be struggling to fit in or develop relationships with other kids. Talk to your child. The more understand about his or her life, the easier you'll be able to identify the source of the problem.

Educate your child about bullying. Your child may have difficulty reading social signs or may not understand how hurtful and damaging their behavior can be. Foster empathy and awareness by encouraging your child to look at their actions from the victim's perspective. Remind your child that bullying can have legal consequences.

Manage stress. Teach your child positive ways to manage stress. Your child's bullying may be an attempt at relieving stress. Or your own

stress, anxiety, or worry may be creating an unstable home environment. Exercise, spending time in nature, or playing with a pet are great ways for both kids and adults to let off steam and relieve stress.

Set limits with technology. Let your child know you'll be monitoring his or her use of computers, email, and text messaging. Limit the



amount of time they spend playing video games and watching TV. Numerous studies reveal that many popular TV shows and violent video games celebrate negative values, reduce empathy, and encourage aggression in kids.

Establish consistent rules of behavior. Make sure your child understands your rules and the punishment for breaking them. Children may not think they need discipline, but a lack of boundaries sends a signal that the child is unworthy of the parents' time, care, and attention.