

Resources for Parents and Teens About Bullying

Unfortunately, the epidemic of bullying, both “live” bullying and cyber-bullying, is so widespread that the potential solutions are as prevalent as the incidents themselves. We could not consolidate enough relevant information onto just a couple of pages, so we offer links to different sites which contain more—and more concise—content than we could post here.

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To bully someone is to “use superior strength or influence to intimidate (someone), typically to force him or her to do what one wants”.

Parents: We might think of “teenage Biff” from the “Back to the Future” franchise, but bullying can take on many forms, and is not limited to shakedowns for milk money or homework.

(Teens: Ask your parents about “Back to the Future” and what the ‘80’s were like.)

Parents: Ask your students for examples of bullying they have seen, both in and out of school, especially on-line. Then listen. This seemingly simple act of engagement can accomplish a lot. You demonstrate that identifying and stopping bullying is a priority; you also learn through the lens of your student many of the challenges they face every day.

Stopping bullying relies on action. Let’s briefly examine the roles in a typical bullying situation

- The Bully... For whatever reason, someone feels it necessary to belittle, threaten, or coerce someone else who has little or no chance to defend themselves, resulting in satisfaction from that—however brief—feeling of superiority
- The Bullied... real or perceived, there is a limitation—size, age, assertiveness, isolation (being outnumbered), low self-worth—on which an opportunistic bully seeks to capitalize
- The Bystander... this is EVERYBODY ELSE, and also where the greatest potential for action lies; BEFORE FOURTH GRADE, most students have routinely witnessed bullying
 - A 2014 study of third-graders revealed that...
 - 22% were frequently the subject of lies or untrue stories
 - 15% were frequently teased, made fun of, or called names by other students
 - 14% were frequently pushed, shoved, slapped, hit, or kicked
 - 15% were frequently excluded from play on purpose

Take Action

Report any incident to a trusted adult. Once the first incident occurs and the bully feels empowered, they are more likely to continue their behavior. Resist the mentality of “group think” and “doing what everybody else” does by recognizing bullying behavior and being willing to not participate and deter others. The ease of finding someone online coupled with relative anonymity has made cyber-bullying far more common, and can take place in group texts, social media comment, online gaming chat, as a copied online image turned into a negative meme... unfortunately, the possibilities are limited only by a person’s creativity.

Prior to bullying happening, foster a culture of inclusiveness, open dialog, and acceptance. You need not be friends with everybody, but being treated with dignity, respect, kindness, and—dare I say it?—a little compassion when warranted, is a basic human need and expectation.

More Statistics

More than 1 in 4 students (27.8%) age 12-18 ADMIT to being bullied. Of those...

- 64.5% said it was once or twice in the school year
- 18.5% said once or twice a month
- 9.2% said once or twice a week
- 7.8% said almost every day

Additionally, of those who reported being bullied...

- 18.3% had rumors spread about them
- 17.6% reported being made fun of, called names or insulted
- 7.9% were pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on
- 5.5% were excluded from activities on purpose
- 5.0% were threatened with harm
- 3.3% were tried to make do things they did not want to do
- 2.8% had their property destroyed on purpose

Cyber-bullying and Social Media

- Approximately 1 in 3 students (34%) in high school report some form of cyber-bullying in their lifetime
- 15% of students admit to cyber-bullying someone else

With the popularity of social media apps such as Snapchat and Instagram, cyber-bullying is on a rise, both in reach (number of victims reporting) and frequency. Of those who have admitted to being bullied online...

- 71.9% reported being cyber-bullied once or twice in the school year
- 19.6% reported once or twice a month
- 5.3% reported once or twice a week
- 3.1% reported every day almost every day

Of students who reported cyber-bullying...

- 25% experienced a face-to-face confrontation with someone
- 13% were concerned about having to go to school the next day
- 12% were called names they didn't like via text messages
- 11% received a text message from another student intended to hurt their feelings
- 8% had physical altercations with someone because of something that occurred online
- 6% reported another student sending an instant message or chat to hurt their feelings
- 4% had something put on a profile page to hurt their feeling
- 3% received a nasty email from another student

Further Resources to Identify and Thwart the Threat of Bullying

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/bullying-prevention-resources>

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/>

Content provided by The Leadership Coalition, www.stopbullying.gov, www.eutopia.org,
(statistics:) www.meganmeirerfoundation.org, and www.Dictionary.com,